Congo Mining Network

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Veteran Executive

Richard Stewart to Succeed Founding CEO at Sibanye-Stillwater

Geopolitics on the Rocks:

The Cost of Tariff Tactics on Global Mineral Markets

DRC Declares 'Red Zone' at M23-Occupied Mines in North and South Kivu

Congo's Mineral Paradox:

An In-Depth Look at a Nation of Abundant Resources and Minimal Prosperity

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FROM 0.7% TO 10%: Malawi's Ambitious Plan to Revitalize Its Mining Sector

Contents

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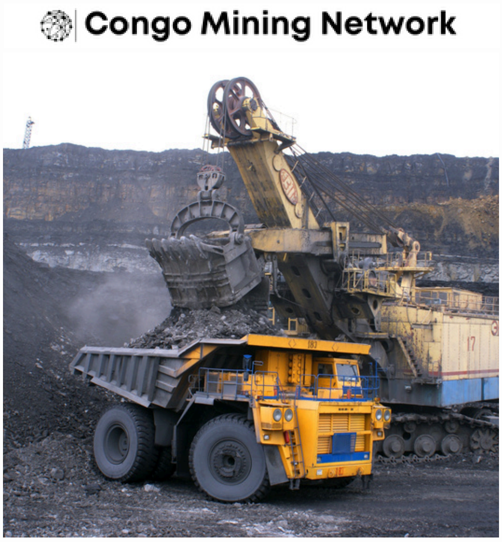

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DR CONGO ENFORCES 10% STATE EQUITY IN MINING

Congo mining cadastre, CAMI, has issued a stark warning to operators

it pointed to a key requirement in the DRC Mining Code: companies must transfer 10% of their share capital to the state. CAMI specifically called out companies like Coopemu and Oracle, accusing them of bypassing this rule using allegedly forged permits from Uganda.

The agency has given these firms 45 days to show compliance, warning of significant legal and administrative penalties for non-compliance.

This move comes as part of a broader push to impose stricter oversight on the DRC mining sector, which, despite its wealth of resources, has been marred by corruption.

CAMI's goal is not just to enforce compliance but to ensure that the mining sector's benefits are spread more widely, helping fuel national development rather than enriching a few players.

foreign companies dominating the sector for years, CAMI's actions signal a shift towards more substantial local involvement.

While critics point to past failures in reform efforts, there's cautious optimism that these new measures,

GEOPOLITICS ON THE ROCKS: THE COST OF TARIFF TACTICS ON GLOBAL MINERAL MARKETS

President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy .Saul Loeb / AFP - Getty Images

The recent wave of tariff hikes and retaliatory trade measures is not simply a bureaucratic tussle over numbers—it is a fundamental misstep that will, in our view, reshape and ultimately damage the global mineral markets.

the current U.S. administration's decision to impose a 25% tariff on imports from Canada and Mexico, coupled with a 10% levy on Chinese goods, may be the most counterproductive trade policy in decades.

The justification for these tariffs—protecting domestic manufacturing, curbing illegal migration, and tackling drug trafficking—might sound compelling in political speeches.

.the economic reality is starkly different. Data from December shows the U.S. trade deficit surged to $98.4 billion as companies scrambled to import goods ahead of the tariffs, highlighting the market's clear anxiety.

Rather than fostering domestic competitiveness, these measures are precipitating supply chain dislocations and driving up costs. When businesses are forced to pay these surcharges, the burden invariably falls on the downstream industries that rely on critical raw materials. This approach, frankly, is short-sighted and economically self-defeating.

Disruptions in the Mineral Supply Chain

There is no denying that the mining industry has long benefited from the predictability of global supply chains. Today, however, we see a restructuring of trade flows that threatens that stability. U.S. metal buyers are being forced to pivot away from traditional suppliers—primarily Canada and Mexico—toward riskier, more expensive alternatives from the Middle East or South America. Canadian aluminum, for instance, has historically provided over half of U.S. supply at competitive rates. With tariffs inflating U.S. premiums by as much as 50 cents per pound, domestic manufacturers are now confronting a steep price increase that could ripple through to consumer prices and, ultimately, economic growth.

The situation is even more critical for rare earth elements. China, which currently supplies about 74% of U.S. rare earth imports, now wields its export restrictions as a political tool.

Any further curbs by Beijing could send shockwaves through high-tech, defense, and clean energy sectors. In our view, the U.S. must urgently diversify its supplier base rather than exacerbate its dependency on a single country with a monopoly on strategic materials.

A Heavy Cost for Downstream Industries

Beyond the immediate impact on the mining sector, these tariffs have a far-reaching economic toll.
Recent warnings from industry leaders such as Anglo American's Duncan Wanblad are a clarion call that increased production costs will persist for years.
Estimates suggest that a 25% tariff on key inputs could cost the sector hundreds of millions per quarter.
Moreover, as production expenses climb, the competitive edge of U.S. manufacturers in global markets will erode, leading to slower economic growth and reduced profitability across multiple industries.

The current policy, steeped in protectionist rhetoric, is emblematic of a broader failure to appreciate the intricacies of global supply chains.
Rather than imposing blanket tariffs, we need a measured, strategic approach—one that supports domestic industries through innovation and targeted investment rather than punitive tariffs.

U.S. companies are already exploring alternative sources in Chile and the Middle East, but this diversification is not a panacea. In sectors where China holds a near-monopoly such as gallium, germanium, and antimony alternative supplies are limited and costly to develop.

In the long run, this approach risks setting off a cascade of retaliatory measures. If the U.S. escalates tariffs, its trading partners will be forced to respond, creating a tit-for-tat cycle that not only disrupts the mineral markets but also undermines the very foundation of international trade.

History has shown that protectionist policies rarely deliver on their promises of national renewal—they tend instead to fragment markets and stifle growth.
the current tariff strategy is an economic miscalculation that prioritizes short-term political gain over

long-term industrial strength. The disruption to global mineral supply chains is likely to be profound, affecting everything from steel production to semiconductor manufacturing. For the U.S. to regain

its footing, it must adopt a policy that embraces global trade's complexity rather than resorting to blunt instruments. It is time to move beyond the outdated notion that tariffs can magically resolve trade imbalances. Instead, a balanced, forward-looking approach is needed one that protects national security while preserving the integrity of global supply chains and fostering sustainable economic growth.

The stakes are high, and the consequences of further missteps will be felt across the entire mining and manufacturing landscape for years to come.

DRC DECLARES 'RED ZONE' AT M23-OCCUPIED MINES IN NORTH AND SOUTH KIVU

The Congolese government has declared several mining sites in North and South Kivu "Red Zones" amid escalating conflict with the M23 rebel group. This bold decree, signed on February 14, 2025, by Minister Kizito Pakabomba Kapinga Mulume, is a clear signal that the state is prepared to take strong measures to counter illegal mineral extraction, which has long provided the rebels with critical financing
.

Under the new directive, sites including D3 Bibatama, D2 Mataba, and D4 Gakombe, among others, will undergo independent audits over the next six months. These audits, to be conducted by both the Ministry of Mines and international bodies, are intended to verify compliance with Congolese law and international standards such as those set by the OECD and the Regional Certification Mechanism of the CIRGL

This measure, while ostensibly aimed at curbing the financing of M23 through the illegal extraction of coltan and cassiterite, underscores a broader struggle for control over one of the world's most volatile yet lucrative sectors.

The M23 rebels have exploited these mineral riches to sustain their armed campaign, often operating under falsified permits and with support that includes logistical backing from neighboring states, as highlighted in a recent United Nations report dated December 27, 2024 (UN).

By designating these sites as "Red Zones," the government not only seeks to halt illegal operations but also to protect vital ecosystems—such as the Télé River, which is crucial for local fishing communities—from irreversible environmental damage. Such environmental degradation, compounded by deforestation and pollution from heavy machinery, has already caused significant hardship for residents in Tshopo and adjacent Bas-Uélé provinces.

this decree is both a necessary intervention and a litmus test for the Congolese government's commitment to reform a sector long beset by corruption and poor governance

and accountability in the management of the country's mineral wealth, a critical step given that illicit mining activities have historically siphoned billions of dollars away from state coffers and undermined legal operators.

The independent audits signal a shift towards greater transparency However, the success of

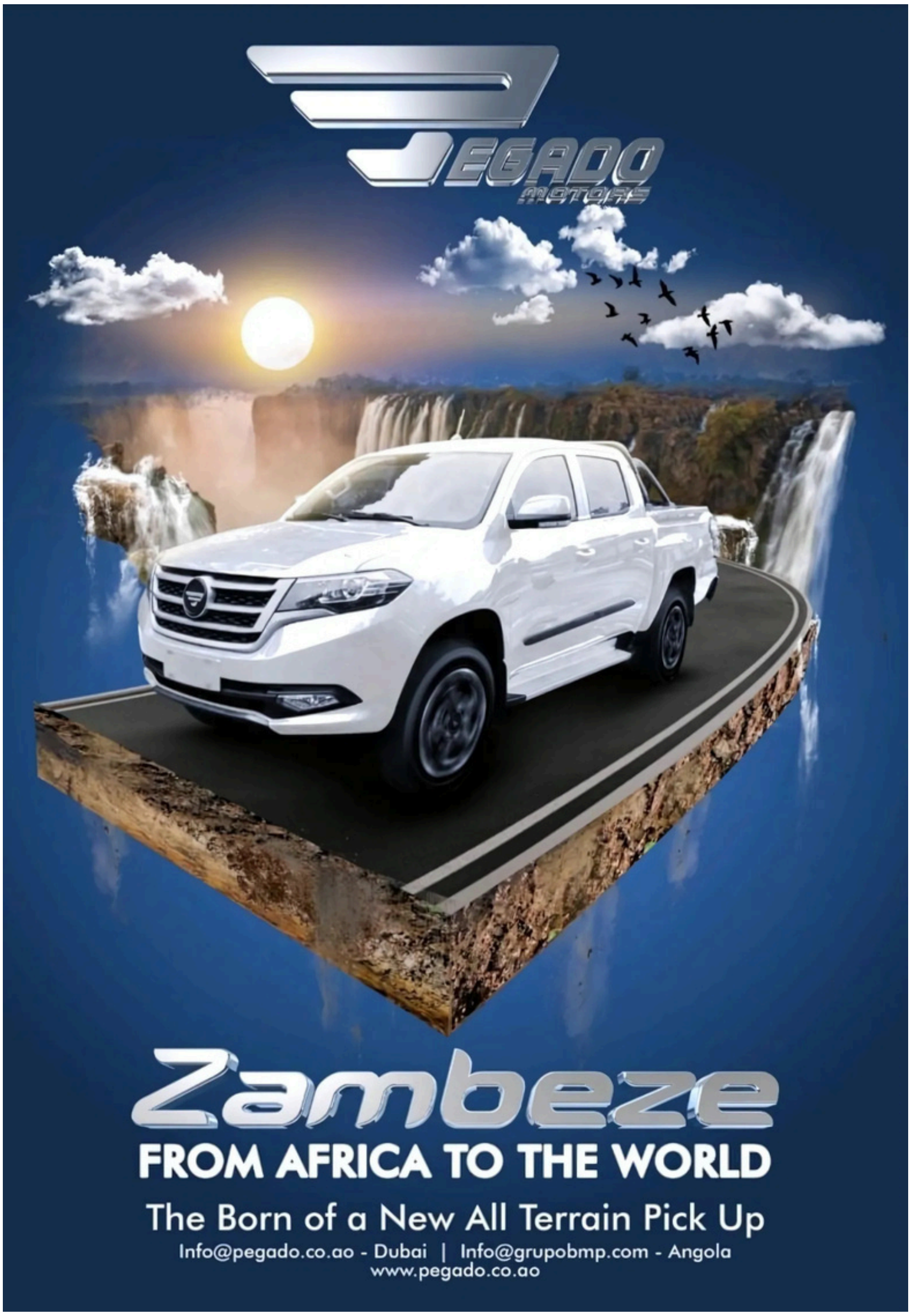
this initiative will depend heavily on the government's ability to enforce its rulings amid persistent challenges, including entrenched graft and the pervasive influence of armed groups in mineral-rich regions.
In effect, the decree is a double-edged sword—it may provide the impetus for reform if rigorously implemented, yet it also risks further destabilization if it incites retaliation from groups whose revenues hinge on these illegal practices

DRC Minister of Mines -Mr Kizito Pakabomba

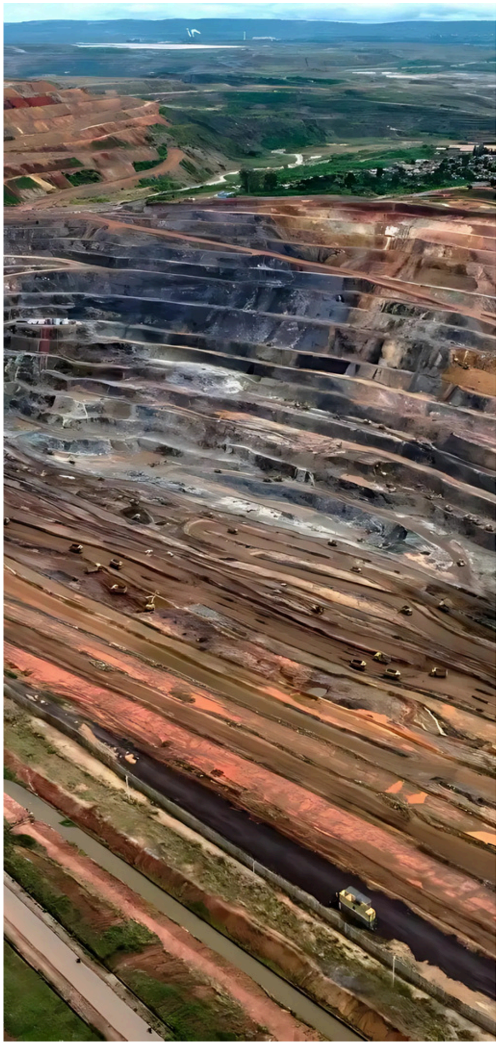
Critically, the state's push for compliance through legal and administrative sanctions emphasized by Mbindule's declaration that "no entity, foreign or domestic, is above Congolese law" is a welcome departure from previous, more lenient stances that allowed unlawful practices to flourish.

Yet, skepticism remains among industry observers, given past reform efforts that have faltered amid bureaucratic inertia.

The challenge now is not merely to impose a temporary freeze on illegal mining but to establish enduring systems that channel mining revenues into sustainable community development and environmental restoration. In this light, the decree can be seen as part of a broader strategy to recalibrate the sector, encouraging local participation and reducing dependence on foreign operators who have long dominated the mining landscape in the DRC



Ultimately, this initiative reflects the inherent tension in a country endowed with vast mineral wealth yet plagued by persistent instability and poverty. If the government can leverage this crackdown to foster lasting reform—by enhancing oversight, strengthening legal frameworks, and ensuring that mineral wealth translates into broad-based prosperity—it could mark a turning point for the DRC's mining sector. However, the stakes are high: without robust implementation and genuine political will, the "Red Zone" decree risks becoming another short-lived effort in a long line of unfulfilled promises, leaving the region's natural riches to continue fueling conflict and environmental degradation



Picture taken from the Daily Maverick

FROM 0.7% TO 10%: MALAWI'S AMBITIOUS PLAN TO REVITALIZE ITS MINING SECTOR

iMalawi is moving decisively to harness more value from its mining sector amid growing concerns over lost revenue.
The government, which currently sees mining contribute only 0.7% to GDP and 3.5% to national revenue, a figure that experts believe could triple given the nation's untapped reserves of uranium, graphite, and rare earth elements—is taking steps to rein in exports

Earlier this month, officials announced a suspension on the export of certain Tminerals, initially a blanket measure later refined to target precious stones.
his policy shift comes on the heels of international recommendations urging reforms to improve export oversight and boost revenue streams.
Analysts note that accredited testing facilities, long a missing piece in Malawi's mining infrastructure, are critical to ensuring that the nation's mineral wealth is fairly valued on the global market. With prospects of restarting uranium mining in the latter part of 2024 and increased production of other critical minerals, officials project that cumulative export revenues could approach $30 billion by 2040.

Professor Leornard Kalindekafe
Chief Executive Officer of the Malawi Mining Investment Company (MAMICO)

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U.S. FUNDS ENTREPRISE GÉNÉRALE DE COBALT'S $2M PLAN TO TACKLE ARTISANAL MINING CHALLENGES IN CONGO - MEDIUM TITLE

Eric Kalala - Chief Executive Officer - Entreprise Générale de Cobalt

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has committed $2 million to a project aimed at professionalizing the artisanal copper-cobalt supply chain in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Announced on January 14, the initiative is led by Entreprise Générale de Cobalt (EGC), a subsidiary of the state-owned mining company Gécamines, under the leadership of CEO Éric Kalala.

According to USAID, the funding will bolster EGC's capacity to oversee artisanal mining operations responsibly.

The ultimate goal is to ensure that Congolese artisanal cobalt adheres to global expectations for ethical sourcing, a pressing issue for an industry often criticized for poor labor practices and environmental concerns.

The project's pilot phase involves five artisanal mining sites, with cooperatives set to manage operations under strict specifications designed to promote responsible mining. EGC plans to purchase all production from these sites and sell it internationally, with full traceability to satisfy market demands

Feasibility studies will precede the selection of cooperatives, ensuring compliance with ethical and operational benchmarks.

If successful, this model could expand to artisanal mining operations across the country.

Kalala has been active in securing support for this initiative, meeting with international stakeholders, including the European Commission, to drum up additional funding. He also facilitated a partnership with Cobalt for Development (C4D), a project spearheaded by the German development agency GIZ, aimed at improving sustainability in the cobalt supply chain.

Despite these efforts, the broader landscape presents challenges. The U.S. Department of Labor recently included Congolese cobalt on its list of goods associated with child labor. While this classification specifically targets artisanal mining, which accounts for approximately 20% of the DRC's cobalt output, it adds pressure to an already scrutinized sector.

Congolese officials and industry leaders have criticized the decision, arguing that it paints the entire industry in an unfavorable light and undermines decades of U.S. support for mining in the region.

The project's success will depend on addressing systemic issues that have long plagued artisanal mining in the DRC, including unsafe working conditions, limited regulatory oversight, and governance challenges. While USAID's funding and EGC's leadership are significant steps forward, questions remain about whether the financial commitment is sufficient to create meaningful, lasting change. Critics point to the DRC's structural obstacles, such as inadequate infrastructure and inconsistent enforcement of mining laws, which could hinder the project's progress.

artisanal mine workers - D.R Congo

The DRC remains the world's largest source of cobalt, a critical mineral used in electric vehicle batteries and other high-tech applications. As global demand for cobalt continues to rise, pressure mounts on mining companies and governments to ensure that supply chains are both ethical and sustainable. EGC's initiative represents an ambitious attempt to address these concerns, but its long-term success will require sustained collaboration among international donors, local communities, and Congolese authorities.

VETERAN EXECUTIVE RICHARD STEWART TO SUCCEED FOUNDING CEO AT SIBANYE-STILLWATER

Richard Stewart, currently the chief regional officer for Southern African operations at Sibanye-Stillwater, has been named CEO-designate, effective March 1. The company confirmed earlier reports that its founding CEO, Neal Froneman, who has helmed the firm for 13 years, will retire later this year.

Richard Stewart

Froneman, aged 65, is expected to step down in September, leaving Stewart to assume additional responsibilities while continuing in his existing role. The board, which evaluated candidates both from within and outside the organization, selected Stewart as the clear choice to lead the company forward.

Stewart's tenure at Sibanye-Stillwater began in 2014, where he was instrumental in shaping and implementing the group's strategy. His role as executive vice president of business development contributed to the firm's venture into platinum group metals, a move that reshaped the company's market positioning.

His appointment comes at a time when Sibanye-Stillwater, which has weathered significant market challenges in recent years, is looking to maintain its competitive edge despite volatile PGM prices and evolving industry dynamics.

In his new capacity, Stewart is expected to replicate the operational turnaround seen at Kiniero under Froneman's leadership, a period during which resource estimates at the mine expanded from 1.5 million to 3.5 million ounces.

Froneman's career, which includes notable tenures at JCI, Gold Fields, and Harmony Gold, has been characterized by a pragmatic approach that has served him well in South Africa's demanding mining environment.

His early efforts at Sibanye-Stillwater, then known as Sibanye Gold, laid the groundwork for a series of strategic moves—from cost-cutting measures and margin improvements to an aggressive acquisition strategy that has reshaped the company's asset base. His leadership helped drive key transactions, including the acquisition of the Rustenburg operations from Anglo American Platinum and the critical turnaround of Lonmin during a period of financial distress.

Sibanye-Stillwater CEO Neal Froneman. Picture: FREDDY MAVUNDA

MATTHEW SHARPLES RETURNS TO GUINEA AS NEW CEO OF ASARA RESOURCES

After a successful period at Guinea's Kiniero gold mine, Matthew Sharples has returned to the region with renewed focus. In a move that reflects his longstanding interest in Guinean gold, Sharples has been named CEO of Asara Resources, a junior mining firm advancing the Kada gold project.

His appointment comes after a memorable chapter in 2019 when his company, Sycamore Mining, took control of the Kiniero mine—a venture that, despite its eventual sale, left an indelible mark on his career and deepened his connection with Guinea's mining landscape.

During his tenure at Kiniero, Sharples managed to boost the mine's resource estimates from 1.5 to 3.5 million ounces, a performance that established him as a respected figure in the mining industry. Now at Asara Resources, he is charged with moving the Kada project forward, starting with a thorough feasibility study and additional exploration work.

Current estimates for Kada stand at 923,000 ounces, with industry analysts expecting that further exploration could reveal higher-grade zones and extend the mine's productive life

With over twenty years of experience, Sharples brings a wealth of industry knowledge to his new role. His background in mining management, including his leadership at Sycamore Mining between 2019 and 2022, has given him a practical understanding of both operational challenges and opportunities in West Africa.

At Kada, he faces the task of translating his past successes into a framework that can capture the untapped potential of this new asset.

This dual role as both executive and investor aligns his personal interests with the company's fortunes, a trend increasingly observed among mining professionals who aim to directly benefit from the projects they lead.

Guinea has recently emerged as a focal point for international investment, with major players like Zijin Mining, Montage Gold, and Perseus Mining showing growing interest in the country's mineral wealth.

The Kada project now finds itself at the intersection of fresh investment and renewed exploration efforts. Industry observers have noted that projects like Kada will be closely watched as potential indicators of Guinea's capacity to evolve its mining practices and capture greater value from its resources.

Asara Resources Limited linkedin

CONGO'S MINERAL PARADOX: AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT A NATION OF ABUNDANT RESOURCES AND MINIMAL PROSPERITY

DR Congo stands as a world titan of mineral wealth. It commands roughly 70 percent of global cobalt production, holds a third of the world's coltan reserves, and possesses significant deposits of copper and diamonds.

Yet, while international markets feast on these raw materials—valued at an estimated $24 trillion—the Congolese economy remains stunted. GDP per capita hovered at a paltry US$923 in 2019, and nearly 60 percent of the population lives on less than $2.15 a day.

This stark disconnect illustrates a contract the country has been forced into: being a major mineral exporter without the corresponding domestic economic benefits.

The phenomenon, often labeled the "resource curse," is not new. Historical evidence from the 1970s shows that while nearly 70 percent of export revenues once derived from minerals, the wealth never translated into broad-based development. Today, despite mining contributing over a quarter of GDP, the revenues are largely captured by a narrow elite or siphoned off through corruption.

A World Bank report has repeatedly highlighted that weak governance and the absence of transparent fiscal institutions have prevented resource rents from being reinvested in critical sectors such as infrastructure, education, and healthcare. As a result, large-scale mining operations flourish under contracts with multinational corporations while the domestic economy remains underdeveloped.

Global commodity markets further compound the problem. The Congolese economy is highly sensitive to price fluctuations in metals. For example, an 18.2 percent growth in the mining sector in 2023 drove overall GDP growth to 8.4 percent—but these gains were unevenly distributed.
When cobalt prices fall or when global demand shifts, DR Congo's export revenues plunge, leaving little room for long-term planning or sustainable investment. The volatility of these markets means that the nation's fortunes can change overnight, yet the state's capacity to cushion the blow is limited by chronic fiscal weaknesses and infrastructure deficits.

The situation is compounded by a legacy of conflict and mismanagement. Despite efforts like the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative

corruption remains endemic. Official reports suggest that the government's domestic revenue mobilization ratio is below 12 percent of GDP—significantly lower than sub-Saharan averages.

This means that even when mineral wealth is generated, only a fraction is reinvested into the economy. Instead, funds meant for development are often lost to rent-seeking and bureaucratic inefficiency.

For DR Congo to break this cycle, it must embark on comprehensive reforms. First, strengthening governance and ensuring transparency in mining contracts are critical.
Revenues from the mineral sector should be earmarked for investments in infrastructure and human capital, creating the foundations for a diversified economy.

Second, economic diversification is essential. Overreliance on mineral exports exposes the country to external shocks; boosting agriculture, manufacturing, and services can create more resilient job opportunities and foster sustainable growth.

Third, establishing stable and predictable fiscal policies can help manage commodity price volatility—hedging mechanisms and forward contracts may mitigate short-term shocks, but long-term prosperity depends on a well-regulated domestic market.

The mineral paradox of DR Congo is a cautionary tale for resource-rich nations worldwide.

The country's plight is not due to the mere presence of natural wealth but rather to a failure in converting that wealth into tangible benefits for its people.

Without structural reforms that address corruption, diversify the economy, and invest in sustainable development, DR Congo risks remaining a "resource-rich, growth-poor" nation—an enduring testament to the dark side of the resource curse.


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