

Multi-annual Country Strategy 2019 to 2022 *Great Lakes region*

In effect up to and including 31 December 2022

Executive summary

The Netherlands will continue to support activities in the Great Lakes region that contribute to stability. This will be done, on the one hand, by transboundary initiatives that foster regional cooperation between the Great Lakes countries and, on the other, by engaging in programs in specifically Eastern DRC that have a positive impact on regional stability.

Based on the lessons learned more emphasis will be put in the next four years on strengthening the political dialogue on conflict related issues and in particular the linkage between Dutch supported development programs and the political context in which they operate. Secondly, emphasis will be on investing in local communities to deal with conflicts and improve the conflict sensitivity skills of implementing partners and creating more synergy between delegated and centrally funded activities.

Getekend door F. de Man, CdP 15/10/2018

I Analysis

A. SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION

Regional

Since gaining independence in the 1960s, the Great Lakes Region, composed of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Uganda, has been marked by interconnected cycles of violence that continue to affect stability, development and economic prospects in all four countries. These conflicts are not confined by national borders, but are characterized by regional dimensions and have implications for the region as a whole. It is almost impossible to categorize conflicts in the region as either 'interstate' or 'intrastate.' This is because the conflicts tend to transcend the national borders, with constantly shifting actors and epicentres.

While the Burundian crisis is persistent, Ugandan and Rwanda seem to be stable. Continuous violence in the Eastern DRC has claimed millions of lives in the past and most recent UNHCR reports suggest that there are over 4,5 million IDPs in the DRC (of which three million in Eastern DRC alone) from and across the region. Recent killings in Kasai, Ituri and the Kivus demonstrate the difficulty to prevent, manage and resolve conflict in the Great Lakes.

The most prominent drivers of conflict can be divided in 5 categories:

- Political: lack of inclusive processes, corruption and impunity
- Security: lack of security and rule of law.

- Economic: unequal land access and ownership, poverty and population pressure, unemployment and lack of economic opportunity, unequal distribution of revenues from unregulated natural resource exploitation
- Social: ethnic and political mistrust, displacement, migration and population movement, gender inequality, chronic psychological trauma, absence of profound and holistic reconciliation processes,
- Environmental: land degradation and climate change

Bilateral relationships in the region (within the framework of the Great Lakes program)

Burundi's relationship with its Great Lakes neighbors

Positions on the situation in and relations with Burundi across the region **diverge**. Relations between Burundi and Rwanda are at an all-time low since the 2015 political crisis in Burundi. Up to 90.000 Burundians have moved to Rwanda. Both countries accuse each other of supporting rebels against the government of the other country. These **tensions** have resulted in a breakdown in communication and trade between the two.

Uganda, on the other hand, seems to be comfortable with the political situation in Burundi (possibly sees the tensions between Rwanda and Burundi as advantageous because of the regional balance of power). As far as **DRC** is concerned, the **relations are complex**, with many Burundian refugees residing in DRC, which regularly results in clashes with the local population and with risks of recruitment by Burundian armed groups. Also, the FNL (Forces Nationales de Liberation), a Burundian opposition political party continues to operate in the Kivus. Economically, Eastern DRC forms an important market for Burundian agro products (especially since the closure of the Burundi-Rwanda border).

DRC's relationship with its Great Lakes neighbors

The situation in DRC is strongly linked to its neighboring countries. DRC's relations with Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi remain complex and fragile. The state of governance in Eastern DRC has made it possible for irregular armed groups, as well as security forces from the neighboring countries to operate most of the time freely in the region, which has allegedly become a theatre for **warfare** between governments and rebel groups, or simply for **illegal exploitation of natural** resources (minerals, charcoal, oil etc.).

Uganda and DRC have enjoyed an on-off relationship. The DRC-based Ugandan rebel group, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) has operated inside Eastern DRC since the 1990s. Since the start of 2018, the area neighboring Lake Edward has seen a rise in tensions between the two countries. Tensions between DRC and Rwanda have in the past periodically flared up due to Rwandan's alleged **support for Congolese rebel groups**, which have further **fueled ethnic mistrust** in DRC.

Rwanda's relationship with its Great Lakes neighbors

The current relations between Rwanda and Burundi are **tense**. There is a deepening mutual mistrust originating from persistent suspicions in Burundi that Rwanda was backing opponents of President Nkurunziza after the failed coup in May 2015. Rwanda is home to opposition figures and journalists critical of the Burundian regime.

Relations between Rwanda and Uganda have been fragile since 1999, when the armies of both countries clashed in Kisangani. Ties between both countries deteriorated rapidly since mid-2017, shortly after the assassination of Uganda's deputy inspector general of Police. Rwanda was allegedly behind the assassination. Rwanda accuses Uganda of harboring and supporting the RNC rebel movement headed by Gen Kayumba Nyamwasa who fell out with president Kagame.

Relations between Rwanda and DRC have been problematic ever since mid-1990s. Given the presence in Eastern DRC of a number of Rwandan rebels groups, among which genocide perpetrators, Rwanda has intervened over the years in DRC as it has seen fit to safeguard its security interests.

Uganda's relationship with its Great Lakes neighbors

The biggest impact of the developments in the region on Uganda for the moment is the **enormous influx of refugees**. Uganda has become one of the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa. Refugees are originating from DRC, South Sudan and Burundi. The large influx of refugees is putting a **strain on access to land and on health and education** systems. Besides hosting refugees, Uganda biggest concern is the volatile situation in Eastern DRC. Uganda, like Rwanda, is relatively secure but feels threatened by the violence along its borders. Rebel groups, such as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), have retreated to CAR and DRC respectively.

In Burundi, President Museveni has not yet been successful as EAC mediator to solve the political crisis in Burundi. The relation between Uganda and Rwanda continues **to have ups and downs**. As the Rwandan government has over the years stepped out of the shadow of Uganda and has grown in confidence on the regional and international stage, tensions have been observed between the two presidents. Accusations of **meddling in each other's internal affairs** resurface on a regular basis.

Eastern DRC

Eastern DRC (especially North and South Kivu) remains for a significant part in a state of **anarchy**. Many zones are dominated by armed groups and inaccessible for the national army or government. Apart from 'political' reasons, the existence of all these armed groups can be explained by economic reasons (illegal extraction of resources and taxation of the population) on one hand, and an endless reservoir of new recruits (jobless youth) on the other. In Eastern DRC, **poor governance and performance of security services** undermine trust by the communities in the government and between different ethnic groups. **Stereotyping and use of ethnic diversity** for economic and political gain by the elites reinforce the insecurity. Even if the upcoming elections are smooth and peaceful, local conflicts in Eastern DRC and the activity of armed groups most likely will continue, with the danger of spreading across borders. Although the threat of foreign interventions has substantially reduced, relations remain fragile.

The role of MONUSCO in peacekeeping may be reduced after peaceful elections. Both the international community and the DRC government may be aiming at reducing Monusco's presence, although for different reasons. The SSU (Stabilisation Support Unit) is coordinating the implementation of the International Security and Stability Support Strategy (I4S). This strategy brings together interventions of different international and local partners and is a means for political dialogue.

Forced displacement remains both a cause and a consequence of instability. The number of **Internal displacement persons (IDPs)** and refugees in the DRC have increased considerably since 2016 to one of the highest levels ever recorded since the beginning of the regional and Congolese conflicts in the nineties and form a threat for stability in the region. Protracted caseloads pertaining to refugees from Burundi, the DRC, and Rwanda contribute to the persisting mistrust among countries in the region, as these groups of refugees are often perceived as a potential reservoir for recruitment by armed groups.

Foreign armed groups originating from Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda operating in Eastern DRC, which take advantage of the state's fragile territorial grip, and the increasing number of **local armed groups**, are of course a source of instability. The armed groups do not always have political objectives but are often criminal in nature, looking for control of resources and power or just self-protection. Political

manipulation of Congolese **identity formations** through ethnic kinships and access to land and/or water is common practice.

In conclusion, Eastern DRC is still not in a very good shape today, regardless of years of well-intended interventions, political dialogues and peacekeeping operations. The toxic combination of poverty, land problems, movement of people, nationality issues, abundance of mineral resources and the absence of properly functioning government institutions demand a healthy level of realism on what can be expected in terms of improvements.

Specific thematic analyses (within the framework of the Great Lakes program)

Peace, security, stability See

‘Eastern DRC’.

The international legal order and human rights

All the four countries of the Great Lakes face **accusations of continued human rights violations**. For years now, the situation in Eastern Congo gives cause to particular concern. Violence against women and girls is rampant and **militias and security forces use rape as a weapon of war**. Civilians are killed, jailed, and/or tortured especially in conflict areas such as the Kasai and the provinces North- and South-Kivu, Ituri, Tanganyika and Maniema. Pressures on political space, in particular during the electoral process, translates into violations of freedom of expression, and of the freedom to organize political meetings and into arbitrary arrests and intimidation. Impunity for perpetrators and a poor functioning of the justice sector aggravates the human rights situation. Security and justice institutions tend to serve the interests of the elite in power, rather than protecting the rights of the citizens. Internal accountability mechanisms in the army (FARDC) and police (PNC) are inadequate. (See also country strategy DRC).

Food security, water, climate and minerals.

The economic development in the region is very uneven. Rwanda and Uganda show economic growth while DRC and Burundi face **economic stagnation because of conflict and poor governance**. **Unequal access to land and land tenure insecurity** have been serious drivers of conflict especially in Eastern DRC. Land is not only a source of livelihoods and value, but it also serves as a foundation for social value and political power. The problem is aggravated by land grabbing by the elite, reducing the possibility of sustainable livelihoods or employment creation and leading to tensions and violence. Violence, lack of security and harassment by security actors and armed groups, contribute to bad functioning markets and undermine incentives for farmers to increase production.

The Great lakes region is endowed with water resources of which the potential remains underutilised, whereas in certain areas around the volcanoes water is insufficiently available. In addition, **population growth and continued environmental degradation** increasingly threaten the existing water resources. Competition and uneven water allocation due to poor water management lead to further tensions and conflict. Sustainable solutions towards an integrated management of water resources often require a trans-boundary approach. The same applies to the **management and exploitation of energy resources** stored in the Kivu Lake (gas), which might provide opportunities for improved collaboration and relation building between DRC and Rwanda.

DRC hosts a significant amount of the world’s tin, tungsten and coltan (3T), gold, copper, cobalt and many other valuable minerals. **Elites, the army and armed groups** have a major interest in the exploitation of these resources. Furthermore, the **exploitation of minerals** in the Eastern DRC is

influenced by regional commercial interest, in particular of the neighboring countries Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, which act, as transit countries for smuggled minerals.

Conflict minerals find their way into international supply chains. The US and the EU have implemented conflict free mineral legislation. The government of Congo has adopted the OECD due diligence guidelines, and participates in the ICGLR certification mechanism. However, there is reliable evidence that minerals coming from mines controlled by militias are still making their way into the global market. Many miners, including children, are still working in dire conditions. The latest research by UNICEF estimates that 40.000 children are working in mines in the DRC. Since 1996, many rebel groups have been and still are profiting from the trade of conflict minerals. Conflict minerals have fueled and continue to help sustain armed violence in eastern DRC.

Social progress

In the great lakes region, **gender inequality** is an underlying reality, which helps, perpetuate poverty. Although there are differences in the level of security and poverty in each of the four countries and **in the experiences** of men and women throughout the region, women remain in a disadvantaged position. While women rights in Rwanda are being relatively well protected, in the DRC sexual and gender based violence, is used as a weapon of war to intimidate, humiliate and destroy families and communities.

Women's role in the economy has been **vital for the reconstruction** of the countries in the Great Lakes region in general and for Rwanda and Uganda in particular. In addition, in the Eastern DRC and in Burundi, women have become the breadwinners of their families through cross-border and small-scale trade. In spite of these developments, women continue to **have limited access to services** and are often exposed to violence and abuse.

The region faces tremendous demographic challenges, with a **high population growth**, and job creation lagging behind the region's **youth bulge**. There is a strong dependence on land as a means of survival and a lack of alternative economic opportunities. The lack of available farmland and employment opportunities, result in very limited perspectives in general and for **youth** particularly, making them more susceptible for recruitment by **armed groups**. Moreover, since overdependence on land for survival and competition for resources are root causes of conflict, the growing population aggravated by **migration** can trigger further conflict.

B. WORKING ENVIRONMENT (AT INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL)

The most important international actor in the area is **MONUSCO**. After the elections (if reasonably acceptable), national and international pressure will increase on MONUSCO to leave or at least be downsized. This would not be desirable, as it is not expected that the violence in Eastern DRC will end after the elections. As MONUSCO also ensures continuous attention for DRC by the Security Council, a departure of MONUSCO could have **dire consequences** for the area. The Netherlands will continue to engage and support MONUSCO to help improve its effectiveness.

International regional actors also (will have to) play their part. The **ICGLR** is active in enhancing security in the region, not only through its Bujumbura HQ but also its large intelligence center in Goma. **SADC** has made available a Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) to MONUSCO. It is unclear what will happen with the FIB but some form of military engagement by SADC will probably continue. On the other hand, the

CEPGL (Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries) has not been able to deliver much until now..

At the political level, the **UN Special Envoy** (UNSE) for the Great Lakes plays a role in the region to ensure the implementation of the **Peace Security and Cooperation Framework** agreement. This framework tries to provide space for collaboration between the countries in the region, regional organizations and the international community and address the structural causes of instability in the Eastern DRC and the region. The special envoy is also member of the **International Contact Group (ICG)**, a coordination form of predominantly Western countries. Although the mandate of the Dutch special envoy is ending, the NL will continue participating in the ICG.

The **East African Community** (EAC), of which Burundi, Uganda and Rwanda are members, plays a role in the mediation in the Burundi crisis that started in 2015. Both mediators, Mkapa and Museveni, have not been able to play a determining role in the talks between the government and the opposition.

The **African Union (AU)** has also started to express itself more clearly on political developments in DRC, usually not in public but behind closed doors. The Peace and Security Commission is following the preparations of the elections closely; its chairperson Mussa Faki has taken a critical approach to the DRC and under his leadership, the AU is increasingly speaking out against delays in elections and the implementation of the St Sylvester political agreement.

The solution of the conflicts in the Great Lakes region requires regional cooperation, which leaves much to be desired at the moment. Therefore, the Netherlands will explore possibilities for closer coordination with relevant regional and international organizations. Under the responsibility of the Africa department, an analysis will be carried out to determine the way forward.

C. THE NETHERLANDS IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION

Relevant policy priorities of the Netherlands

The possibility of continuation of the ongoing local conflicts or even another **explosion of violence** on a much bigger scale in particular in Eastern DRC (with all its regional implications) is real. Efforts to **mitigate the risk** of that happening and to **contribute to the stability** in the region fits well in the conflict prevention agenda as articulated in the **Dutch policy frameworks** concerning foreign trade and development cooperation as well as the Integrated International Security Strategy.

Added value

The Netherlands has played a substantial role in the region since the Rwandan genocide of 1994. It has been a major donor to Uganda, played a very active role in Rwanda in the aftermath of the genocide, and has been heavily involved for example in security sector reform in Burundi. The Netherlands has a dense network of embassies (and an embassy office in Goma).

In comparison to many other countries, the Netherlands can still be considered a major donor in the region, with a solid presence, an extensive network of contacts, and a good reputation as a small country without its own geopolitical agenda. Many Dutch CSOs are active as well in the Great Lakes region and specifically in Eastern DRC.

Lessons learned within the framework of the Great Lakes program

The strategy of the GL program has proven to be successful to a certain extent in contributing to a holistic approach towards stability and conflict transformation. However, experience has shown that working in conflict areas is difficult and with many pitfalls. In the coming period, an effort will be made to address these challenges.

Linkage to the political process

The focus of the Great Lakes program has been **on developmental issues**. As was to be expected, it has become increasingly clear that many of the problems that are identified and raised by the projects in the GL program, can only be adequately addressed at political level. It requires the **involvement and commitment** of not only local but also national and international political actors. Some examples: (ethnic) conflicts over land, illegal exploitation and trade in minerals, human rights abuses by the national army and local militias. Therefore, more than in the past, efforts will have to be undertaken to engage in political dialogue on sensitive issues, and to **link the development interventions to the political process**.

Invest in communities for stability

The interventions of the last four years have clearly shown that, in order to enhance stability, it is necessary to invest in the capacity of local communities to deal with conflicts and to empower those communities in their relationship with local governments and security actors.

Alignment and political dialogue through SSU/I4S

Most activities of the GL program are aligned with the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (I4S). However, this process is too detailed and overestimates the capacity of the SSU. Projects are excluded for sometimes unclear reasons and thereby are not influenced and monitored under I4S, which reduces the impact of I4S.

The I4S is an important tool to harmonize and coordinate the interventions by the international community to enhance stability and security in Eastern DRC. However, the alignment procedures and the political dialogue need strengthening in order to realize the potential of the strategy. The GL program will intensify the participation in the discussions concerning I4S and the SSU and, if required, revise the collaboration strategy with I4S/SSU

Conflict sensitivity

Developing and implementing activities in a fragile and conflict prone environment like the Great Lakes region, and particularly in Eastern DRC, have proven to be challenging. This explains that some of the implementing organizations struggle to incorporate the concept of **conflict sensitivity** in their activities. Well intentioned interventions in a fragile and conflict prone environment, run the risk of further aggravating an already instable situation. In order to assure that a proper conflict analysis is translated in a coherent intervention strategy, adhering to at least '**do not harm**' principle is needed. While selecting new implementation partners, the Great Lakes team will focus on their capacity related to conflict sensitivity.

Cooperation between embassies, headquarters

The management structure of the GL program, based on active cooperation between the four embassies has provided an institutional basis for the implementation of the program. However, there continues to be a need to look for opportunities for **closer cooperation** in term of **political analysis of the developments** in the region **and political action**.

As this strategy is supposed to provide a framework for not only the Dutch supported interventions through delegated funds but also for those funded centrally, it is expected that, with the active participation of the relevant thematic departments, the coordination between centrally and delegated funded interventions will improve.

Delays

Given the difficult and specific circumstances under which the projects have to operate, the start of the implementation of a number of projects **took much longer than expected**. Based on the lessons learned, more attention should be paid already in the design phase of any new activities to a proper political-economy analysis, a realistic planning, a conflict sensitive approach, a political projection, and the right expertise of the implementers.

II Dutch objectives and strategy in the Great Lakes region

1) General

Goal

The overall goal of our interventions within the context of this Great Lakes strategy is to **contribute to stability** in the region and more in particular in Eastern DRC. Right from the start the regional strategy has been based on two ‘pillars’:

1. Interventions that are transboundary in nature and contribute to regional cooperation
2. Interventions that take place in Eastern DRC and have an impact on regional stability

Political priorities and development dimensions within the context of the Great Lakes program

Given the formulated overall objective of our interventions, the nature of the related political process is the determining factor in achieving this goal. Development efforts, if executed in a proper way (see lessons learned), can support and reinforce this process. In addition, development efforts in themselves can have an intrinsic value to the extent that in a number of cases they mitigate (temporarily) the effects of conflict and lack of stability for the population in Eastern DRC and the adjoining areas in Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda. A lot can be gained by a **better linkage between the ongoing development efforts and initiatives of a more political nature**.

The Dutch involvement in terms of personnel (dense network of embassies) and finance (bilaterally and regionally) will have to go hand-in-hand with a **political commitment and engagement by the ministry** as a whole. However, given the limited priority of the Great Lakes region in the Netherlands any ‘political strategy’ should take into account an appropriate, realistic level of political engagement.

Political priorities

In terms of political priorities, the following areas have been identified, but are not limited to:

- Inter-ethnic dialogue: **Instrumentalization of ethnicity** and corresponding ethnic tensions are one of the main drivers of the violence and conflict. Ongoing efforts to support **dialogue between different ethnic groups** (and their leaders), especially in areas where Dutch funded projects are operating, will be reviewed from a political perspective and, where necessary, strengthened as an integral part of this political agenda.
- Mediation: In addition to ‘political tribalism’, the loss of monopoly on force by the state and the fragmented nature of the political elite are other conflict drivers. Building on relevant experiences by Dutch funded programs, political and modest financial support will be

provided to promising local initiatives to mediate between armed groups, as this could be another important contribution to **limit the level of violence**.

- Access to land and tenure security: This is a major cause of (armed) conflict in Eastern DRC. Technical interventions cannot completely address the problems. Political will and dialogue is required to make the required fundamental changes in land governance.
- Illicit financial flows: The political problems in Eastern DRC are further complicated by the vast opportunities for financial gain. The Netherlands might wish to lobby more actively for international measures to limit the transfer of illicit financial revenues.

It goes without saying that these might have to be adjusted depending on the **evolving political circumstances** and a better understanding of the added value of the Netherlands as a political actor.

Relationship with bilateral programs in the region

Most of the interventions carried out within the framework of the bilateral programs (especially in Rwanda and Uganda) have a different objective (than contributing to stability), different approach (less emphasis on conflict sensitivity) and are different in nature (not working in an open conflict area). Where there happens to be an overlap **or possibilities for synergy** between the regional and bilateral strategies, this will be indicated in the thematic chapters of the several bilateral strategies.

Choice of themes

Taking into account the **very difficult circumstances** under which the program had and has to operate and, therefore, the very slow start of some of the foreseen activities, this strategy opts explicitly for a consolidation of the earlier identified thematic interventions. An exception will be made for conflict minerals, given its importance as a trigger to aggravate conflict.

2) Organisation of the Great Lakes program

The Great Lakes Program is managed by the Management Team (MT) consisting of the four Heads of Cooperation of the embassies in Kinshasa, Bujumbura, Kampala and Kigali. At an operational level the coordinator of the regional program is responsible for the implementation of the program as a whole. The coordinator works in close collaboration with the head of Goma Office. Specific thematic experts/policy officers of the four embassies are assigned to monitor the implementation of specific projects within the context of this program.

3) Thematic

For each of the identified priority areas **long-term objectives** have been formulated to which interventions eventually have to contribute, as well as a number of **medium-term objectives**, which ideally will be realized within the time frame of this country strategy. The medium-term objectives provide guidance for the results to be achieved by Dutch (co-)funded programs and interventions under the period covered by this multi-annual strategy, irrespective of whether they are funded centrally or through delegated funds.

Peace, security, stability and migration

A. Impact and outcomes

Long-term objective

- Improved stability in the Great Lakes Region and especially Eastern DRC

Medium term-objectives Eastern

DRC

- More effective local conflict-resolution through enhanced community–government (incl. security actors, women and youth groups) relations
- Improved access to justice through local structures
- Enhanced coordination of development, security and political interventions by the international community to improve stability
- More effective political engagement of Dutch and regional actors in peace building and conflict prevention

Transboundary

- Improved transboundary collaboration of communities (m/f) through increased awareness of regional conflict drivers

Contribution to Dutch policy framework



- ‘Investing in global prospects for the world, for the Netherlands’, chapter two and five.

B. How will we achieve these objectives?

More effective local conflict resolution through enhanced community–government (incl. security actors, women and youth groups) relations

The bulk of the activities within the context of this strategy will be implemented in Eastern DRC and build on the results obtained over the last four years. Under this component the Great Lakes program will **contribute to address conflicts** by reinforcing communities in dealing with conflicts, building relations between communities (ethnic groups) and local government actors (including security forces). In addition, the program will enhance local stability **by building capacity** of local government, including security and judicial actors.

The development and implementation of **security plans** at local government level provide a good starting point for developing activities that foster inclusive and accountable governance and for political engagement. The interventions will assure the active participation of women and a role for **youth** being the future of the region and at the same time being a target for recruitment by armed groups. The interventions in these areas will include in their M&E framework indicators that will measure the results.

Improved access to justice through local structures

Interventions to enhance access to justice will be promoted at local level through support to legal clinics and local courts. In the activities, special focus will be on women, youth and marginalized groups.

Enhanced coordination of development, security and political interventions by the international community to improve stability

In order to enhance impact of the efforts to improve stability by the Netherlands and (international) partners joint political engagement has to be reinforced. Isolated development activities will have less impact than well-coordinated efforts. The International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (I4S) is an important tool **for coordination of the interventions** by the international community in the Eastern part of the DRC. The performance of SSU on coordination and political dialogue is still weak.

The GL team will continue its engagement with the SSU and development partners to improve on these aspects. It will emphasize the need to be **more inclusive** to assure that political issues from aligned interventions will be taken into account. Political efforts will concentrate on the future role of MONUSCO, an adequate transfer of the SSU responsibilities and of course support to a genuine national political dialogue.

More effective political engagement of Dutch and regional actors in peace building and conflict prevention

A support fund for peace and security will be available to reinforce **the political agenda, the link between development interventions and their political dimension** as well as to support **promising political initiatives** to mitigate conflict and boost the necessary political dialogue. Depending on the nature of the activity, all relevant parties (regional department, Goma office, and four embassies) will be able to make use of this (modest) fund managed by the GL Team in Kigali.

Improved transboundary collaboration of communities through increased awareness of regional conflict drivers

The program will continue to build **cross-border relations** between communities by increased awareness of regional conflict drivers and **ethnic prejudice**. For example by bringing communities and their leaders together through radio and cross border discussion fora.

Centrally funded programs in Eastern DRC will be phased out; no new centrally funded activities will be started. The delegated budget is increased to maintain the same level of activity in the field of Peace, Security and Stability. In order to enhance synergy, the DSH strategic partners will develop their interventions in close coordination with the GL team.

The international legal order, human rights and host country policy

A. Impact and outcome

Eastern DRC

Long-term objective

- Improved human rights situation in the region

Medium term-objective

- Reduced number of human rights abuses

Contribution to Dutch policy framework



- ‘Investing in global prospects for the world, for the Netherlands’, chapter two.

B. How will we achieve these objectives?

For Eastern DRC, most development activities are geared towards **improving security and governance** and as such **contribute to an improved human rights** situation. Projects working on governance and gender-based violence, pay explicit attention to the improvement of behavior by police and military, and therefore help to reduce human rights abuses. Programs on land will assist to defend the rights of people that are victims of enforced land consolidation and land grabbing. The Goma office will continue to support relevant activities through small, concrete projects. Promoting respect for human rights is a key pillar of the Netherlands involvement in the DRC (see also DRC strategy). The Netherlands will use international fora to put any further deterioration of human rights in DRC on the political agenda.

Sustainable development, food security, water and climate

Food security development

A. Impact and outcomes

Eastern DRC

Long-term objective

- Sustainable inclusive agricultural development to foster food security and stability

Medium-term objectives

- Improved land governance
- Improved productivity and income of smallholders
- Conflict sensitivity mainstreamed

Contribution to Dutch policy framework



- ‘Investing in global prospects for the world, for the Netherlands’, chapter two and three
- Letter to Parliament on food security

(2014) B. How will we achieve these objectives?

Improved land governance

Addressing access to land cuts across several thematic areas; in this document, it is part of food security. In collaboration with the Ministry of Land in Kinshasa and in partnership with MONUSCO, UN Habitat a land conference is under preparation. This conference will provide input for the development of interventions to improve and regulate access to land. Secondly, the conference will provide a framework for a **productive political dialogue** on this sensitive and emotional topic. Given

the nature of the conference, the Netherlands is actively seeking collaboration with other international and development partners.

Ongoing food security projects are also addressing land governance. These programs will, amongst others, improve tenure security for a number of households. Special attention will be paid to **land rights of women**. Although those rights are guaranteed in the heritage laws of the DRC, those are often not respected.

Improved income and productivity of smallholders.

Food security is a thematic area for all countries in the Region. The Great Lakes strategy focuses on the Kivus. Main areas of attention are **value chain development** and an **enhanced sustainable agricultural production**, taking into consideration as well climate resilience/adaptation, and employment creation. Given the context of the Kivus, all activities in this area will pay specific attention to security, conflict transformation, land access and ethnic inclusivity. The ongoing food security programs will improve production and market access and create additional jobs in the value chains. **Special activities are developed to reach youth and women.**

Conflict sensitivity mainstreamed

To improve monitoring of the food security (and water) programs a **peer monitoring mechanism** has been developed and rolled out. Experience has shown that some of the implementing partners do have the required technical knowledge but often lack sufficient understanding and implications of working in conflict prone areas. Therefore, continued support in these areas is required. Peer monitoring will be continued and additional technical support will be provided to project implementers. New activities will be scrutinized on the conflict dimension.

Integrated Water management

A. Impact and outcomes

Transboundary and Eastern DRC

Long-term objective

- Improved use of water resources and its catchments in the Kivus

Medium-term regional objectives

- More responsible use of energy resources in Lake Kivu
- Reduced conflict through increased access to water, involvement of communities and improved watershed management
- The number of people using safely managed water of good quality has increased
- Improved conflict sensitivity around natural resource use and management

Contribution to Dutch policy framework



- 'Investing in global prospects for the world, for the Netherlands' , chapter two

B. How will we achieve these objectives?

More responsible use of energy resources in Lake Kivu

Support to the **regional cooperation between Rwanda and DRC** to enhance the responsible use of the energy resources contained in Lake Kivu will be continued. More emphasis will be put on broadening the support for the regulation of gas exploration in Lake Kivu and to encourage a more active and substantive involvement of the DRC.

Reduced conflict through increased access to water, involvement of communities and improved watershed management

Existing programs combining integrated watershed management and supply of drinking water will continue, as they are entry points for enhancing stability in the vulnerable Virunga landscape. Water sources in forested and sometimes protected areas will be sustained and new infrastructure built for access to drinking water and water for agriculture. In critical situations, cross-border conflicts due to flooding and erosion will be mitigated by working on the **causes across borders**.

The number of people using safely managed water of good quality has increased

Water supply is part of ongoing programs in both South Kivu and in the Virunga area. Addressing water needs in these areas is an essential component of the efforts to enhance stability and security.

Improved conflict sensitivity around natural resource use and management

Just like other thematic areas, the interventions in relation to integrated watershed management and drinking water supply will (have to) pay special focus on security, conflict transformation and ethnic inclusivity. The water program around Virunga is part of the peer monitoring process. The Lake Kivu activities will strive for a larger involvement of DRC in order to create a better balance of interest and thereby a stronger cooperation between the two countries.

Climate/biodiversity

A. Impact and outcomes

Transboundary

Long-term objective

- Improved protection of vulnerable and endangered eco-systems

Medium-term objectives

- Improved transboundary collaboration to conserve the Greater Virunga Landscape.
- Improved synergy between delegated and centrally funded activities on climate change and biodiversity

Contribution to Dutch policy framework



- 'Investing in global prospects for the world, for the Netherlands', chapter two and three

B. How will we achieve these objectives?

Improved transboundary collaboration to conserve the Greater Virunga Landscape.

Transboundary collaboration is essential for the protection of the vulnerable Greater Virunga Landscape and its endangered inhabitants such as the gorillas. The Dutch supported development interventions will support **mediation efforts** to diffuse cross-border tensions, initiatives to collaborate across borders and efforts to **build trust** between the countries and **promote collaboration** to enhance the conservation of the Greater Virunga Landscape (GVL). These activities will help combat the consequences of the presence of armed groups and illicit practices such as charcoal exploitation. The GVL is also of importance in protecting waterways and a possible source for renewable energy such as electricity. Activities in the field of food security will also incorporate activities in relation to **mitigate the effects of climate change**.

Improved synergy between delegated and centrally funded activities on climate change and biodiversity

A number of organisations, such as WWF and IUCN, are supporting programs in the Greater Virunga's, focusing on sustainable management of the forest and national park. The potential for closer collaboration between the programs of these organisations and the Great lakes program will be explored, as part of the Strategic Partnership between the ministry and these organisations.

The centrally supported Planetary Security Initiative focuses on the relation between climate change, natural resource exploitation and security. The potential of this initiative to create broader awareness of the effects of climate change and its potential risk for security in Eastern Congo will be explored.

Conflict minerals

A. Impact and outcomes

Eastern DRC

Long-term objective

- Removal of exploitation of minerals as a major driver of conflict.

Medium-term objective

- Reduction in conflicts related to natural resource exploitation

Contribution to Dutch policy framework



- 'Investing in global prospects for the world, for the Netherlands', chapter two

B. How will we achieve these objectives?

While the bilateral strategy for the DRC will focus mainly on corporate social responsibility of the large industrial exploitation of resources, the Great Lakes strategy will focus on the **conflict dimension of mineral resources** in Eastern DRC and its implications for the relations with the neighboring countries. In the coming period further analysis will be undertaken to identify and develop interventions that will promote governance, reduce elite capture and fight transboundary illegal trade. The development of the activities will build on former experiences and lessons learned from the centrally funded programs, discussions with major stakeholder and evaluations of ongoing initiatives. There are currently no

centrally funded country-specific programs within the Great Lakes region, as IGG is supporting within this context more generic initiatives.

Social Progress

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

A. Impact and outcomes

Transboundary & eastern DRC

Long-term objective

- Sustainable gender equitable peace to contribute to stability

Medium-term objectives Eastern

DRC

- Reduction of violence against women and girls
- Promote comprehensive sexuality education that reaches young people and adolescents
- Strengthen health systems to support provision of SRH services, specifically to GBV survivors Transboundary
- Promote continuous availability and affordability of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) commodities services

Contribution to Dutch policy framework



- ‘Investing in global perspectives for the world, for the Netherlands’, chapter two

B. How will these objectives be achieved

Reduction of violence against women and girls

The GL Program will continue and intensify interventions on **positive masculinity** to boost the fight against sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). The engagement with the national police and the army at the provincial level will be continued. The interventions will be **connected to women empowerment** through village savings and loan associations (VSLA). Interventions will build on previous experience to improve the **mental health and psychosocial support** component of the program and to promote more involvement of spouses of beneficiaries. In addition, the established VSLA will continue to be used as an entry point for Sexual and Reproductive Health and rights (SRHR) information.

Promote comprehensive sexuality education that reaches young people and adolescents

Youth in and out of school will be better informed about SRHR, to better understand and navigate relationships in a healthy way, and to carry forward new models of **female-male equality**. The focus will also include teenage mothers and teenage sex workers.

This will be achieved by delegated programs as well as centrally funded activities .

Strengthen health systems to support provision of SRH services, specifically to GBV survivors

Support of SGBV survivors will be reinforced through an **expansion of one-stop centers**. These centers are established to holistically (including legal, medical, psychological and economic reintegration support) respond to SGBV. These services will be provided by strengthened health facilities.

Promote continuous availability and affordability of SRH commodities services

A regional SRH commodity supply program is proposed to be developed and implemented to cater for the commodity needs of the different projects in the Great Lakes regions in an effective and efficient, less costly way by pooling procurement. This program will respond to the need for a **better cooperation** and **proper management** of efforts to ensure the availability of commodities and curb the **rapid population growth**. The advantage of a regional approach is that the supply can be more flexible and thereby better matched to the requirements. For budgetary reasons, this program is expected to start in 2020.

General

- Monitoring and coordination

To ensure that **actions are coordinated** and that **results are sustainable**, all implementing partners (including centrally funded programs) will continue to be part of the **SRHR platform** established for that purpose. The monitoring system will be strengthened through increased field visits, a **stronger focus and support on conflict sensitivity** and by a systematic review of progress. During the preparation, new interventions will be scrutinized on the conflict dimension.

- Expansion of intervention area

Possibilities will be explored to expand the SRHR programs to Ituri, one of the provinces in Eastern DRC with the highest rate of gender-based violence.

III RISK MANAGEMENT

Security and Health risks

The security situation and Ebola outbreaks in the region and particularly in Eastern DRC may impede or **slow down the implementation** of the development activities.

Political developments

Political developments in the region have an immediate **impact on stability and the security situation**.

This risk cannot be mitigated as such. However, the four embassies will **closely monitor the developments** and **engage in political discussions** according to the needs and possibilities. A drop in the international political interest in the region may negatively affect the developments in the GL region. Collaboration between countries in general and transboundary development activities in particular are depending on the relations between the involved countries. The development and implementation of cooperation programs like Lake Kivu Monitoring Project and Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration can be affected by increasing tensions in the region.

Capacity implementing organizations and functioning of consortia:

The capacity of implementing partners has proven to be limited as far as conflict transformation is concerned.

These weaknesses are reinforced by the composition of some of the implementing consortia.

Fraud, corruption or misuse of donor funds

In a volatile region as the GL region with limited capacity of many actors, corruption can/will take place. Therefore **due diligence** will be strengthened during the assessment phase of proposals.

Organizational risks

The implementation of the program requires intensive monitoring and coordination between the embassies in the region.