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CANADIAN ORGANIZATION LAUNCHES PUBLICATION ON NEW CERTIFICATION SCHEME FOR AFRICAN CONFLICT MINERALS

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Ottawa

A new report that outlines how to develop a regional certification mechanism for tracking high value and conflict prone minerals in Africa's Great Lakes region was launched today by Partnership Africa Canada.

Taming the Resource Curse: Implementing the ICGLR Certification Mechanism for Conflict-prone Minerals analyses the strengths and weaknesses of existing certification mechanisms, especially the Kimberley Process (KP), and applies lessons learned to four minerals-gold, coltan, tungsten and tin-in the context of Africa's Great Lakes region.

The report's findings and recommendations form the basis of the Mineral Tracking and Certification System that is currently in the development stage by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), based in Bujumbura, Burundi. The report is a joint publication of the ICGLR, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and Partnership Africa Canada.

"This report aims to give the ICGLR the head-start it needs to avoid many of the pitfalls and limitations that have come to undermine the efficacy and legitimacy of the Kimberley Process," says Joanne Lebert, Director of PAC's Great Lakes Programme.

The report, authored by Shawn Blore and Ian Smillie, promotes key principles that will make the new certification mechanism stronger than existing regulatory schemes. Key features include the introduction of mandatory, regular, and independent third party audits of all participants in the mineral supply chain and a sophisticated database to track mineral flows, from mine site to export, and beyond.

"The scheme will raise the bar considerably for all participants in the mineral supply chain, particularly those operating in the Democratic Republic of Congo," said lead author Shawn Blore. He also noted that the scheme has been designed to be flexible

and adaptable as certification standards and criminality changes-a key weakness of the Kimberley Process.

The report is available online at: <http://tinyurl.com/67rmhmn>

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Note to Editors:

Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) is a Canadian NGO that undertakes investigative research, advocacy and policy dialogue on issues relating to natural resources, conflict, governance and human rights in Africa.

PAC is internationally recognized for its efforts to halt the trade in conflict diamonds. In 2003 PAC was co-nominated by U.S. House of Representatives and Senate members for the Nobel Peace Prize for its work exposing links between conflict and diamonds in several African countries.

While PAC is best known for the leadership role it played in establishing the Kimberley Process (KP) -a UN mandated system initiated in 2000 to break the link between the trade in rough diamonds and armed conflict-it currently also serves as an adviser to the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and its efforts to create a mineral tracking and certification scheme.

The ICGLR is an inter-governmental organization of the countries in the African Great Lakes Region. Its establishment was based on the recognition that political instability and conflicts in these countries have a considerable regional dimension and thus require a concerted effort in order to promote sustainable peace and development.

The organization is composed of eleven member states: Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.