



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

Natural Resources

Summary of Facts

- 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).
- 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 estimated that cross-border criminal production and trade results in 1.3 billion USD yearly that feeds back the lifelines of negative forces;
- UN Regional Strategic Framework, launched by the Security Council in March 2016, set transparent regional natural resources management as its first 'pillar'.
- On 20 July 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya, Ministers of Defense from countries ICGLR and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) requested the Executive Secretary of the ICGLR and the Special Envoy 'to convene a dedicated meeting on the issue of illegal exploitation of natural resources aimed at undercutting the lifelines of negative forces.' They noted 'the need to identify countries, companies and individuals that trade and benefit from illicit economic activities of the negative forces in the region and to bring sanctions to bear through appropriate mechanisms, in line with the UN sanctions regime. The encouragement to hold a dedicated regional meeting on natural resources management was reiterated at the Seventh High-Level Meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism (ROM) of the PSC Framework on 26 October 2016 in Luanda, Angola.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O/SESG-GL and ICGLR plan to convene for June 2017 an expert meeting to review links between negative forces and illicit production and trade in natural resources, linked also to international criminal networks.
<p>Analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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-O/SESG-GL expert report. The UNEP-MONUSCO-O/SESG-GL 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, estimated worth over half a billion USD per year, has contributed also to the continued financing of the illegal armed forces in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). • International criminal networks fed by the illicit revenues from natural resources, wildlife, timber, charcoal and other activities exert a growing influence in the Great Lakes region.
<p>Next Steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with the implementation of the UN Regional Strategic Framework pillar on natural resources. • Align donors' efforts in addressing and strengthening sustainable and inclusive natural resources management. • Convene with partners, including ICGLR, a High Level Forum on the issue of illegal exploitation of natural resources in 2017. • Work with United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) for regional, cross-border programme development for natural resources management and support resource mobilization for it. • Join forces with the European Union, the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) and ICGLR to extend the RINR to other areas of natural resources, including wildlife, timber and charcoal. • It is important to support increased access to viable economic opportunities for the populations of the conflict affected areas which



	<p>will enhance their resilience and resistance to being drawn into conflict.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable decent job opportunities for women and youth will provide tangible peace dividends to complement on-going efforts to address trauma of conflict and build strong allies in peace and stability maintenance. • O/SESG-GL and ICGLR need the support of all concerned to prepare bankable cross-border projects that will attract investment. This will require resources and a regional and timely approach to the preparation of these projects to ensure investors seize the opportunity provided. • Sponsorship opportunities for the conference will be open four months before the event.
Messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of parallel approaches and search for solutions can be strengthened by unified structures, coordination and leadership. • 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. • 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.

	Drafted by	Distribution
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