

Press release

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**AFREWATCH DEPLORES THE DRC GOVERNMENT'S RESIGNATION AND ABANDONMENT OF
THE NATIONAL INITIATIVE TO ORGANISE THE MINING CONFERENCE IN FAVOR OF DRC
MINING WEEK**

The African Natural Resources Observatory (AFREWATCH), a non-governmental organisation for the promotion and protection of human rights working in the natural resources sector, observes with great astonishment the unprecedented mobilisation of political and administrative officials and public technical services in the mining and related sectors, as well as companies in the State portfolio, to take part each year in "DRC Mining Week", an event organised in Lubumbashi in the Province of Haut Katanga by private South African operators not established in the DRC.

To take part in this event, public funds are used to finance the costs of participation and the organisation of stands, and the funds are immediately exported to South Africa where the organisers are based, to the detriment of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Apart from the online platform and the organisation, Vuka Group contributes nothing else, as all the money is raised locally from private and public companies, ministries (including their technical agencies), public establishments and other institutions based in the DRC.

AFREWATCH points out that in the current context of strong and growing demand for minerals for the energy transition, the DRC must take the reins of its mining destiny by developing its own discussion frameworks based on an enlightened vision. In addition to promoting the mining industry, these frameworks must allow for citizen participation and accountability.

For AFREWATCH, the Mining Conference, which was held three times in 2013, 2014 and 2018 respectively, remains a framework par excellence that strengthens the DRC's sovereignty in the face of the challenges of energy transition and is an important lever for responsible and sustainable mining. To this end, AFREWATCH recommends that the government :

- ❖ Set up a technical committee led by the FEC with the participation of all stakeholders, to evaluate past editions of the Mining Conference and propose improvements;
- ❖ Relaunch the regular holding of the DRC mining conference by a responsible and professional organisation with the support of the FEC and its members,
- ❖ Demand that ministries and public institutions publish the public funds invested each year in DRC Mining Week;
- ❖ Take stock of the implementation of the recommendations of the last DRC mining conference;

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- ❖ Use the same leverage as DRC Mining Week to secure funding for the Mining Conference.

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