Joint Communiqué between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations on the Fight Against Sexual Violence in Conflict
Kinshasa, 30 March 2013

From 20 to 30 March 2013, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo in connection with the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010), which emphasize the need to establish effective mechanisms to protect against sexual violence in conflict situations.

The Special Representative met with His Excellency Joseph Kabila Kabange, President of the Republic, and His Excellency Matata Ponyo Mapon, Prime Minister. The Special Representative also met with the Minister of Justice and Human Rights, the Minister of Gender, Family Affairs and Children, the Minister for Media, Parliamentary Affairs and the Initiation to New Citizenship, the Deputy Minister of the Interior, the Chief Military Prosecutor, the Commissioner General of the Congolese National Police, as well as other authorities and partners, both in Kinshasa and in the east of the country. She also met with survivors of sexual violence.

The Special Representative recognized the efforts made by the Government of the DRC to combat sexual violence in conflict, notably the improvement of the legal framework, the application of laws 06/018 and 06/019 on the prevention and punishment of sexual violence crimes, as well as the signature of the Action Plan for the Prevention of the Recruitment of Children by the Armed Forces and Armed Groups. She welcomed the efforts of the DRC to implement the Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence against Women and Children as adopted by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (2006) and the Declaration of the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) (2011). She also took note of ongoing efforts to introduce legislation establishing specialized chambers in the judicial system. The Special Representative underlined the importance to implement the Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region with a view to eradicate the root causes of sexual violence.

She commended the Government's pursuit of national ownership under the leadership of the Prime Minister, as well as its ongoing efforts to combat sexual and gender-based violence and the sustained action of the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children's Affairs to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence.

The Special Representative welcomed the efforts to implement the National Strategy on Combating Gender-Based Violence, especially the development of appropriate mechanisms such as the Special Police for the Protection of Women and Children, a national database on sexual violence, and various initiatives including the creation of national protocols to increase multi-sectoral assistance to victims of sexual violence and of a training manual on the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence for the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC). She also noted the efforts underway to combat impunity by the organization of mobile courts and the establishment of Prosecution Support Cells (PSC).

The Prime Minister and the Special Representative expressed concerns about the persistence of sexual violence committed by armed men primarily in the east of the country. They underlined the necessity to neutralize the armed groups and to initiate an effective reform of the security sector.
The Prime Minister reiterated the commitment of Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to combating sexual violence, particularly to the “zero tolerance” campaign initiated by the President of the Republic. The Government will continue to work with partners, including State entities, donors, non-governmental organizations, as well as women’s organizations, with the support of the United Nations, to enhance efforts to implement the National Strategy, under the leadership of the Minister of Gender, Family and Children Affairs.

The Government also commits to:

- Accelerate the implementation of a national strategy for security sector reform, which includes the adoption of safeguards for the prevention of violence against women and children, mainly the prevention of sexual violence in conflict, such as the vetting of candidates for integration into the national defence and security forces with a view to avoiding the inclusion of elements involved in various crimes; and the training of defence and security forces on combating sexual violence;

- Increase efforts to regulate the exploitation of natural resources in line with existing laws in the DRC to prevent its contribution to the proliferation of and violence caused by armed groups and arms-bearing men, who are perpetrators of crimes of sexual violence;

- Combat impunity, especially by reinforcing the Special Police for the Protection of Women and Children and the Prosecution Support Cells (PSC), mobile courts, the improvement of prison conditions and protection measures for victims, witnesses and state and non-state actors engaged in the fight against conflict-related sexual violence;

- Strengthen the implementation of the National strategy through the adequate coordination of activities undertaken by different stakeholders, national or international, in order to increase the effectiveness of medical, psychosocial, and legal assistance, as well as of socioeconomic reinsertion support provided to victims of sexual violence;

- Provide the military and civilian justice system with the capacity and resources necessary to efficiently contribute to the fight against impunity and ensure reparation to victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

The United Nations will continue to support the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to combat sexual violence. MONUSCO and the United Nations system in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in coordination with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict, will contribute to the efforts to provide the necessary support for the implementation of the National Strategy as well as this Communiqué within the framework of a coherent approach to combating sexual violence. The United Nations Teams of Experts on the Rule of Law/Sexual Violence in Conflict will offer its technical expertise to the institutional efforts being implemented by the Government to combat impunity, in accordance with the priorities expressed by this Communiqué and at the request of the Government.

[signed]                        [signed]
Zainab Hawa Bangura               Matata Ponyo Mapon
Special Representative of the      Prime Minister
Secretary-General on
Sexual Violence in Conflict