

# *Conflict-Prone Minerals in the Great Lakes Region of Africa*



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## About Partnership Africa Canada

Over the last decade, Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) has built a strong reputation based on its ground-breaking investigative research and effective policy advocacy related to good governance, natural resources and human security. PAC is a participant in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme for rough diamonds, hosts the Publish What You Pay Coalition of Canada, supports the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in the design and implementation of a regional certification scheme for conflict minerals, and is a member of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights.

PAC works with an extensive network of African civil society organizations to engage communities and artisanal miners and to ensure their meaningful participation in national and international policy dialogues and initiatives related to natural resource management. Through this work, PAC and its partners have been able to generate concrete improvements in the governance of natural resources in Africa.



PARTNERSHIP AFRICA CANADA

## Conflict-Prone Minerals in the Great Lakes Region of Africa

The Great Lakes Region of Africa is abundant in natural resources, including high-valued minerals such as tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold, which are important components of everyday products like cell phones, iPods, refrigerators, jewelry, airplane components, automobiles and more.

For decades these minerals have been used by artisanal miners in the Great Lakes Region of Africa as a primary source of income. Over one million artisanal and small scale miners in the Democratic Republic of the Congo depend on the informal mineral trade alone, and although artisanal mining is characterized by low financial returns and heightened health and safety risks, a lack of alternative livelihoods continues to fuel the trade.



The informal artisanal sector is also prone to corruption and criminality, and for years minerals such as tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold, have been used by armed groups in the DRC and neighbouring countries as a source of financing. Furthermore, control over these lucrative natural resources has become a source of conflict, with armed groups fighting to retain access. Many of these groups have been accused of committing serious human rights violations, including forced slavery and sexual violence.

### Efforts to Curb the Illegal Exploitation of Minerals

Acknowledging the impact of the illegal exploitation of minerals on the ongoing social and political crises in the Region, the Heads of State of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) have committed to concretely action through the *Regional Initiative against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources (RINR)*.

The *RINR* is comprised of six tools:

1. A regional mineral tracking and certification scheme.
2. The harmonisation of mining legislation in the 11 member states.
3. The creation of a database to track the trade in minerals in the region.
4. The formalization of artisanal and small-scale mining.
5. The establishment of a whistleblowing mechanism.
6. The promotion of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI).

These efforts focus on four minerals that have been selected for their conflict sensitivity: tin, tantalum, tungsten (referred to as the 3 Ts) and gold. These are the same four minerals designated as 'Conflict Minerals' under the US Dodd-Frank act, and the same four minerals covered by the OECD *Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas*.

The ICGLR sets the standards for certifying conflict-prone minerals in the Great Lakes region. These are fully compliant with the OECD Guidance. The ICGLR Regional Certification Mechanism constitutes the in-region implementation of the regional standards and the OECD Guidance. As the overall, regional umbrella, the ICGLR's standards and procedures are harmonized with existing certified trading initiatives and have accommodated traceability schemes such as ITRI's Tin Supply Chain Initiative (iTSCi).

#### ICGLR Member States

Angola

Burundi

Central African Republic

Democratic Republic of Congo

Kenya

Republic of Congo

Rwanda

Sudan

Tanzania

Uganda

Zambia

Central to the ICGLR's Regional Certification Mechanism are transparency, and verification and monitoring processes that consist of third-party audits and an overarching Mineral Chain Auditor. Together, these provide rigorous and independent oversight of the system and enable industry to meet its requirements under the Dodd-Frank legislation.

The ICGLR has been recognized by the G8 as a key body and instrument for tackling the illegal exploitation of, and trade in, natural resources in Africa. In July 2011, the US State Department publically acknowledged and encouraged the efforts of the ICGLR and its eleven member states.

## **Partnership Africa Canada's Programme on the Great Lakes Region**

Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) was invited by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) to act as an advisor in 2005 and has since played a vital capacity building role for the institution in its efforts to tackle the illegal mineral trade. In April 2010, PAC presented detailed recommendations to the ICGLR for the creation of a regional certification mechanism for the targeted high-value minerals – coltan, cassiterite, wolframite and gold. PAC's proposals were accepted by the ICGLR and have now become the foundation for the RCM which was launched and endorsed by the ICGLR Heads of State at a special summit in Lusaka in December 2010.

Since the launch of the RCM, PAC's support to the ICGLR has been multifaceted, and has included: Developing the ICGLR mineral tracking database and facilitating data collection in-region; Facilitating technical capacity and training for the ICGLR Secretariat, ensuring sustainability of the RCM; Advising on the development of the ICGLR's Independent Mineral Chain Auditor; Providing direct support to ICGLR Member States to meet certification requirements.

PAC supports an independent regional civil society coalition on natural resources comprised of members representing the Kivus (DRC), Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. They work to promote the ICGLR Pact, to hold their own governments to the commitments they have made, to share experiences and to contribute to impact assessment, monitoring of tracking and certification and whistleblowing. Launched in August 2011, they held their first regional planning meeting in December 2011 in Kampala, Uganda.



## **A Comprehensive Approach**

### *The Role of Women and Children in the Mineral Trade*

PAC supports a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding. PAC is planning to engage in further research to better understand how women and girls participate in the extractives sector in Eastern DRC, with the objective of identifying ways to minimize vulnerabilities and amplify potential opportunities unique to a conflict/post-conflict environment. It is critical to monitor how women and girls in particular are affected by the introduction of tracking and certification in their respective communities. Moreover, it is PAC's view that the implementation phase of the Regional Certification Mechanism provides an opportunity to implement relevant UN Security Council Resolutions related to Women, Peace and Security such as UNSCR 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889 and others to ensure that women and girls vulnerabilities in conflict/post-conflict settings are recognized and that their full participation in the implementation and monitoring of the Regional Certification Mechanism is encouraged.

### Complementary Initiatives

PAC has participated in the development of the *OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas*. In practical terms such guidelines ensure industry end users can track the source of their minerals through their entire supply chain—from mine site, to smelter, to manufacturer—thereby guaranteeing to consumers and interested government authorities that their products are “conflict free” to the best of their knowledge.

PAC is also a contributor to the International Task Force dedicated to donor coordination on conflict-minerals in the Great Lakes Region

PAC is the civil society lead to the US-led Private Public Alliance for Responsible Minerals Trade, a joint initiative between governments, companies, and civil society to support supply chain solutions to conflict minerals challenges in the DRC and in the GLR.

In Canada, PAC hosts the Canadian Multistakeholder Calls on Conflict Minerals, an information sharing platform that provides updates on on-going international and in-region efforts to stop the flow of conflict minerals. Participants include government officials, civil society organizations, academics and private sector representatives from various industries.



### Formalization of Artisanal Miners

PAC is currently preparing to launch pilot projects for the formalisation and registration of artisanal miners in parts of the DRC and Burundi. This pilot project aims to establish, on test sites, a reliable chain of custody production tracking system for artisanal gold, beginning at the mine site and proceeding on to the point of export.

The formalization effort will be conducted in close cooperation with Congolese and Burundi government, industry and civil society. This tri-partite co-operation has been shown excellent results with formalisation efforts elsewhere in the region, and is a key element of the project.

Strong incentives for formalisation will be offered to artisanal gold producers, in the form of technical assistance and – potentially – via better prices for tracked and formalized gold. The project aims to achieve this latter goal by facilitating contacts and establishing a direct relationship between a major downstream gold buyer (i.e. a refiner) and in-country vendors of tracked and formalised gold.

*For more information visit our website at:  
[www.pacweb.org](http://www.pacweb.org)*

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