

SECRETARIAT
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION



SECRÉTARIAT
CONFÉRENCE INTERNATIONALE
SUR LA RÉGION DES GRANDS LACS

REPORT OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE ICGLR MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF MINES

2ND MAY 2025

**MULUNGUSHI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
CENTRE**

LUSAKA, REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Extra-ordinary meeting of the Ministers in charge of mines of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) was held at the Mulungushi International Centre, in Lusaka, Republic of Zambia, on 2nd May 2025 to consider the report of the 30th Regional Committee on the illegal exploitation of natural resources and the recommendations of the ICGLR Regional Committee on the mineral smuggling allegations between DRC and Rwanda.
- 1.2. The meeting was co-chaired by Hon. Paul Chanda Kabuswe (MP), Minister of Mines and Minerals Development of the Republic of Zambia and H.E. Ambassador Albino Malungo, the Ambassador of the Republic of Angola to Zambia.
- 1.3. The Ministers in charge of Mines or their representatives from the following Member States attended the meeting: the Republic of Angola, the Republic of Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Rwanda, the Republic of Sudan, the Republic of South Sudan, the Republic of Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, and the Republic of Zambia.
- 1.4. The meeting was also attended by the Executive Secretary and Deputy Executive Secretary of the ICGLR, the Head of the European Union to Zambia and representatives of the German Agency for International Development (GIZ), representing the Development partners.

2. OPENING CEREMONY

The opening ceremony was graced by **Hon. Paul Chanda Kabuswe**, Minister of Mines and Minerals Development of the Republic of Zambia, on behalf of the President of the Republic. The meeting was also addressed by **H.E. Ambassador João Samuel Caholo**, Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR); **Ms. Petra Gašpárová**, the Head of the European Union Delegation in Zambia, and **Dr. Hapenga M. Kabeta**, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Mines and Minerals.

- 2.1. **Dr. Hapenga M. Kabeta**, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Development, welcomed all participants to the extraordinary meeting of the Ministers in charge of mines. He emphasised that the meeting reflected the shared commitment to strengthening cooperation in governing the region's mineral resources,

acknowledging the mining sector as a vital pillar of their economies that provides employment, drives growth, and offers regional integration and development potential. Dr. Kabeta recognised the persistent challenges affecting the mining sector, including illegal exploitation, smuggling, environmental sustainability issues, human rights concerns, and transparency problems, noting that the meeting was timely for reaffirming the dedication to responsible mineral governance and taking decisive action as well as shared commitments, review collective progress, and chart a path forward for sustainable and inclusive mineral resource development, emphasising that collaboration, dialogue, and mutual trust were essential to transform mineral wealth into a source of prosperity rather than conflict. He expressed hope that the discussions would be fruitful, forward-thinking, and focused on achieving tangible outcomes beneficial to their countries and peoples.

- 2.2. In her remarks **Ms. Petra Gašpárová**, Chargée d'Affaires of the EU Delegation to Zambia and COMESA, congratulated the Zambian government and ICGLR Secretariat for convening the meeting. She emphasised the importance of addressing illegal exploitation of natural resources in the Great Lakes region, explaining that this practice deprived governments of public revenues, hindered sustainable development, fueled corruption, fed armed groups in eastern DRC, and created mistrust between countries. She referred to the UN Security Council Resolution 2773, which condemned the illegal exploitation of resources, and outlined various EU actions to address the issue, including regulatory reforms, international advocacy, support for the ICGLR's Regional Certification Mechanism, and bilateral agreements with the DRC and Rwanda. She stressed that while the EU stood ready to assist, the key to resolving the problem lay within the Great Lakes region itself, requiring coordinated political will. She urged all ICGLR Member States to ratify the Protocol against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources to strengthen its legitimacy and enforcement capacity.
- 2.3. **Ambassador João Samuel Caholo**, Executive Secretary of the ICGLR, extended gratitude to the Zambian government and President Hakainde Hichilema for their exceptional hospitality and for hosting the extraordinary meeting. He highlighted Lusaka's historical significance as the birthplace of the ICGLR Regional Initiative on Natural Resources (RINR), where Heads of State and Government convened in 2010 to address the critical issue of illegal resource exploitation in the region. It was recognised that the alarming

connections between illegal exploitation and the proliferation of armed groups, result in devastating conflicts, loss of life, and severe human rights violations, including Sexual and Gender-Based Violence. Thus, the Lusaka Declaration was built upon the Protocol Against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources, which aimed to develop effective prevention mechanisms, intensify cooperation among Member States, and harmonise national legislation against illegal exploitation.

- 2.4. Ambassador Caholo underscored that the current extraordinary meeting demonstrated their continued dedication to implementing the Protocol and enhancing security in mining areas through collaboration between regional initiatives and national security institutions. He highlighted the ICGLR's unwavering commitment to promoting mutual trust and cooperation while transforming the Great Lakes Region into a sustainable peace and security space through coordinated conflict prevention efforts. He acknowledged the technical and financial support from development partners, including the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands through GIZ, and the European Union through IMPACT. He urged Member States to provide necessary financial resources to empower the ICGLR Secretariat in fulfilling its mandate. He expressed confidence that deliberations would yield concrete outcomes beneficial to the entire Great Lakes Region.
- 2.5. In his opening statement, the Guest of Honour and President of the Republic of Zambia, H.E. Hakainde Hichilema, represented by the Minister of Mines and Minerals Development, Hon. Paul Chanda Kabuswe, expressed his honour in addressing the gathering and extended a warm welcome to all delegates, development partners, and participants. He commended the ICGLR Secretariat for effectively coordinating with the Zambian government to host the meeting and thanked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Ministry of Mines and Minerals Development for their tireless efforts. The President noted that the meeting had convened at a time when the region continued to face complex challenges rooted in natural resource governance, and he emphasised that the moment provided an opportunity to reaffirm shared commitment first articulated in Lusaka in 2010 when regional leaders adopted the Lusaka Declaration.
- 2.6. The Guest of Honour acknowledged that while these tools were designed to address the nexus between mineral extraction, insecurity, and armed group activities, implementation remained uneven fifteen

years later. He warned against external interests seeking to exploit regional vulnerabilities and declared that the era of resource imperialism must end, asserting that Africa would no longer be a passive source of raw materials for others' development.

- 2.7. He affirmed commitment to ICGLR principles and reported that Zambia was undertaking mining sector reforms to ensure mineral resources contributed to economic development, peace, and security. He emphasized that poor mineral governance could exacerbate conflict while strong, transparent systems could promote stability. In conclusion, he officially declared the meeting open and wished the delegates productive deliberations and a pleasant stay in Lusaka.

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

After the opening ceremony, the meeting adopted the following agenda:

- 3.1. Presentation of the report of the 30th meeting of the ICGLR Regional Committee against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources
- 3.2. Presentation of the recommendations of the ICGLR Regional Committee on the mineral smuggling allegations between DRC and Rwanda
- 3.3. Statements by Ministers in charge of Mines
- 3.4. Consideration of the Draft Report of the Extraordinary meeting of Ministers in charge of Mines

4. CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE 30TH MEETING OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE

The Chairperson of the Regional Committee presented the report detailing the deliberations and recommendations of the meeting held in Nairobi, from 28th to 30th April 2025 conducted in line with the Protocol against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources, with the objective to receive updates on the implementation of the six tools, review the Ad Hoc Sub-committees' report on the Analytical Fingerprint (AFP) and the consultancy on Assessment of the Regional Initiative on Natural Resources (RINR), and address allegations regarding alleged mineral smuggling between DRC and Rwanda.

Regarding recommendations, the Chairperson reported that, among others, the Committee had resolved to table amended Terms of Reference regarding smuggling allegations at the upcoming Ministerial meeting, requested regular in-person attendance at Committee meetings, and encouraged



Member States to request technical assistance for setting up national databases. The Committee had also approved transferring the AFP analytical laboratory to Tanzania.

5. STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS AND HEADS OF DELEGATIONS

5.1. Republic of the Democratic Republic of Congo

H.E. Kizito Pakabomba Kapinga Mulume, Minister of Mines of the DRC, commended the collective efforts to implement the six tools of the RINR, which he described as the foundation of transparent and responsible mining governance. He noted the 30th Regional Committee meeting in Nairobi as an example of efforts to tackle traceability, transparency, and illegal resource exploitation, and praised Tanzania for hosting the regional analysis laboratory. He, however, expressed concern about the worrying situation in eastern DRC, which has prevailed for three decades and has worsened since January 2025. He explained that the instability, primarily linked to the illegal exploitation of natural resources, compromises the effective implementation of the Regional Certification Mechanism. He reported that the DRC Ministry of Mines had taken decisive measures, including a ministerial decree from 12 February 2025, classifying specific mining sites in eastern DRC as "red status." In addition, the DRC had made a formal request to the Conference Secretariat for an investigation into alleged mineral smuggling to Rwanda. The Minister emphasised that this approach should be seen as a call for truth, shared responsibility, and rebuilding trust between Member States rather than an accusation. He reiterated the commitment of the DRC to the region, where natural resources are a driver of peace rather than conflict.

5.2. Republic of Rwanda

The Representative of the Government of the Republic of Rwanda thanked the government of Zambia for hosting the extraordinary meeting and the Conference Secretariat. He stated that since 2012, Rwanda had led other ICGLR member states in implementing the six tools of the Regional Initiative on the Fight against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources. He reported that 16 ICGLR Third-Party Audits had been conducted, with most exporting entities receiving green status. He asserted that Rwanda had established robust systems to prevent contraband trade across its borders, and that there were no verified reports of smuggled minerals entering Rwanda from the DRC. He noted that Rwanda had not been consulted by the DRC regarding these allegations nor presented with evidence to support such claims.

He suggested that rather than targeting individual countries, the ICGLR should have proposed a collective strategy for regional collaboration and emphasised that Rwanda did not endorse the deliberations, decisions, and recommendations from the previous meetings and would not participate in their implementation.

5.3. Republic of Angola

The Representative of the Minister of Mineral Resources, Petroleum and Gas of the Republic of Angola informed that the Republic of Angola endorsed the report of the 30th meeting and supports the investigation into the allegations made by DRC.

5.4. Republic of Burundi

The Representative of the Minister of Hydraulics, Energy and Mines, Ambassador Evelyne Butoyi, informed that the Republic of Burundi concurred with all the efforts being exerted against the illegal exploitation of natural resources in the region and endorsed the report of the 30th meeting of the Regional Committee, especially the conducting of the proposed investigations on the illegal exploitation of natural resources in the region.

5.5. Republic of Kenya

The Representative of the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Mining, Blue Economy and Maritime Affairs, expressed appreciation for the meeting in Lusaka and emphasised Kenya's commitment to regional dialogue on natural resource management. He stressed that sensitive issues affecting regional cohesion must be approached with care while protecting the unity of purpose. Kenya proposed non-adversarial verification mechanisms based on facts and handled by neutral experts, reaffirming their readiness to support all member states in finding a balanced solution through diplomacy and shared commitment to peace.

5.6. Republic of Uganda

The Representative of the Minister of Energy and Mineral Development emphasised that identifying regional challenges clearly was essential for developing effective solutions. She stated that these issues could only be resolved through collective action and mutual cooperation, which would ultimately benefit regional growth and development. The Government of Uganda proposed conducting a comprehensive and amicable investigation to promote peace and stability. In this regard, the Representative noted that



continuous engagement with all Member States throughout the investigative process was necessary and affirmed that the Republic of Uganda stood ready to collaborate with all Member States on this important matter fully. In addition, Uganda recommended establishing an ad hoc ministerial committee comprising the United Republic of Tanzania, the Republic of Uganda, and the Republic of Zambia, which would undertake official visits to both the DRC and Rwanda to engage in constructive discussions with the respective Ministers, with the primary objective of identifying practical and sustainable solutions to the current challenges.

5.7. Republic of Zambia

Hon. Paul C. Kauswe, Minister of Mines and Minerals Development, informed that Zambia was pleased to host the meeting and remained committed to the resolutions adopted by the ICGLR Heads of State and Government on 15 December 2010. He recalled that these resolutions provided direction on tackling illegal exploitation of natural resources and preventing their use to fuel regional conflicts. He reported that Zambia welcomed the report from the Chairperson of the 30th Meeting of the ICGLR Regional Committee against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and the proposed recommendations related to mineral smuggling allegations between the DRC and Rwanda. He recommended handling the matter in a way that would enhance regional solidarity and build mutual trust. The Minister affirmed Zambia's support for the review process of the six tools of the Regional Initiative on Natural Resources to address current challenges. He mentioned that the Zambian government was establishing mechanisms to identify, assess, and mitigate potential risks across all mining sector supply chain stages. He emphasised the importance of promoting peace, security, stability, and development in the region as envisioned by the ICGLR.

6. DECISIONS

Following extensive deliberations, the meeting decided as follows:

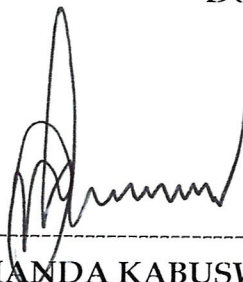
- 6.1. Took note of the Republic of Rwanda's reservation about including the agenda item on the DRC's allegations of mineral smuggling between the DRC and Rwanda, and further noted that the reservations were also made during the opening ceremony of the 26th meeting of the Audit Committee held in Nairobi.
- 6.2. Adopted the report of the 30th meeting of the Regional Committee on the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

- 6.3. Adopted the Terms of reference for the investigations with amendments, with the inclusion of the word “alleged” in paragraph 1(a) and deletion of the words “armed groups and Rwandan Defence Forces” on paragraph 2.2 (i).
- 6.4. In the spirit of cooperation, the meeting established an ad hoc ministerial committee comprising the United Republic of Tanzania, the Republic of Uganda, and the Republic of Zambia supported by the Conference Secretariat, to undertake official visits to both the DRC and Rwanda and engage in constructive dialogue with the respective Ministers.

7. VOTE OF THANKS

The Ministers expressed appreciation to Paul Chanda Kabuswe, Minister of Mines and Minerals Development and the Government of the Republic of Zambia for the facilities put in place to ensure the success of the meeting.

Done in Lusaka, 2nd May 2025



HON. PAUL CHANDA KABUSWE, MP
MINISTER OF MINES AND MINERALS DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA