



The [UN Secretary-General](#) and the President of the [World Bank](#) say that a recent peace agreement has given Africa's Great lakes region, which includes the Democratic Republic of Congo, the "best chance for peace and economic development in many years."

In a joint Op-Ed published in many leading world newspapers, Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary-General and Jim Yong Kim, the President of the World Bank, write that the region today has the chance to achieve something that has eluded its war-weary people for several decades. "It can silence the guns, boost trust and trade between neighbours, educate millions of out-of-school children, empower women, and create economic opportunities that will help the countries forge a path to prosperity, good governance, and lasting stability."

The Op-Ed is written on the eve of a joint trip to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Uganda, where the UN and World Bank chiefs meet the region's leaders and announce a range of specific commitments to accelerate development and consolidate peace on the basis of an agreement signed by 11 countries in the region.

The pact was the fruit of a concerted effort between the United Nations, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Southern African Development Community and the

African Union.

The two leaders warn that the implementation of the agreement will require hard work and point out that 70 percent of people in the DRC live on less than \$1.25 a day and some 6.3 million people require food support; while sexual violence continues at appalling levels throughout the country. In addition, more than three million Congolese have fled their homes for safety, including 2.6 million displaced inside DRC and 450,000 refugees in neighbouring countries.

"By restarting economic activity and improving livelihoods in border areas, by promoting cross-border trade, by steadily increasing economic interdependence, by rooting out corruption, and by ensuring that natural resources are managed for the benefit of all, we can steadily build confidence and improve well-being, income, and opportunity," the UN Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank write in their joint Op-ed.

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