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Experts and stakeholders conclude consultations on Natural Resources Governance in Africa's Great Lakes region

Nairobi (Kenya), 6 July 2017 - The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Office of the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for the Great Lakes (O/SESG-GL) convened on 5 and 6 July in Nairobi, Kenya, a “Regional Experts and Stakeholders Consultation on Natural Resources and Good Governance for Sustainable Peace, Development and Transformation of the Great Lakes Region”.

The consultations were convened in response to the request made by Defence Ministers from the ICGLR and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) as endorsed by the 26 October 2016 Regional Oversight Mechanism summit of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework.

The consultations were officially opened and closed by Pierre Kangudia Mbayi, Minister of State in charge of Budget of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Dan Kazungu, Cabinet Secretary in the Ministry of Mining of the Republic of Kenya.

The ICGLR Executive Secretary, Zachary Muburi-Muita, and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, addressed the participants. The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for the DRC and Head of the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), Maman Sidikou, the European Union Head of Delegation in Kenya, Stefano Dejak, and the UN Environment Executive Director, Erik Solheim, also participated.

During the consultation, 65 experts and stakeholders from Africa, Europe, North America and Australia, including civil society organizations and representatives from the mining industry, government institutions, donors, think tanks and UN agencies, funds and programmes exchanged best practices, pointed out challenges and agreed on prioritized recommendations focusing on sustainable and transparent management and governance of natural and renewable resources.

Participants underscored the responsibility of member states, companies and individuals to ensure compliance with international standards and agreements related to natural resources. They also agreed on the importance of raising awareness at the international level, including in end-user countries, of this matter.

The participants recommended that ICGLR member states make public the production and export statistics of natural resources; harmonize taxation regimes at the provincial, national and regional levels, especially on the trade of gold. They also suggested that all companies in the natural resources sector are audited and that financial records are available in the public domain.

Participants committed to strengthen their partnerships through increased synergy and coordinate respective interventions to maximize the collective impact of efforts to curb the illegal exploitation and trade of natural resources. This will also contribute to ensuring further progress in the implementation of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, and the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for DRC and the region.

Participants agreed on the need to strengthen regional cooperation among the judiciaries, police and customs services to address the illegal trade of natural resources, including through support to the Great Lakes Judicial Cooperation Network established by the ICGLR with the support of the O/SESG-GL.