



Speech by Ambassador Deo Mwapinga
Secretary General, Forum of Parliaments of the ICGLR (FP-ICGLR)
At the 9th Ordinary Summit of ICGLR Heads of State and Government
15 November 2025 | Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo

- Your Excellency Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Incoming Chairperson of the ICGLR;
- Your Excellency João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola and Outgoing ICGLR Chairperson;
- Your Excellency António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations;
- Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government of the ICGLR Member States;
- Your Excellency Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Chairperson of the African Union Commission;
- Honorable Parliamentarians and Ministers,
- Your Excellency Ambassador João Samuel Caholo, Executive Secretary of the ICGLR;
- Excellencies Ambassadors, and Representatives of Regional and International Organizations;
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;

I fully associate myself with the protocols already established and extend due respect to all dignitaries present.

Your Excellencies,

Allow me, at the outset, to convey on behalf of the Forum of Parliaments of Member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (FP-ICGLR) our profound appreciation for the opportunity to participate in this 9th Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of our organization. I also bring you warm greetings from the parliaments of our region and reaffirm their unwavering commitment to our shared aspirations for peace, security, stability, and sustainable development.

Let me express, in a particular way, our sincere gratitude to His Excellency President Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, to the Parliament of the

Democratic Republic of Congo, and to the Government of the DRC for hosting the headquarters of the FP-ICGLR. The diplomatic, political, and material support extended to our institution is deeply appreciated, and we would like to assure you that we do not take it for granted.

Excellencies,

This year's theme: ***“Consolidating Peace and Security for Sustainable Development in the Great Lakes Region”*** is both timely and compelling. Indeed, without peace and security, no nation, community, or institution can meaningfully achieve development.

As the Forum of Parliaments, it is our considered view that the situation in the region calls for a renewed return to the founding spirit that inspired the establishment of our organization. As you all know, the ICGLR was conceived as a homegrown mechanism designed by Africans, for Africans, to address African challenges through African-led solutions. We must therefore safeguard this spirit, strengthen our ownership, and reinforce the regional mechanisms that form the backbone of our collective efforts.

In recent years, we have observed a growing inclination towards externally brokered processes, often negotiated without the full participation of our people. While international support is always welcome, the durability of peace and the credibility of solutions require that we, as a region, remain firmly at the centre of all peace and development initiatives.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

The Forum of Parliaments remains a proud and indispensable pillar of the ICGLR architecture. As the representative voice of our citizens, we provide a vital platform for dialogue, oversight, experience-sharing, and parliamentary diplomacy throughout the region.

Our unwavering commitment to peace and stability guided the Forum's six-phase Parliamentary Fact-Finding Mission on the security situation in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The mission sought to independently and impartially assess the persistent insecurity, violence, and humanitarian concerns affecting the region, while complementing ongoing regional peace initiatives. The Parliamentary delegation undertook consultations in Angola, Goma, Kinshasa, Kigali, Uganda, and Kenya.

Allow me to express our deep appreciation to Their Excellencies, the Presidents of Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and Kenya, for the honour

of receiving the delegation despite their demanding schedules. The final report of this mission was adopted during the 15th Ordinary Session of the Plenary Assembly, held in April 2025 in Luanda, Angola. The Forum stands ready to work with Member States in implementing its recommendations.

Our steadfast commitment to democracy and good governance, and our conviction that democratic legitimacy emanates from the ballot box, led to the deployment of an election observation mission for the 2025 General Elections in the United Republic of Tanzania. Under the leadership of former Burundian President, His Excellency Domitien Ndayizeye, a team of 25 observers was deployed across six locations on the Tanzanian mainland and in Zanzibar. These observers stood in solidarity with their Tanzanian brothers and sisters as they exercised their sovereign right to choose their nation's future.

The Forum also places great importance on the empowerment of women and their full participation in political, economic, and peacebuilding processes. In this context, we will convene next year the Women Parliamentarians' Conference for a Peaceful and Developed Great Lakes Region, to be held in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania.

This conference will bring together women parliamentarians, scholars, gender experts, and peacebuilding practitioners. Its principal outcome will be the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Women, Peace, and Development, supported by a regional action plan aimed at strengthening women's leadership and advancing gender-responsive governance across the ICGLR.

Excellencies,

Undertaking initiatives of such scope namely including fact-finding missions, regional conferences, and parliamentary capacity-building, to name but a few of our activities, requires substantial financial and technical resources. I therefore humbly appeal to Member States to continue strengthening the Forum through sustained political, diplomatic, and financial support. A strong Forum of Parliaments is not an institutional luxury; it is a strategic necessity for peace, stability, accountability, and citizen-centred development in our region.

The Forum of Parliaments of the ICGLR stands ready to work hand in hand with Your Excellencies, with our regional institutions, and with our communities to translate the aspirations of this Summit into concrete progress for the peoples of the Great Lakes Region.

I thank you. Merci beaucoup. Matondo mingi. Asante sana. Zikomo.