



OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL  
FOR THE GREAT LAKES REGION

**Natural Resources**

<p><b>Summary of Facts</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and international players have long been engaged with natural resources management, including governments of the region, donors, civil society, private sector, bankers, academia, regional economic communities and international organizations. Their engagement has resulted in a proliferation of respectable initiatives aimed at improving transparency, traceability, good governance, and responsible business in the sector. A key initiative is the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Regional Initiative against the Illicit Exploitation of Natural Resources (RINR), which has since 2014 been developed to the level of an ambitious business plan, though not yet funded.</li> <li>• In February 2015 the Office of the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region (O/SESG-GL) convened together with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) an expert meeting in Goma that resulted in a public report on illegal production and trade of natural resources. It noted that cross-border criminal production and trade results in 1.3 billion USD yearly that feeds back the lifelines of negative forces;</li> <li>• UN Regional Strategic Framework, launched by the Security Council in March 2016, set transparent regional natural resources management as its first ‘pillar’.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Analysis</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Great Lakes natural resources comprise not only minerals but also wildlife, land, forestry and water resources, all of which play a significant role in the conflicts of the region, as reflected in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)-MONUSCO-OSESG-GL expert report. The UNEP-MONUSCO-OSESG approach maintains that the management of all natural resources has peace and security consequences. For example, the illegal charcoal and gold production and trade in and from eastern DRC has contributed to the continued financing of the illegal armed forces in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Next Steps</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene a regional expert workshop in support of the Regional Strategic Framework implementation (October 2016).</li> <li>• Convene a donor policy coordination meeting (November 2016).</li> <li>• With partners, including ICGLR, convene a High Level Forum on the</li> </ul>



	<p>issue of illegal exploitation of natural resources in 2017.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) for regional programme development and mobilize resources for it.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Messaging</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of parallel approaches and search for solutions can be strengthened by unified structures, coordination and leadership.</li> <li>• Transparent natural resources management will contribute to pacification of the region and transformation of the role of natural resources from the current situation of a key driver of conflict to a driver of inclusive development.</li> <li>• The issue of natural resources is a very complex root cause of conflict, but addressing it effectively will contribute to development and cooperation in the region.</li> </ul>	
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