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**“The adoption of due diligence policies and practices is crucial to end human rights violations in cobalt and copper mines in the provinces of Lualaba and Haut-Katanga”**

African Resources Watch (AFREWATCH), a nongovernmental organisation working for the advancement of human rights, welcomes the IDAK workshop held from 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017 in Kolwezi on the implementation of sustainable policies to end child labour in artisanal mines. However AFREWATCH is deeply concerned about biased discussions that might ignore appropriate strategies by seeking to establish a fragile traceability mechanism.

In January 2016, Amnesty International and AFREWATCH released a joint report titled: ***“This is What We Die For: Human Rights Abuses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Power the Global Trade in Cobalt”*** which strongly recommends that states should “ Legally require companies to conduct human rights due diligence on their mineral supply chains, and report publicly on their due diligence policies and practices in accordance with international standards<sup>1</sup>

The FEC Chamber of mines, taking part at IDAK workshop in Kolwezi, condemns the lack of control in the implementation of legislations which is worsened by the presence of illicit artisanal mines. While referring to the joint report by Amnesty International and AFREWATCH, the Chamber of mines claims that most of its member-companies are not supplied by artisanal miners, rather depend on their own mines.

Therefore it is clearly established that the main objective of the IDAK workshop is not to help mining companies respect human rights in the supply chain rather it consists in *“sustaining their business with regards to cobalt which is the most traded ore of the DRC”*<sup>2</sup>. This is the workshop motivation according to the terms; it seeks to ignore previous efforts by putting in place a fragile traceability mechanism that would concern only a limited number of companies attempting to resolve the issue of child labour in the mines.

Various sources have reported that the IDAK workshop conclusions could be presented at the Cape Town Mining Indaba next February and could focus on recommendations calling for the implementation of a traceability mechanism

However following discussions initiated by AFREWATCH, it appears that NGOs don’t share the same view on this matters and acknowledge the absence of prior consultations through which organisation’s feedbacks could have been collected.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://afrewatch.org/sites/default/files/this\\_what\\_we\\_die\\_for\\_report\\_0.pdf](http://afrewatch.org/sites/default/files/this_what_we_die_for_report_0.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Statement of FEC’s Chamber of Mines at the workshop held in January 25-27, 2017 in Kolwezi

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In this regards, AFREWATCH recalls that the conduct of human rights due diligence in the commercialisation of cobalt and copper ores is far more effective than a simple traceability mechanism. Human rights due diligence will have no negative impact on companies' business or on the economy of the country or on the provinces of Lualaba and Haut-Katanga; however it would increase the credibility of companies and would clear them of human rights violations such as child labour.

Given the above, AFREWATCH recommends that civil society organisations, participating at the IDAK workshop, support:

- the adoption of due diligence policies and practices in the commercialisation of cobalt and copper ores as it is the case for the 3T (Tin, Coltan and Wolframite);
- the creation of new artisanal mining sites that should be accessible and productive, and the formalization of unauthorized mining sites as a means of preventing child labour;
- the implementation of the national plan on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

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**AFREWATCH**

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