



ALTERNATIVE CIVIL SOCIETY SUMMIT ON THE ILLEGAL EXPLOITATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

From 11 to 12 November 2010, on the initiative of the Southern Africa Resource Watch (SARW), an Alternative Civil Society Summit on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources in the Great Lakes Region was held in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

More than eighty people representing civil society in the Great Lakes Region took part in this summit.

Participants came from Angola, Burundi, Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, as well as delegates from the DRC. They dealt with important matters, in particular the inventory of Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources in ICGLR countries, illegal mining of minerals in Eastern DRC, the role of civil society in the region, the role of multinational companies, efficiency of ICGLR, illegal exploitation of wood, certification, role of churches in the search for solutions and efforts made by the DRC government to combat illegal exploitation.

After discussions and deliberations, the following statement was made:

1. Illegal exploitation and illicit trade in natural resources are a reality and are gaining strength day by day in the region.

2. Illegal exploitation contributes to instability, conflicts, mining fraud, corruption and poverty, etc.
3. It is accompanied by human rights abuse, in particular atrocities, sexual violence, etc.
4. It deprives States of a large amount of revenue. It is the basis for massive destruction of the environment; it favours arms trafficking and supports armed groups.
5. The protocol on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources has not yet been fully applied.

Many causes have been identified as being the basis for this illegal exploitation.

1. Irresponsibility of States in the region which neglect good governance.
2. Non-respect of legal standards and transparency by multinational companies.
3. Persistence of uncontrolled armed groups in the region.
4. Weakness of administrations in the region;
5. Continuous corruption of State representatives;
6. Poverty in the region.
7. Multinational companies' lack of moral values;
8. Involvement of soldiers and State agents in the exploitation of natural resources.

To solve the problem of illegal exploitation and illicit trade in natural resources in the Great Lakes region, civil society organisations are making the following recommendations:

A. To the Heads of State of the Great Lakes region

1. Effectively hold the special Summit of Heads of State on Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources in December 2010 in Zambia;
2. Revise and standardise the institutional and legislative policies regarding natural resource management.
3. Standardise commercial legislation (tax, customs and statistics);

4. Pool commercial policies by defining common strategies and sharing good practises.
5. Reinforce governance in the sector by the control of prices, traceability, rules of origin and certification;
6. Adhere to and apply existing mechanisms (KPCS, ITIE, DDI, reasonable Diligence) and OECD principles to reinforce the application of the Memorandum of Understanding.
7. Invest in efforts to repress violence against women.

B. To Multinationals

8. Stop the illicit trade in minerals and other natural resources of the countries of the Great Lakes region.
9. Comply with national laws of the region and mechanisms introduced by the International Great Lakes Conference.
10. Stop supporting armed groups which cause atrocities in the region;
11. Comply with voluntary OCDE standards;
12. Provide proof of reasonable diligence;
13. In the mining countries, create transformation plants for minerals and other natural resources

C. To the International Community

14. Set up mechanisms forcing national and multinational companies to comply with principles of transparency in Extractive Industries and to respect national standards of the Great Lakes region.
15. Oblige companies which are working in the Great Lakes region to declare investments, mining areas, taxes paid, income generated by industrial mining in the Great Lakes region and organise an annual inventory system;

16. Support the ICGLR mechanisms on the fight against Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources in the Great Lakes region;
17. Set up a transparency mechanism in the western and emerging countries' banking system. The international community must promote a policy to eradicate tax havens in the region. It must encourage transparency of financial flows;
18. Take all clear measures against multinational companies which do not comply with all transparency initiatives taken.

Civil society in the region shall undertake to:

19. Make the regional civil society Forum operate within the ICGLR;
20. Set up a small Committee to monitor the resolutions adopted at this civil society Summit. In a similar manner, they have decided to implement concerted actions within the framework of a regional network of civil society organisations involved in the natural resources sector;
21. Implement warning and information exchange mechanisms between organisations and civil society to fight against illicit trade in natural resources in the Great Lakes region. The monitoring Committee will make concrete proposals in this regard;
22. Set up a network of organisations of civil society in the region, actively involved in the sector.

Conclusion

Civil society organisations support the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and its initiative in fighting against Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources in the region. They request the Heads of State to effectively hold the special summit in December in Lusaka, Zambia and to avoid another delay.

Civil society draws the attention of the Heads of State to the problem of the illegal trade in wood in the region. It states that this trade does not benefit the States nor the local communities. Similarly, it draws the attention of the Heads of State to the risk of conflict regarding the drilling of oil in the region.

Participants welcome the initiative of the Southern Africa Resource Watch (SARW), in holding this first civil society meeting on the problem of Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources in the Great Lakes region.

Civil society organisations have undertaken to regularly exchange information on the trade in natural resources. They have therefore decided to activate the civil society forum. They have undertaken to meet once a year in order to regularly discuss the exploitation of natural resources in the Great Lakes region.

Kinshasa, Hotel Memling, 12 November 2010

