

Understanding the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)

More than a Conference platform?

By Volker Hauck*

This background paper is part of a series on the Political Economy Dynamics of Regional Organisations (PEDRO). It was prepared in March 2017. In line with ECDPM's mission to inform and facilitate EU-Africa policy dialogue, and financed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, BMZ, the studies analyse key policy areas of seventeen regional organisations in Sub-Saharan Africa. In doing so they address three broad questions: What is the political traction of the organisations around different policy areas? What are the key member state interests in the regional agenda? What are the areas with most future traction for regional organisations to promote cooperation and integration around specific areas? The studies aim to advance thinking on how regional policies play out in practice, and ways to promote politically feasible and adaptive approaches to regional cooperation and integration. Further information can be found at www.ecdpm.org/pedro.

* Author contact: Volker Hauck (vh@ecdpm.org). Project team leader: Bruce Byiers (bby@ecdpm.org).

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List of Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
APCLS	Alliance des Patriotes pour un Congo Libre et Souverain
ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
ASM	Artisanal and Small Mining
AU	African Union
BGR	German Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources
CAR	Central African Republic
CBLT	Lake Chad Basin Commission
CEMAC	Central African Economic and Monetary Community
CEN-SAD	The Community of Sahel-Saharan States
CEPGL	Communauté des Pays de Grands Lacs
CICOS	Commission Internationale du Bassin Congo-Oubangui-Sangha
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COMIFAC	Central African Forest Commission
CSCE	Conference on Security & Cooperation in Europe
CSF	Research Programmes on Children and Security
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
EASF	East African Standby Force
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECGLR	Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
EJVM	Extended Joint Verification Mechanism
ES	Executive Secretary
EU	European Union
FDLR	Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda
FNL	Forces Nationales de Liberation
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GLR	Great Lakes Region
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
JIFC	Joint Information Fusion Centre
LMRC	Levy Mwanawasa Regional Centre for Democracy, Good Governance, Human Rights and Civic Education
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MLC	Movement for the Liberation of the Congo
MONUSCO	United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DR Congo
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NBI	Nile Basin Initiative
NDC	Nduma Defense of Congo
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PEDRO	Political economy dynamics of regional organisations in Africa
PT	Political traction
RCD	Congolese Rally for Democracy
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RIMC	Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee
RINR	Regional Initiative on the Fight Against the Illegal Exploitations of Natural Resources

SA	South Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
UN	United Nations
UN-SC	United Nations Security Council
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States for International Development

1. Introduction and broad context

The International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) is a regional organisation stretching over Central, Eastern and Southern Africa with twelve diverse member states, several of which are characterised by war, conflict, mistrust and mutual tensions about resources and border lines. But among its membership ICGLR also counts states which are rather stable and secure and on a path towards further development and prosperity. Though a new organisation, established in the early 2000s, the ICGLR operates in a region with a long history of cross-border and internal conflicts which can be traced back to the pre-colonial history of the region, strongly reinforced through the decisions made during the Africa Conference in Berlin, 1885¹.

At the root of the foundation of the ICGLR lie the conflicts in eastern DRC and its neighbouring countries in the post-cold war 1990s with hundreds of thousands of deaths. First, there were the consequences of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda of almost one million persons dead while another two million were pushed to leave the country by the Government and its army and militia who executed the genocide. The presence of thousands of Rwandese refugees as well as armed soldiers and militias mainly in the DRC was a threat to the regional security, requiring a regional solution.

Second, there was a need for an agreement to end the political crisis and the war in the DRC where many countries were involved in what some observers called “the first African World War” in 1998. Indeed, at the end of the 1990s, DRC was divided into three zones, one (West) under Kinshasa government control supported by Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia; the second (East) by a rebel movement (Congolese Rally for Democracy - RCD), supported by Rwanda (and somehow by Burundi); and third (North) by another rebel movement, the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC) supported by Uganda.

This set in motion a series of active diplomatic exchanges between the countries mentioned, other countries in the region and African regional organisations as well as exchanges between the region, the UN and many non-African governments with past and present stakes in this region. These dynamics led to the creation of the ICGLR in response to a call from the United Nations Security Council. This report analyses the political economy surrounding the creation of the ICGLR and how it has developed over the years.

This report addresses the following three questions: i) what is the political traction of the ICGLR and in driving or steering the regional peace and security agenda; ii) what are the interests of member states in using ICGLR to address regional security challenges; and iii) which are the specific areas or sub-sectors with most potential for ICGLR to focus in continuing to address peace and security challenges at a regional level. This report is based on field interviews, phone interviews and desk-based work.

¹ Stig Förster, Wolfgang Justin Mommsen, Ronald Edward Robinson. 1988. Bismarck, Europe and Africa: The Berlin Africa Conference 1884-1885 and the Onset of Partition. Oxford University Press [for] German Historical Institute.

2. On assessing the political traction (PT) of regional organisations

2.1. Structural and institutional drivers and obstacles

The foundations of the ICGLR

The circumstances around the establishment of ICGLR and its agenda mainly reflect the search for agreements among countries regionally as well as internationally to address the consequences of violent conflicts, political crises and interference in internal affairs which characterised the Region in the 1990s. Conflict in and around Eastern DRC, including grave human rights violations and gender based violence, was the main trigger though the illegal exploitation and trade of precious minerals and bad governance have fuelled these conflicts substantially as of the 1990s and so also underpinned ICGLR activities.

A ceasefire agreement was signed in July 1999 in Lusaka², Zambia, by Angola, DR Congo (Government), Namibia, Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Uganda as well as two main DRC rebel movements (RCD and MLC) to put an end to the war in the DRC. In search for a solution to the problems at hand, the then UN Secretary General (UNSG) Kofi Annan, posed the question to the regional leaders whether the region could solve the problems by itself. The idea to establish a sort of permanent conference was launched by the UNSG and supported by the AU and regional leaders, following the example of the *Conference on Security & Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)* which started as of 1975 in Helsinki and which developed into the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

The two main actors influencing the establishment of an international conference on the Great Lakes Region in 2000 were therefore the UN and the OAU (Organisation of the African Unity, predecessor of the African Union), two organisations whose mandate covers peace and security issues. The main legalising role was played by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as the guarantor of international security, in partnership with the UNSG: the UNSC adopted resolutions 1291 and 1304 respectively in February and June 2000 calling for holding, if conditions were appropriate, an international conference on peace, security, democracy and development in the Great Lakes Region under the auspices of the UN and the OAU. It took two years before an effective process of consultation and dialogue among countries took place in 2003. Between 2000 and 2003, the UN conducted diplomatic advocacy to define the format and to agree on the countries to take part in the conference.

Though triggered externally, several countries played a key role in setting the agenda: key member states associated to discussions at that time were Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania and the DRC. But when the preparatory process was on its way, the principal question raised was who could call the conference. The five principal countries did not feel empowered and strong enough to do this by themselves and (because of a history of conflict and mistrust between several of these core countries) looked to neighbouring countries to join the process. Consequently Zambia, Kenya, Botswana, Namibia and Mozambique were ready to assist.³ Following intense discussions in search of a logic for membership to the Conference, it was agreed that all countries bordering the DRC, and therefore the immediate neighbours potentially affected by whatever happened within the DRC, should be involved. Kenya was an exception because other ICGLR countries considered it as a neutral player in the region, because of its

² http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/collections/peace_agreements/drc_07101999.pdf.

³ We could not trace why these countries, in particular, were ready to assist.

harbour facilities and hence its economic and logistical relevance for this region.⁴

Finally, 11 countries (DRC, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Angola, Congo Brazzaville, Sudan, CAR and Zambia) organised consultations at the national and regional levels, which culminated in the First Heads of State Summit in Dar es Salaam on 19–20 November 2004. They then adopted the *Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region* (known as Dar es Salaam Declaration).⁵ Stakeholders required two more years for dialogue and for the development of Protocols and Programmes of action before a 2nd Summit of Heads of State was held in Nairobi on 15 December 2006 to adopt the *Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region*.⁶

ICGLR was created as a regional organisation (see box 1) the same day but the location of the Secretariat had already been discussed in 2005/6. Burundi was selected for one principal reason: the country experienced a promising peace process leading to a peace agreement in 2005. The decision to place the Secretariat in Burundi was an act of giving confidence to this peace process. A group of donors, known as the “Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region”, supported the dialogue and negotiations, including the Facilitation Secretariat of the UN and OAU-AU based in Nairobi and chaired by the UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region.

Box 1: Is the ICGLR an African Regional Organisation?

The first Executive Secretary of the ICGLR, Mrs Liberata Mulamula (2006-2011) tried to establish the ICGLR as an African Regional Organisation recognised by the AU but the decision was already made at that time that no more RECs and Regional Mechanisms should be created. The ICGLR was allowed to join the AU as an observer, supported by a MoU between the both organisations, but not as a decision making body. One interviewee noted that “the ICGLR was created as a conference facility to address the conflicts in the East of the DRC, in particular, but it has outgrown and developed into an organisation which, de facto, behaves like a Regional Mechanism – a function which it could not really fulfil so far.”

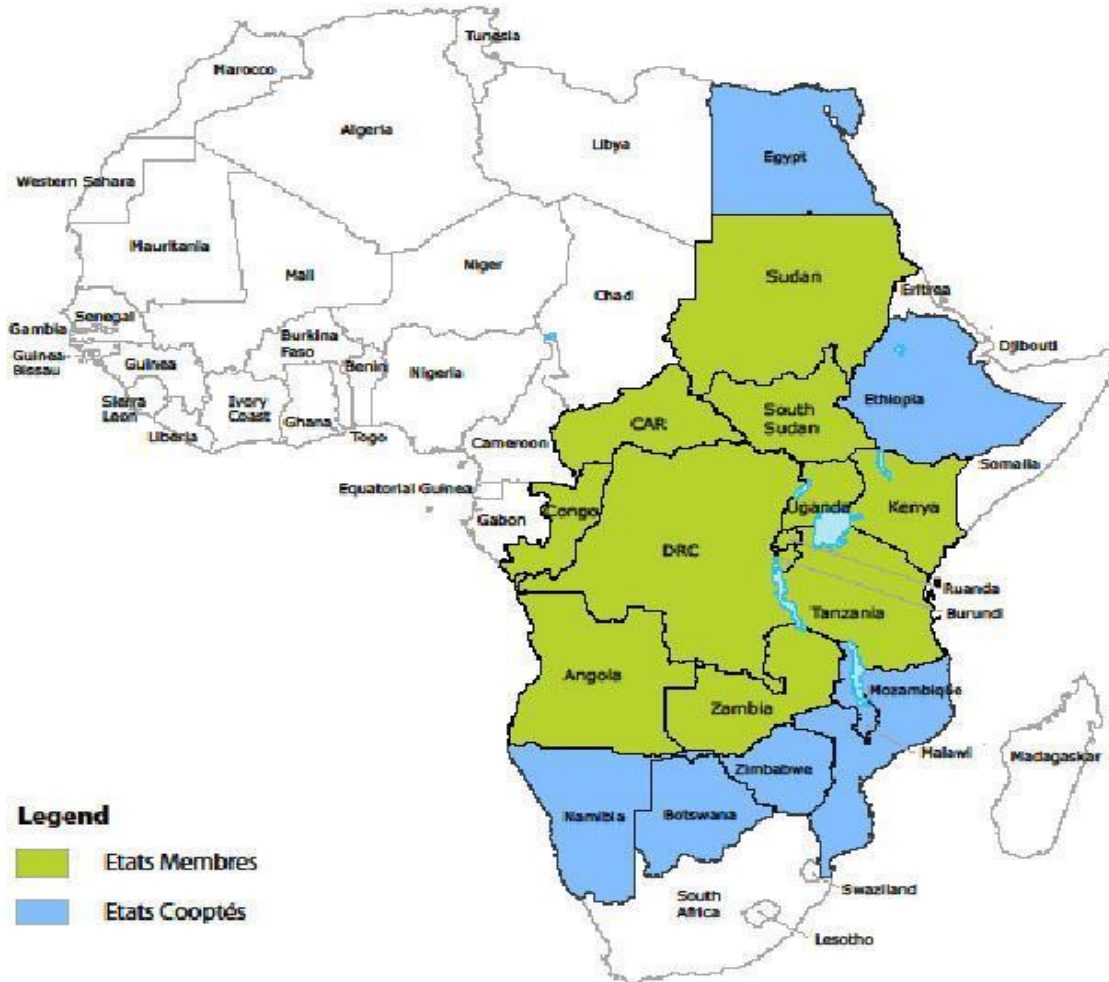
The original 11 countries grew to 12 countries with the split of Sudan into South-Sudan and Sudan in 2011. As a complementary measure, to keep ties with the countries having shown an interest to be associated with the ICGLR, the statute of “co-opted members” was introduced. These are the following six countries: Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mali, Mozambique and Ethiopia, leading to near full coverage of East, Southern and Central African states (see map, below).

⁴ See Sezibera, Richard (2008) "International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (IC/GLR): Inception, Process and Achievements," *Journal of African Conflicts and Peace Studies*, pp 18-19.

⁵ <http://www.icglr-lmrc.org/index.php/icglr-pact-protocols>.

⁶ <http://www.icglr-lmrc.org/index.php/icglr-pact-protocols>.

Map 1: ICGLR member states and co-opted members



*Les frontières et les noms indiqués sur cette carte ne représentent pas la position officielle de la CIRGL.

Source: www.icglr.org

Today's relevance of the foundational factors

The continuing presence of foreign armed groups in Eastern DRC, namely the members of the former Rwandan army and extremist militias (called Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda - FDLR⁷ since 2000) underline the importance of the role ICGLR still has to play. Even if their number has reduced during the last 10 years, they are still a threat to the Congolese population in the South Kivu and North Kivu provinces as well as to the building of trust between DRC and Rwanda.

The same goes for the multitude of smaller conflicts, fuelled by the exploitation of precious minerals, taking place in the same region. Around 70 armed groups have been identified in the entire DRC, from which the principal are, in addition to the FDLR, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF; a Uganda oriented movement), the Forces Nationales de Libération (FNL; a Burundian movement), the Alliance des Patriotes pour un Congo Libre et Souverain (APCLS), the Bakata Katanga, the Nduma Defense of Congo

⁷ For an overview on FDLR, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Forces_for_the_Liberation_of_Rwanda.

(NDC), the Mai-Mai Yakutumba, the Mai-Mai Nyatura faction and the Raia Mutomboki faction. These groups are particularly active in the resource-rich regions of the North and South Kivu, Katanga Province and Ituri (Oriental Province).⁸ The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), active in South Sudan, CAR and DRC, is another (old) security threat in the domain of the ICGLR. As such, the conflicts that ICGLR was formed to address still remain, in particular the unsolved question of the FDLR, "the big elephant in the room" according to one interviewee. The issue concerns the DRC, but also its neighbours Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. No other regional organisation, neither the EAC nor ECCAS, has a broad enough membership to bring these countries together under one regional umbrella.

The role and mandate of ICGLR has not changed over the last 10 years. The principal character of the organisation, as conceived during its inception, has remained but the intensity of its engagement on topical issues, as defined in the Pact of 2006 (see next section) has changed over time. The ICGLR continued to function as a framework and platform for dialogue and (diplomatic) exchange between ICGLR MS. This function was most prominently reconfirmed in the period 2012/2013 in relation to the M23 crisis, which created a momentum of intense diplomatic and military activity in the ICGLR region to which the UN and the SADC contributed to (see box 2).

Box 2: M23 crisis

The focus on peace and security issues was increased in 2012 when ICGLR became the place to handle the crisis between DRC and two neighbours, Rwanda and Uganda. DRC accused Rwanda of supporting a new rebel movement, the M23,⁹ in 2012. Indeed, between 2012 and 2013, under the Ugandan ICGLR Presidency, ICGLR held seven special Summits of Heads of State in Kampala (the team charged with this issue principally worked out of Kampala while the ICGLR provided for the overall institutional framing within which these negotiations took place). It was decided to create two more structures in charge of security, namely the Extended Joint Verification Mechanism (EJVM) and the Joint Information Fusion Centre (JIFC) both based in Goma, DRC. The EJVM has a mandate to verify the respecting of borders between DRC and Rwanda and between DRC and Uganda and reports to the Chair of the Committee of Ministers of Defence. In 2014, it was decided to extend its mandate to other countries if there is a claim related to interference in internal affairs. The JIFC is composed by representatives of Intelligence Services of Member States and has a mandate to share information on negative forces and armed groups mainly in Eastern DRC.

As we discuss in more detail below, the intensity of its engagement on topical issues such as natural resources, civil society or women, gender and peacebuilding has also varied over time. Donor engagement on these topics, in particular with regard to natural resources, played a determining role for addressing these issues. Global developments supported this, such as the 2007 and 2009 G8 Summits in Germany and Italy, as well as the passing of the 2010 Dodd Frank Act regulating the import of so-called conflict minerals into the USA.¹⁰ Another factor pressing the ICGLR member states for change were critical reports of the UN calling on the Governments of the DRC and its neighbours to bring an end to the illegal exploitation of precious natural resources and cross-border trade, including through a normalization of trade relations within the framework of existing regional organisations.¹¹

⁸ <http://congoreserchgroup.org/>.

⁹ For an overview on M23, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March_23_Movement.

¹⁰ The "Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act" is a massive piece of financial reform legislation passed by the Obama administration in 2010 as a response to the financial crisis of 2008.

¹¹ Report of the Security Council mission to the African Union; Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and Liberia. (<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Liberia%20S%202009%20303.pdf>) and various UN resolutions and guidelines <https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/1533/due-diligence-guidelines>.

2.2. Expanding agenda and its implementation

The 10 Protocols

As the above points suggest, the agenda of the ICGLR is very wide, covering all sectors of society. The above mentioned *Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region* signed in 2006 identified 4 priority areas in which the member states decided to address the root causes of conflicts. The Pact stipulates “the implementation of the Protocols and the programmes of action selected in the priority areas of peace and security, democracy and good governance, economic development and regional integration, and humanitarian, social and environmental issues.”¹² As part of this Pact, 10 Protocols were formulated to give more body to the agenda (see box 3). Programmes of action containing various projects have been elaborated in each area - a few of them have been implemented and for many others implementation is underway or awaiting resources to be implemented.

Box 3: The 10 Protocols

The broad agenda of the ICGLR can be seen through the above 4 programmes of action as well as the following 10 Protocols which are legally binding:

- Protocol on Non-aggression and Mutual Defence in the Great Lakes region (GLR);
- Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance;
- Protocol on Judicial Cooperation;
- Protocol for the Prevention and the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity and all forms of Discrimination;
- Protocol against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources;
- Protocol on the Specific Reconstruction and Development Zone;
- Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence Against Women and Children;
- Protocol on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons;
- Protocol on Property Rights of Returning Persons;
- Protocol on the Management of Information and Communication.

The Protocols, as one interviewee noted “were possibly overambitious and not all well thought through.” Several have a development or humanitarian focus which, in principle, could be dealt with under the EAC or ECOWAS. But the needs addressed through the Protocols cross national borders, intertwine with the conflict dimensions in the region and are to a more or lesser extent relevant for both sides of the borderline between the EAC and the ECOWAS. This borderline between DRC, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi is at the centre of the Great Lakes Region and de facto bridges the outer regions of these two RECs.

While the ICGLR has a very broad agenda, it has – de facto – remained much more narrowly focused since its inception. This is partly put down to a lack of commitments and financial resources of ICGLR member states - the main responsibility for the implementation of several of these Protocols lies at the national level. But longstanding commitments of international donors to support the organisation was also lacking. The extent to which the first influenced the second could not be fully researched in the context of this study but disappointment about the performance of the ICGLR and its Secretariat over the years might have contributed to this situation as we discuss below.

Perceived success and failings of the ICGLR

Two principal successes are frequently mentioned in discussions about the ICGLR, i.e. reforming the exploitation and trade in natural resources, and trust. Another cited success was the ICGLR’s role in addressing the M23 problem in 2012/2013 and its contribution to peace and stability in the region more

¹²ICGLR, *The Pact on Security, Stability and Development for the Great Lakes Region*. December 2006 amended November 2012: Article 10b, p.6.

widely, though its peace and security related role could not be successfully deployed throughout the region.

Countries that fought each other throughout the 1990s (DRC and Angola on one side, and Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi on the other) engaged in dialogue under the umbrella of the ICGLR on different political and technical levels and on a variety of topical issues. This helped to shape an informal accord that dialogue and peaceful means of cooperation are the best options to overcome problems and conflicts. The implementation of (some parts of) the Pact, its Protocols and programmes of action has provided for such opportunities.

Apart from the DRC and its neighbours that have had conflicts before signing the ICGLR Pact in 2006, other countries also benefited from the ICGLR framework. The meetings of its organs, i.e. the Heads of States Summit, meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs or Defence, Chiefs of General Staff or Chiefs of Intelligence and Security Services, were used to discuss peace and security issues in other parts of the wider ICGLR region. These have been the conflicts and grievances between Sudan and South Sudan; Sudan and Uganda (when the first claimed that the second supported the rebel movement attacking its territory); DRC and Republic of Congo; DRC and Angola for the issues related to immigrants of one country living in the other; and more recently Burundi claiming that Rwanda interfered in its internal affairs (though the latter issue was finally addressed under the EAC and not the ICGLR).

Several of the latter conflicts could have been dealt with solely in the context of other regional organisations. But the ICGLR organ meetings provided complementary fora to discuss these issues. The effectiveness of such a multitude of discussion and dialogue fora should be questioned but was cited by ICGLR stakeholders as an added value of the organisation.

On peace and security in relation to the M23 crisis, during the years 2012 to 2013, the ICGLR became the formal institutional arrangement for exchange and dialogue with regard to the M23 problem in Eastern DRC, leading to the demobilisation of this rebel group and the end of its insurgency. Though several factors helped to make this a success. Events took place during the Ugandan ICGLR Presidency allowing its President, Mr. Museveni, to exercise regional leadership. He had the convening power to bring to the table the most important presidents from the ICGLR in search of a solution. In 2013, the UN authorised the deployment of an intervention brigade within MONUSCO¹³ to carry out targeted offensive operations against armed groups that threatened peace in Eastern DRC and it assisted in the demobilisation process when M23 declared to put down its arms in November the same year (see also box 2, above).

The other cited ICGLR success is in relation to the certification and trading of minerals. The ICGLR, with substantial support from international partners, facilitates the implementation of the “Regional Initiative on the Fight Against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources” (RINR). It has been described as a cornerstone for implementing the ICGLR’s mandate to promote good governance in the region as it aims to break the link between the illegal exploitation of minerals and the financing of rebel forces¹⁴ (see box 4). Rwanda is considered most advanced in the implementation of the RINR, followed by DRC. The latter has a strong interest in the reform but due to internal political and security problems has so far not been able to promote the reforms in full. Burundi has been well engaged since the beginning but mounting

¹³ The United Nations Force Intervention Brigade was the first UN peacekeeping formation specifically tasked to carry out targeted offensive operations to neutralize armed groups that threaten State authority and civilian security. The brigade is part of MONUSCO and is based in North Kivu (DRC) and is made up of a total of 3,069 peacekeepers. The brigade consists of South African, Tanzanian and Malawi Defense forces.

¹⁴ <http://enact-kp.streamhouse.org/rinr/>.

internal problems and conflicts over the past years resulted in a de-facto stop of reform efforts. Gold is of principal interest to Tanzania but it has proven difficult to control this mineral. The ICGLR has also advocated in different international fora such as OECD and during private sector meetings in support of producing and trading conflict-free minerals and has gained international recognition in this regard.

Box 4: The Regional Initiative on the Fight Against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources” (RINR)

This initiative was adopted in Lusaka in 2010 during the ICGLR Special Summit to Fight Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources in the Great Lakes. At this occasion, the ICGLR Heads of State agreed upon the use of six specific tools aiming at breaking the link between the illegal exploitation and trade with minerals and the financing of rebel groups in the region. The initiative focuses on the development of a joint, regional approach to stop the illegal exploitation of natural resources in the Great Lakes Region, including a certification mechanism through which these minerals can be traded internationally as conflict-free minerals.

The core tool is the setup of a Regional Certification Mechanism for the 3T minerals (wolframite/tungsten, coltan/tantalum and cassiterite/a tin oxide mineral) and gold that traces mineral flows. Through this mechanism the minerals can be traded as ‘conflict-free’ and gain a higher price on the international market. The second is the harmonisation of national legislation on illicit resources to a regional standard. The third is a regional database to disclose information on origin of the minerals and regional trade patterns. The fourth is the formalisation of artisanal mining and facilitation its entry into the formal sector through improved taxation systems and the provision of extension services. The fifth is the mutual exchange of experiences in the context of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and, lastly, the setting up of a whistle blowing mechanism to enable the reporting of illegal exploitation and trade activities.

The RINR is coordinated, facilitated and monitored by the ICGLR Secretariat. A Regional Steering Committee, comprising technical experts and civil society representatives from all ICGLR member states has been charged with the steering of the initiative and the auditing process. Its policies and technical guidelines are approved by the Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee as well as the ICGLR Summit. The 2010 Lusaka Declaration is cited as a success as well as the approval of a regional certification manual to guide the implementation of the Certification Mechanism. Another step has been the drafting of a model law on the illegal exploitation of natural resources to assist the ICGLR member states in harmonising their national legislation. Under the RINR, technical assistance is provided to the mining authorities in the ICGLR member states (comprising advice and capacity development in relation to the exploitation of minerals). In a new phase, starting in 2017, a database will be set up in Tanzania that will help to trace and verify the origin of minerals. The EITI has been considered as too complex for the ICGLR and its member states and was not promoted so far.

A key donor for the RINR is the German Cooperation (via GIZ and BGR). Other donors are the European Commission (implementation via GIZ) and the African Development Bank (AfDB). USAID has also provided support for the Independent Mineral Chain Auditor.

Despite these apparent successes, several challenges emerge from stakeholder interviews. In relation to ICGLR’s vision and mission, while the 2006 Pact provided for an overall clarification of the ICGLR’s purpose, the agenda did not lead to any clear priority setting by ICGLR member states about what the organisation should deal with.

People having witnessed the ICGLR before 2010 already noted the absence of a more strategic engagement by the ICGLR MS, which led to the implementation of individual and rather disconnected projects. After the intense momentum of the early years, focusing on stability in the Great Lakes Region, ICGLR member states’ attention to their organisation gradually reduced but the ICGLR experienced a “second life” as of 2008/2009, according to one interviewee, when international attention and pressures regarding the exploitation and trading of the conflict minerals was mounting (see also reference to UN reports and resolutions, above). Preferences of international and regional development partners for youth,

women and peacebuilding, private sector or parliamentary development also influenced the extent to which certain Protocols were prioritised, while others remained untouched.

With the exception of the M23 insurgency, the ICGLR did not manage to more systematically address the persistence of negative forces and armed groups in the eastern parts of DRC, in particular the Rwandese armed group FDLR while that was one of the main challenges to be addressed since the launching of the ICGLR process. Until today, the former divisions between conflict parties persist on the decisions about the disarmament of rebel forces and armed groups and it seems that some countries prefer not to take position on such a key issue as two interviewees highlighted.

The ICGLR also failed to contribute pro-actively to the prevention or peaceful management of new violent conflicts which emerged after the signing of the Pact in 2006, namely in CAR, Burundi and South Sudan. The three conflicts are currently handled by other regional organisations, the ECCAS, the EAC and IGAD respectively. ICGLR supports them politically but it does not play a more significant role. The handling of these conflicts by other regional organisations should be seen as a good division of labour but the Protocols have created expectations among ICGLR stakeholders which the organisation could not fulfil.

Political traction explaining success and failings

The traction for these successes (and failings) stands and falls with the engagement of the ICGLR MS, more specifically, their Heads of State. This pattern can be disclosed from the time of the foundation of the ICGLR, when Heads of States of the region agreed to solve the problems built up over the 1990s regionally, as well as from the time of the M23 crisis, showing a strong engagement from several Heads of State under Ugandan leadership. It can be further seen from the initiation and implementation of the RINR. In all three cases, however, different degrees of external pressures led the Heads of State to move forward. National interests played into this as well. The strong interest of the ICGLR member states in the RINR, Rwanda and DRC in particular, coincides with their interest to sell their minerals for higher prices on the international market.

The ICGLR Secretariat played overall a rather modest role to promote the Protocols. It has little political leverage and plays principally a coordinating role. Though differences in the leadership and performance were noted by stakeholders. The leadership of the First ICGLR Executive Secretary (ES), Ambassador Mulamula, was described as very pro-active and engaging. Her focus was to mobilise the Heads of State and Government to make sure they implemented effectively their commitments during her term (2007-2011). This period coincided with the period that the RINR was initiated though interviewees attributed the initiation of this initiative mainly to external forces, including the adoption of the Dodd Frank Act in 2010. After 2011, the dynamics reduced during the term of her successor (2012-2016) whose engagement was described as disappointing by several stakeholders due to lack of sufficient engagement and political sensitivities to deal with the complexity of the Burundi crisis, in particular. The third Executive Secretary, bringing in a renewed momentum and a focus on clarifying the role and further activities of the ICGLR, witness to the recently held workshop of the ICGLR and its partners (February 2017), shapes new hopes and confidence that the performance of the organisation will improve.

A more in-depth discussion on the interests of the respective ICGLR member states and other stakeholders is discussed throughout the following section.

2.3. Current reforms

ICGLR institutional structures

The ICGLR structures are: The Summit of Heads of State and Government; the Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee (RIMC) which is the Executive Organ of the Conference; the National Coordination Mechanisms with ICGLR offices/desks in the respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs; and the Collaborative Mechanisms, such as the Committee of Ministers of Defence, and other specific structures or forums if necessary.”¹⁵ There is also the Troika, an informal mechanism consisting of the past ICGLR Chair, the present as well as the incoming ICGLR Chair, which functions as a kind of Bureau of the ICGLR Heads of State. Its directions are generally respected by the other Heads of State.

The ICGLR Secretariat is headed by an Executive Secretary with departments on peace and security, democracy & good governance, economic development and regional integration, humanitarian and social affairs, women and children and other cross-cutting issues (genocide, environment) and supported by an administration and finance department. The Secretariat has some 10 senior staff, including the Executive Secretary and Programme Directors, plus some 10 Programme Assistants. These (approximately) 20 persons are normally paid by the Secretariat and receive salaries which can compete with those of international organisations. In addition, there are technical assistants paid by GIZ¹⁶, AfDB, USAID, Switzerland and the World Bank. A structural problem of the ICGLR staff (Secretariat and its decentralised organs alike) is the limited employment term of three years (renewable once for staff members) and of four years for the Executive Secretary (non-renewable). As most senior staff have been recruited at the same time their departure is also around the same time which means a loss of institutional memory that weakens periodically the Secretariat. The overall weak capacity and limited resources of the ICGLR, as described by various interviewees, is reflected on its website (see box 5).

Box 5: A snapshot at ICGLR’s website

This ICGLR’s website is rather poor on content and does not provide up to date information about the activities of the organisation. There are no strategic (planning) documents nor is there any annual work plan or an annual report. Summit resolutions and their supporting documents are also not available. The website contains a long list of documents describing the programmes of the ICGLR but these originate from 2006, supporting documents on what actually happens in these programmes and what has been achieved is largely missing. The exception is the section on natural resources (supported by external partners) which has information available up to 2014 but nothing beyond. The very broad and (as interviewees mentioned, unrealistic) ambitions of the ICGLR are reflected in the programme documents from 2006. They contain projects as diverse as ‘promotion of Kiswahili in the Great Lakes Region’; ‘Trans-African Highway (Mobassa-Lagos)’; ‘Revival of CEPGL’; or ‘Fighting transnational crime and terrorism’. Most of these projects are without funding and do not exist beyond the project document written in 2006.

According to the Pact, the majority of aspects of the ICGLR agenda have to be implemented at the national level by member states, civil society organisations and/or private sector. For example, it is up to each Member State to domesticate the Pact and the 10 Protocols. The role of the ICGLR Secretariat is mainly to coordinate and monitor (as in the case of the RINR), to provide advice and shape guidelines as well as to facilitate peer-learning and exchange of lessons learned among ICGLR MS. This is the principle. The Secretariat has little political leverage to effectively monitor and enforce implementation. Several ICGLR officials, not linked to externally funded programme areas, have little opportunities to

¹⁵ICGLR, *The Pact on Security, Stability and Development for the Great Lakes Region*. December 2006 amended November 2012: Chap. V, Article 22, p.11.

¹⁶ GIZ has some four/five technical assistants but they function out of Kigali due to the security situation in Burundi. There are also German technical assistants from the BGR in support of the RINR.

engage.

At the technical level, the Levy Mwanawasa Regional Centre for Democracy, Good Governance, Human Rights and Civic Education (LMRC)¹⁷ is based in Lusaka, Zambia, with the mandate to conduct operational and policy relevant research as well as to stimulate and monitor the implementation of the Pact, the 10 Protocols and the programmes of action. It was operationalised in 2011 with a team of three international staff plus supporting staff. There is also the Regional Training Facility on SGBV¹⁸, based in Kampala, two Centres in charge of security (EJVM and JIFC, based in Goma and mentioned above¹⁹) Interviewees noted the weak linkages between the Secretariat and its technical structures, for example the underutilisation of the LMRC for providing strategically relevant inputs for the discussion of pertinent policy issues.

There are also the Forum of Parliaments²⁰ of member states as well as several participatory structures, i.e. the Regional Fora²¹ for Women, Youth, Civil Society and Private Sector, most with the ambition to maintain a Secretariat, to hold regular General Assemblies and to run topical programmes. Step-by-step investments were made into these domains of youth, civil society and women/gender but space for civil society to unfold in the respective ICGLR member states is limited and progress in implementing these fora and making them work is piecemeal (see also box 6).

Box 6: The ICGLR Civil Society Forum (ICGLR CSF)

Over the period 2011 to 2016, efforts were put into the creation of an ICGLR CSF. Some progress has been made, but the initiative has faced considerable challenges preventing the full functioning of this Forum. The current basis for the ICGLR CSF are the existing national civil society fora from some 10 ICGLR MS. They send delegates into the General Assembly, which elects an Executive Committee. The Executive Secretary of the ICGLR CSF needs to report to the ICGLR Secretariat, an agreement through which it can be controlled (directly or more indirectly) through the Heads of State. The ICGLR CSF has meanwhile 60 members and there are plans to set up a Secretariat in Tanzania. Only very few funds were so far provided by the ICGLR; the remaining (limited) funding has come from the UN, own ICGLR CSF fund-raising and other donors. In addition to the funding issue, two other challenges were mentioned. Most of the Governments in the region are to a more or lesser degree involved in their national civil society fora, thereby reducing their ability to function as a truly independent forum for the civil society in the region. Second comes sustainability. Similar structures like the ICGLR CSF are in place (and evolving) for the Youth Forum, the Women Forum and the Private Sector Forum. Stakeholders interviewed shared the view that this is not a realistic set-up. Ideally, it was said, two fora should be created. One for civil society, comprising women, youth and the private sector and one for the parliamentarians. Funding to bring these fora together to discuss this issue could not be mobilised so far. However, the diversity of fora allows different groups and actors to find a place among a multitude of civil society actors which needs to be recognised as a positive aspect according to one interviewee.

The ICGLR's organs are highly formalised, common to the procedures of African regional organisations. Their functioning is based on the payment of assessed contributions of the ICGLR member states though, as highlighted below, those are not always forthcoming. ICGLR stakeholders generally perceive the creation and operationalisation of the ICGLR's complex institutional structure as a success. That said, several observers of the ICGLR as well as internal stakeholders acknowledge that this structure, similar to

¹⁷ See www.icglr-lmrc.org.

¹⁸ <http://www.icglr-rtf.org/>.

¹⁹ <http://www.icglr.org/index.php/en/decentralize-organes/goma-center>.

²⁰ <http://fpcirgl.org/en/>.

²¹ The Regional Fora are supposed to have their counterparts at the national level and serve as platforms for sharing experiences and information in order to better contribute in implementing the Pact, Protocols and Programmes of action.

a Regional Mechanism, is rather heavy and difficult to sustain in the absence of sufficient ICGLR member state support.

Financing of the ICGLR

The institutional budget of the Executive Secretariat as well as its decentralised or technical organs are funded mainly by ICGLR member states through assessed contributions. The budget is adopted by the Heads of State every two years during the Ordinary Summit. The assessed contribution for each Member State is based on its GDP and the main contributor is currently Angola. During the last five years, there is a trend of delays in paying assessed contributions though delays were already the case prior to the years 2009/2010 when the ICGLR started to work on the RINR²². Though conflict and peace is the *raison d'être* of ICGLR, the conflicts, political crises and economic problems facing ICGLR member states have been cited as excuses for the delays in payment. Disappointment about the low level of visibility and impact of the Secretariat during the period 2012 and 2016 was also mentioned as a reason.

For the funding of programmes of action and projects included in the Pact, a “Special Fund for Reconstruction” was set up, managed by the AfDB.²³ Its purpose is to support the implementation of the Protocols and the programmes of action as confirmed in the 2006 Pact. In practice, this Special Fund received only voluntary and very small contributions of some ICGLR member states while there is no suggestion of any international partner contributing to this Special Fund though this had been agreed on in the Pact. International partner financing takes place on a bilateral basis.

Two main areas among ICGLR programmes are supported by international partners. There is the above-mentioned RINR supported by the German Cooperation (via GIZ and BGR), the European Commission (via GIZ), the AfDB and USAID (via Tetra Tech). The GIZ support has a component of technical support to the institutional development of the ICGLR Secretariat. Gender programmes, including the fight against sexual gender based violence, are supported by the Swiss Cooperation and the World Bank. The UN Women has been supporting activities in that sector but it stopped recently. The Parliamentary Forum is supported by the Swiss Cooperation. The UN supports the ICGLR through projects financed from a donor-financed trust fund of the Office of the Special Envoy. Projects are financed in support of the ICGLR Women, Youth and Civil Society Fora, SGBV and the Private Sector Business Forum. For 2014 to 2017, six bilateral partners²⁴ funded some US\$3.5m through the UN; the ICGLR was the UN's key partner according to the 2016 trust fund report (see also box 7).

Box 7: Examples of financial support by international donors (incomplete compilation)

International partner	Principal sector(s)	Amount (exchange rates 03/2017)
German Cooperation	Natural Resources and capacity development of ICGLR Secretariat	EUR 11.5m (2017 – 2019)
European Union - via GIZ	Natural Resources / peacebuilding	EUR 10m (2017-2018)
AfDB	Natural resources	EUR 2.5m (funding is ending)

²² With delays, all ICGLR member states paid their assessed contributions until 2015 except for one country which declared being unable to do so because of internal problems. For 2016, only two countries have paid so far. But it was also mentioned during interviews that some ICGLR member states had sometimes paid their assessed contributions for three years in advance – in some cases to show their engagement and willingness to promote this organisation and give it financial stability, in other cases as an expression of strength and power vis-à-vis their neighbours.

²³ ICGLR, *Dar-es-Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region*. 20th November 2004: Article 53, p. 7.

²⁴ The Netherlands, Ireland, Belgium, United Kingdom, Norway, Switzerland.

UN Special Envoy (trust fund)	Civil society, youth, women and private sector fora; regional judicial cooperation; SGBV	Approximately 2/3 of EUR 3.25m (2014-2017) goes to activities falling under the ICGLR remit
Swiss cooperation (implemented through AWAPA ²⁵)	Parliamentary Forum; SGBV	EUR 1.8m (2016-2020); plus 50% funding of TA on SGBV
USAID	Natural resources/ governance	Funding not known, but ending
World Bank	SGBV	Funding not known

The above table shows a substantial level of external funding for programmes and projects on natural resources and conflict minerals. There is also some funding for gender, youth and parliaments though this is rather ad-hoc like the one-off funding by Kenya for the establishment of the Youth Forum Secretariat, US\$2m, following the Declaration on Youth Unemployment in Nairobi, July 2014²⁶. Most of the programme-related funding, however, originates from external sources through time-bound and bilateral projects as listed above.

Formal and informal capacities

The formal capacities were described under 'institutional structures' above. Among these, the Heads of State Summits and the Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee are the key decision making organs. The ICGLR Secretariat has a coordinating and facilitating role with rather limited autonomous executive powers.

Informal capacities are scattered throughout the ICGLR structures and can change over time. The above mentioned Troika is a very powerful organ as underlined by ICGLR stakeholders. Functioning as a kind of Bureau of the ICGLR Heads of State, its directions are generally respected by the other Heads of State in particular with regard to peace and security. Prominent regional leaders, such as the Presidents from Angola, Uganda or Rwanda, can also create more (informal) leverage compared to some of their counterparts from other countries – the M23 crisis with a leadership exercised by President Museveni is witness to this. As an important informal capacity, not part of any formal structure of the ICGLR, President Zuma from South Africa has been mentioned. He has been invited twice to ICGLR Heads of State Summits chaired by Angola.

Efforts have been made to give informal capacities from civil society the space and the channels to enter into a more formalised contact with the ICGLR organs. The creation of the various fora for youth, women, private sector and civil society at large needs to be seen in this light. Their chairpersons are always invited to the ICGLR decision-making organ meetings. Although these frameworks and spaces for engagement exist, as described above, the dialogue and engagement of the ICGLR with these actors is rather limited. Important challenges for an effective engagement of these stakeholders on important agenda items is the lack of human and financial resources to effectively operationalise them but also a clear ICGLR strategy on how to create synergies towards achieving common goals. Though the example of the ICGLR Regional Women Forum before, during and after the adoption of the Declaration to fight against the SGBV which was adopted by the ICGLR Summit in December 2011 in Kampala, Uganda,

²⁵ The Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (<http://www.awepa.org/>).

²⁶ Declaration of the Special Summit of the ICGLR Heads of State and Government on "the Fight against Youth Unemployment through Infrastructure Development and Investment Promotion", July 2014.

shows that there is a potential available to get civil society positions onto the agenda of the formal ICGLR organs.

Several formal and informal institutional constraints to deliver on its core mandate are listed in Box 8.

Box 8: Constraints working against the delivery of the ICGLR mandate

ICGLR formal institutional constraints	ICGLR informal institutional constraints
<p>Lack of provisions related to sanctions in case of an ICGLR member state not respecting its commitments both in terms of paying its assessed contributions and implementing the Pact and Protocols.</p> <p>Regular and increasing delays in paying assessed contributions by a growing number of ICGLR MS.</p> <p>ICGLR Secretariat principally recognised as a technical facility and not as a political facilitator by ICGLR MS.</p> <p>Overlapping membership of countries in the Region which does not facilitate regional integration. Indeed, member states are also member of the following RECs: ECCAS, EAC, SADC, IGAD, COMESA and other organisations like, CEPGL, the Eastern Africa Standby Force and several other smaller regional mechanisms.</p>	<p>Decisions are taken by consensus, only. This arrangement developed during the period of setting up the organisation (after widespread violence took place in the region) shows its limits today.</p> <p>Lack of political will of some countries to implement the principles and commitments contained in the Pact and Protocols, such as the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, or the Protocol to Fight Against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources.</p> <p>Lack of human resources with appropriate expertise to implement the regional agenda in a complex political environment.</p> <p>Avoidance of some donors to align their interventions to the ICGLR agenda to follow their own policy priorities and modalities of support.</p>

2.4. Drivers and blockers

External drivers and blockers

International development partners are a determining driving as well as blocking factor for the implementation of the ICGLR agenda. The organisation was accompanied from the beginning by the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region composed of a wide group of partners.²⁷ It played a key role in supporting the ICGLR during the consultation and dialogue process until the signing of the Pact in 2006 but it ceased to exist in 2010 when the ICGLR decided to prioritise sector-related issues which had not been the focus of the Friends' engagement from the beginning. Only a small number of international partners followed up on their commitment to support the agenda of the ICGLR through financial and technical support (see list of external supporters, above).

The role of the Office of the UN Secretary General Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region whose mandate is to facilitate the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the DRC and the Region (signed in 2013) is questioned by ICGLR stakeholders. The PSC Framework can be seen as an attempt to renew the 2013 commitments of the countries having dealt with the M23 crisis in East DRC but in terms of agenda, it is similar compared to what is in the 2006 Pact overall. Questions were raised why the UN SG Special Envoy Office could not be given a mandate to provide financial and technical support directly to the ICGLR for its interventions instead of implementing parallel

²⁷ The Group of Friends and Special Envoys (27 States and the EU): Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, the European Commission, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Greece, Holy Seat, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Portugal, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Special Envoy of the Chairman of the African Union Commission for the Great Lakes Region, the United Kingdom, the United States of America.

programmes and projects. This could help to strengthen the ICGLR for the implementation of its agenda and create more coherence, complementarity and synergy between the two organisations.

The engagement of international partners with ICGLR clearly changed over time. This is manifested through the active accompaniment of the regional peace process through the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region and its termination as of 2010. This can be explained through a gradually declining international interest in the Great Lakes Region, the lack of progress within the region of addressing peace and security more fundamentally and the assumption that this agenda can be best accompanied through the UN and the Office of its Special Envoy. The UN, together with ICGLR member states and other countries of the region, played indeed a pivotal role in addressing the M23 crisis.

A small number of international partners supported sector programmes, particularly as of 2009/2010, but they did so mostly through their own implementation mechanisms. Direct financial support to the ICGLR and its technical structures for programme related work remained minimal. The implementation of support programmes through such indirect mechanisms and the absence of payment into the abovementioned AfDB administered “Special Fund for Reconstruction” shows limited trust in the institutional (implementation) capacities of the ICGLR. This Fund received also limited voluntary payments by ICGLR MS, which does not reflect full commitment of the member states towards its own regional organisation. Though, as some interviewees mentioned, the willingness of ICGLR member states to pay their assessed contributions over all these years – against all odds – needs to be seen as a continued commitment to keep this organisation alive and to work through it.

International development partners also bring along their preferences and can apply a selective approach in terms of prioritising the areas to be supported. This has made the ICGLR’s programmatic agenda considerably donor driven (except for peace and security issues). Today, two main areas stand out as supported by both, the ICGLR and international partners. These are the RINR and the fight against sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) and support to Parliaments. The other domains of the 10 Protocols have remained largely unaddressed.

Other factors affecting implementation

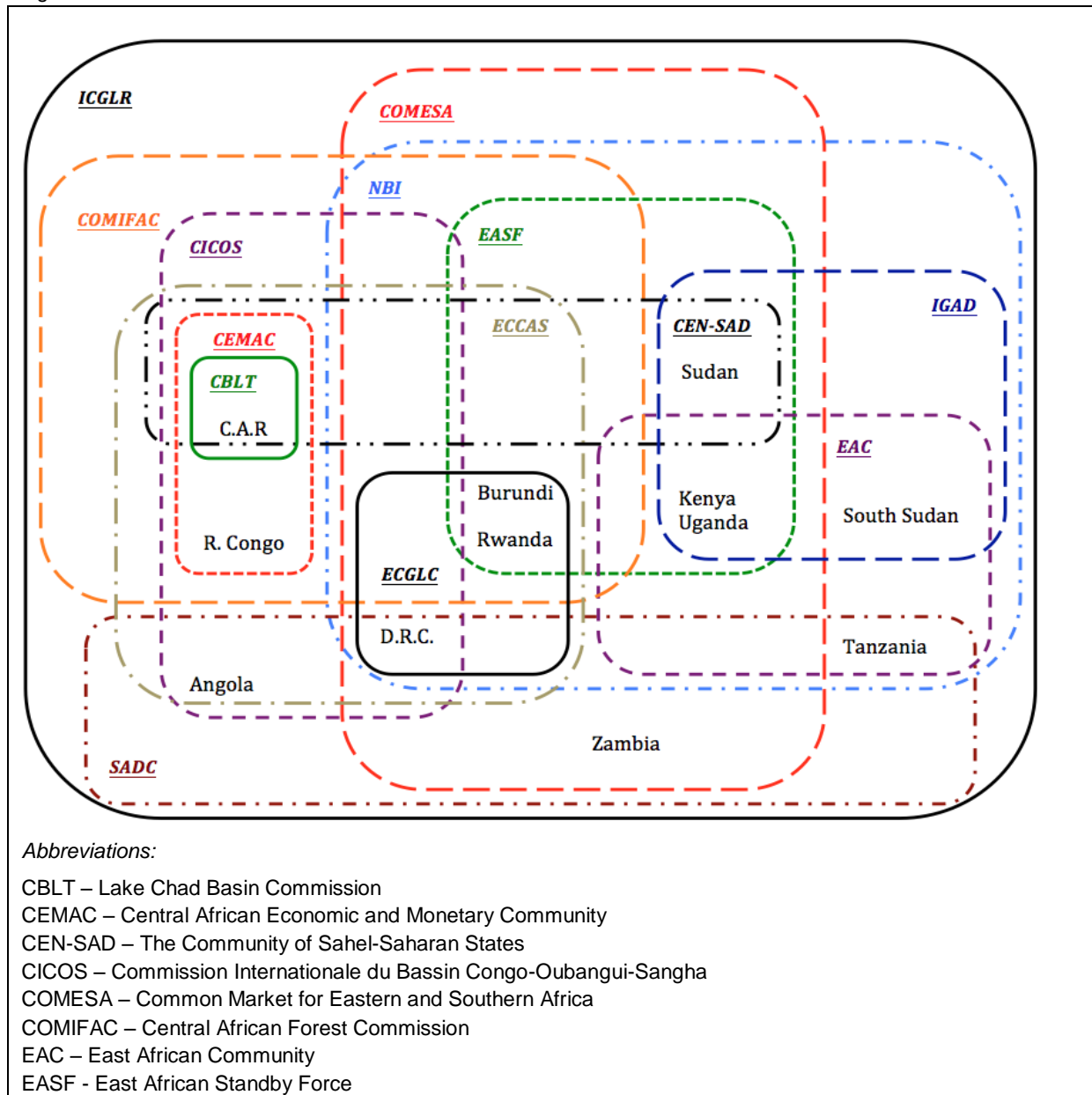
The ICGLR’s aim to promote peace and security in the Eastern parts of the DRC is squarely blocked by the continued and high number of armed groups who thrive from the illegal exploitation and trade of minerals (see section 2.1). The Rwandese armed group FDLR remains a particular problem as it continues to sour relations between Rwanda and DRC due to a complex conflict that reaches back into the history of the region. There were hopes that this problem could be addressed in the context of the fight against M23 but the momentum of solving peace and security in this part of DRC was silenced after M23 put down its weapons.

Peace and security has also been, and continues to be, a problem in CAR, in Burundi and in the South of Sudan – all falling into the ICGLR’s mandate. But overlapping memberships with other regional organisations (see diagram in box 9) provided ICGLR member states with opportunities to deal with these issues through other fora and regional processes. The war in the South of Sudan, for example, is dealt with in the context of IGAD and the AU. Burundi, one of the four core-ICGLR countries, did not draw in the last ICGLR Executive Secretary during the most recent crisis (2015/2016).²⁸ For reasons not related to the Executive Secretary, this recent crisis was primarily dealt with under the umbrella of the EAC and of

²⁸ Interviewees mentioned that the last ICGLR Executive Secretary was not welcome in the eyes of the Burundian Government due to his approach taken towards the Burundi crisis.

the AU.²⁹ The example of Burundi shows that the memberships to different regional organisations can create confusion and overlap but, in view of Burundi and Rwanda not dialoguing directly with each other, also opportunities to switch from one to the other if the political constellation or (non)performance of one of the regional organisations might require to do so.³⁰

Box 9: Membership of ICGLR Member States in Regional Economic Economies, Regional Mechanisms and Regional Commissions



²⁹ During the first part of 2015, the ICGLR as well as the EAC were involved in the crisis (with a focus on the upcoming elections). In March 2015, with the appointment of Benjamin Mkapa, the former Tanzanian president as mediator, and growing criticism about President Museveni’s engagement (probably due to elections in Uganda) the EAC took a leading role. The more neutral role of Tanzania in this conflict and its chairmanship of the EAC at that time were seen as the reasons for this change (see also ISS, Peace and Security Council Report No 79, April 2016).

³⁰ Some of the interviewees saw the current weakness of the EAC and its internal tensions as a reason to deal with certain issues in the region rather through the ICGLR than the EAC.

ECCAS – Economic Community of Central African States
ECGLR – Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries
ICGLR – International Conference of the Great Lakes Region
IGAD – Intergovernmental Authority on Development
NBI – Nile Basin Initiative
SADC – Southern African Development Community

The issue of natural resources and conflict minerals was recognised in one of the 10 Protocols agreed upon in 2006 (the Pact) as one of the principle problems to be addressed by the ICGLR. The implementation of this programme remained rather dormant during the first years but gathered momentum through the growing international attention to the problem of conflict minerals as of 2009 (G8 in Italy), a critical UN report about the illegal exploitation and trade in the Great Lakes region (which was published in the same period) and, finally, the passing of the Dodd Frank Act by the US Congress in 2010 (see also above).³¹ As mentioned above, these international developments and pressures impacted on the ICGLR Heads of State. Assisted by international development partners, Germany and the AfDB in particular, the implementation of the natural resources programme of action gathered momentum and gave the ICGLR a renewed sense of purpose which is still valid today.

3. On the political interests of member states

3.1. A review of member states and their respective engagements

Given the diverse nature of the ICGLR membership, stretching from the far South-West of Africa (Angola) to the northern parts of the continent (Sudan) it can be useful to cluster them according to their respective engagement. We have grouped the 12 ICGLR member states broadly into three:

First, there are the CAR, Congo Brazzaville, South Sudan and Sudan. All four are situated rather to the periphery of the Great Lakes region and its conflicts, deeply occupied with their internal wars, conflicts or societal problems. These countries have not been mentioned as prominent ICGLR actors throughout the interviews and the document study. The focus of the ICGLR has been on the conflicts in the Great Lakes region. The other conflicts have been dealt with through different regional bodies.

Second, there is Zambia, Tanzania and Kenya, which are important and overall stable states in the region but which are more at a distance from the ICGLR's key areas of concerns. Zambia has engaged itself from the beginning as a constructive supporter for the development of the ICGLR but remained rather distant from engaging strongly on key issues like natural resources or the conflict in the Eastern parts of DRC. Zambia's engagement coincides broadly with the reign of President Levy Mwanawasa (2002-2008) who was a strong supporter of good governance.³² Kenya, the only country not bordering the DRC, has remained a constructive supporter of the ICGLR throughout the years (supporting the Secretariat as well as civil society initiatives) but stakeholders see the country more as a neutral actor with regard to the

³¹ The Congress legislated Section 1502 of the Dodd Frank Act requires companies to disclose whether any of the products manufactured or contracted to be manufactured by the company contains conflict minerals that originate in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) or any of the adjoining parties.

³² Zambia also promoted the creation of a think tank linked to the ICGLR, the Levy Mwanawasa Regional Centre for Democracy and Good Governance, and helped to set it up in Lusaka, capital of Zambia. The idea to build a regional intellectual capacity to produce knowledge about the region and to inform ICGLR-related policy making processes was referred to by interviewees as the deed of forward looking regional leaders who recognised the inter-linkages between conflict, conflict resolution and governance. The idea for the creation of such a centre dates back to 2006, it was formally launched in 2009.

conflicts in DRC, in particular. Its key interest in the region is economic with some interests with regard to natural resources as minerals are also shipped out of the Great Lakes Region through Mombasa. Tanzania, finally, is most closely linked to the natural resources topic compared to the two other countries. Its role in this ICGLR initiative is substantial. Tanzania has gold itself and is the principal trade corridor for the transport of minerals to Dar-es-Salaam and out of the Great Lakes Region.

Third, there is Angola, Uganda and Rwanda as pro-actively engaged countries in the region and, though through a lesser extent and weakened through its internal fragility and continuous conflicts, the DRC. These are the countries, which have been involved strongly on security questions while playing at the same time key roles in other initiatives of the ICGLR.

Angola is a militarily powerful country in the Region (demonstrated during its support to DRC Government in 1998, already). It has provided important financial support to the ICGLR and its election as the chair of the ICGLR in 2014 (renewed in 2016 for two more years) gave it the opportunity to increase its political weight at the regional level. Its willingness to host ICGLR meetings regularly in Luanda has also been well noted by various stakeholders. This engagement coincided with its status of non-Permanent Member of the UN Security Council in 2015 and 2016. Angola has a geopolitical interest in the region to assure its own security, keeping away conflict and armed groups from its thinly populated and resource rich border region³³ and uses the ICGLR to become a more politically visible actor across the central parts of Africa. Angola is a member of the SADC but this is dominated by South Africa and – compared to the ICGLR – provides it with less opportunities to influence political and security-related processes in the region, though it is also a member of ECCAS, covering many of the same states as ICGLR.

Uganda demonstrated its capacity to shape the regional peace and security agenda during its chairmanship of the ICGLR in 2012 and 2013 during which it handled the crisis of the M23 in the eastern parts of the DRC. This pro-active role clearly coincided with the internal security agenda of Uganda, which had no interest in a potential destabilisation of its western regions bordering the DRC. Determined to implement its objective of seeking “African solutions to African problems” and reducing external interference in the management of regional affairs, President Museveni organised seven special Summits of Heads of State in Kampala and hosted negotiations between the DRC Government and M23 during that period until the conclusion of agreements known as the “Declarations of Nairobi” by the DRC Government, M23 and the Guarantors (including ICGLR, SADC, UN and AU). He managed to avoid a new war on the Congolese territory when there was a risk of new fighting among countries, one group supporting the DRC Government and the other supporting M23, which was considered as a frontline against the Rwandan FDLR rebels. More recently, Uganda has also shown interest to connect more proactively with the RINR.

Rwanda wanted to use, and still uses, the ICGLR as a vehicle to turn the page of conflicts in the region and to focus on economic development in support of its national development plans. This approach can most clearly be seen from its engagement with the RINR though this is done primarily from a national agenda perspective. Rwanda is the most advanced country in this RINR initiative and has prioritised its resources to draw most benefits from this it, including the integration of technical know-how into its mining sector or access to international markets with the export of certified minerals. Stakeholders mentioned that Rwanda is using the ICGLR’s external support in this domain for its national agenda and development but does not make particular efforts to promote more regional integration through this initiative. One interviewee described this as follows: *“Others in the region can follow but Rwanda will not*

³³ One source also mentioned an interest to keep access to water resources in the DRC under control but this could not be confirmed through triangulation during interviews.

wait for them.” Though it has opened its doors to representatives of other ICGLR countries who want to learn from Rwanda’s progress in implementing the RINR.

There is also DRC as the epicentre of the security problems in the region but also concerning the development of the mining sector and the aim to export conflict-free minerals. While it has engaged in the latter with interest, in particular for economic reasons, the DRC faces continued fragility and conflict in its eastern parts, the Kinshasa Government has been unable to bring these regions fully under its control. The DRC has also played an important role in the domain of peace and security, notably by mobilising its numerous supporters within SADC (most prominently South Africa, Angola, Malawi and Tanzania) to advance or slow down some initiatives, such as the measures related to the deadlines for disarming by force the FDLR based in its eastern region.

Burundi, finally, is more difficult to associate to one of the groups above. As a core country to the conflict and being involved in the ICGLR from the beginning, it has become an important country in the region. But its severe internal conflicts and its subsequent inability to pro-actively participate in the RINR has turned the country into a kind of ‘special case’. The benefit of the doubt and trust which ICGLR member states gave to Burundi during the inception phase of the ICGLR, i.e. recognising the positive momentum of the country’s peace process in 2005 and rewarding the country with the ICGLR Secretariat (established in Bujumbura) did not realise. At present, in the absence of a strong and reform oriented Burundian government, the trade in illegally exploited minerals has gone up.

Less information is available on the role of the co-opted ICGLR states in the development of the organisation (see map under section 2.1). Their engagement appears to have been limited during past and present affairs of the ICGLR, except for Malawi, which sent troops to the East of DRC in the context of the UN’s Force Intervention Brigade to fight the M23 crisis. As mentioned during one interview, the added value of these co-opted states, not having any voice in the organs of the ICGLR, is their potential neutralizing influence on conflict issues in the Great Lakes Region if need be. These co-opted states should be understood as a kind of complementary insurance for support in case any major conflicts arising in the Great Lakes region cannot be solved by the ICGLR MS, alone. In addition to these co-opted states, there is South Africa, a declared friend of the ICGLR³⁴. It had also sent troops at that time of the M23 crisis, together with Malawi and Tanzania. The troops are stationed in DRC until today.

While not a country of the region, the UN’s Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region and his Office should be mentioned as an important actor for the promotion of peace and security in the region. The UN’s role in mobilising a Force Intervention Brigade in the fight against M23 was mentioned above. The request for the sending of such a brigade was formulated during a joint ICGLR and SADC Heads of State Summit.

³⁴ Witness to the invitation and participation of President Zuma of South Africa to ICGLR Heads of State Summits.

3.2. Member states ownership

While the origins and continuing reliance on outside funding may suggest an externally driven organisation, several manifestations of ownership can be nonetheless noted. First, the ICGLR organ meetings are overall well attended, namely the Summit of Heads of States, the Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee (RIMC), the Committee of Ministers of Defence, and the Committee of Chiefs of General Staff or the Committee of Chiefs of Intelligence and Security Services. This suggests a willingness of the decision makers to implement the Pact but it also underlines that the ICGLR is valued as a conference and exchange facility for the political leaders in the region. Though Heads of State participation in these meetings has decreased over the past years according to observers (see also box 10).

Box 10: ICGLR Heads of State Summits

ICGLR Heads of States Summits take place every two years for ordinary meetings. The Pact does not require a minimum presence of Heads of State to attend the Summit. When they are represented (by Vice-President, Premier Minister, Ministers of Foreign Affairs or others), the quorum is respected. Special Summits can be held any time if it is necessary. As mentioned above, during the chairmanship of Uganda, President Museveni organised seven Special ICGLR Summits on M23 and the crisis in the Eastern parts of DRC. Since that crisis, SADC has been closely involved in ICGLR Summits through the participation of the South African President and a representation of the Secretary General of SADC. The President of South Africa has been invited by the Chairman (Angola) since 2014 twice. - According to a picture of the June 2016 Summit, published on the ICGLR website, Presidents present were: Zuma (SA), Denni Sassou Nguesso (Congo B), Dos Santos (Angola), Museveni (Uganda), Uhuru Kenyata (Kenya), J. Kabila (DRC). Touadera (CAR) attended as well (but is not on the picture). President Nkurunziza of Burundi did not attend. He has not left his country since the most recent crisis. President Kagame of Rwanda did not attend (because there was nothing to talk in the absence of President Nkurunziza according to one interviewee) and was represented by his Minister of Defence. – An important mechanism for addressing conflict is the so-called Troika, i.e. the past ICGLR Chair, the present as well as the incoming ICGLR Chair. At present, the Troika does not function well as the earmarked incoming Chair, Kenya, cannot confirm its chairmanship due to the upcoming elections in Kenya (August 2017).

Second, there is reportedly also a good level of attendance to the technical meetings like the Regional Committee on natural resources, the National Coordinators Committee, the Forum of Parliament's Plenary Assembly, etc.³⁵ Third, ICGLR member states have kept the institutional side of the organisation alive over all these years through the (delayed) payment of assessed contributions to the ICGLR Secretariat and its decentralised or affiliated organs. Concerning the programmatic agenda of the ICGLR, taking the voluntary payment into the 'Special Fund for Reconstruction' as an indicator, leaders from ICGLR member states do not seem to be much concerned about the programmatic aspects of the organisation raising questions about ownership.

3.3. Member state internal dynamics and politics

The role of elites and interest groups

It appears that the level of implementing of a reform agenda in many ICGLR member states is rather low despite some positive exceptions noted.³⁶ The interest for the diverse elites in the respective countries seems to prefer keeping the *status quo* and follows a line of non-interference in internal affairs of other countries – the latter is a property of the Pact and an important agreement compared to the 1990s when countries in the region mingled into the internal affairs of the DRC. But it also plays into the hands of

³⁵ For all these meetings, international per diem rates are paid but no attendance fees.

³⁶ Such as Rwanda's reforms made in the natural resources sector.

those who do not seek control. The low level of implementation of the Pact, which were supposed to address key root causes of violent conflicts and political crises in member states, was mentioned as a result of this policy.

If we take, for example, the position of the DRC Government in relation to the rebel groups and armed forces in the eastern parts of DRC, it appears that the Government and its supporting factions in DRC society either do not have the capacity to put an end to the threat, or do use these groups to justify the lack of concrete progress in the governance and development of the country. Both options, or a mix of both, are possible and might also coexist on the ground. Against this background, one should understand that the interests or incentives of ruling elites or dominant coalitions in a country can be homogeneous or contradictory and might change over time but nonetheless remain beyond the control or influence of the ICGLR.

Considering these overall considerations presented above and recalling the main areas where the ICGLR agenda has been implemented, we can identify broadly three broad interest groups who can bring national positions to the regional agenda. First, there are the positions of the security services concerning security issues, including their responsibility to deal with the rebel groups and armed forces.

Second, in DRC and Rwanda mainly (because they were most affected by international measures to ban the so-called conflict minerals), the chambers of mines and industry and motivated Government officials/departments, as interviewees mentioned, have an interest to join the RINR. Incentives include the opportunity to benefit from technical mining and processing know-how of minerals, the promoting of transparency in the extractive sector and thereby increase the trading of conflicts-free minerals from the Region and getting a higher price for the minerals on the international market. In Rwanda, the Government is also committed to improve transparency and accountability in the sector as a strategy to attract investment and improve tax collection from that sector.

Third, there are the national civil society fora, which contribute to the ICGLR's Regional Women Forum and other (emergent) ICGLR fora. One example is the role played by the ICGLR Regional Women Forum before, during and after the adoption of the Declaration to fight against the SGBV which was adopted by the ICGLR Summit in December 2011 in Kampala, Uganda (mentioned above). The Forum requested this special Summit to the Heads of States and mobilised different stakeholders until the adoption of the Declaration. It then continued and advocated for implementation. Another example is the ICGLR Regional Youth Forum which requested during the Kampala Summit in 2011 to call a special Summit to allow ICGLR member states to discuss the issue of youth unemployment and to take relevant measures to address it. The Heads of States accepted this. In July 2014, a Special Summit was held in Nairobi and a "Declaration to fight against youth unemployment in the context of infrastructures development and investment promotion" was adopted.³⁷ Since the adoption of this Declaration, however, there has been rather little follow up in terms of implementation and monitoring (though Kenya, hosting this Summit, provided seed-funding to start up the Youth Forum Secretariat). While these examples illustrate how national interest groups signalled problems and articulated their concerns towards the ICGLR decision making organs, it also shows that there was rather limited underlying political interest to follow up on these.

National elites play an important role in the implementation of arrangements and commitments at the regional level because they are represented in the ICGLR decision-making organs (Summit, Regional

³⁷ See Declaration of the ICGLR Special Summit on fighting youth unemployment: <http://www.icglr-lmrc.org/index.php/policy-documents>.

Inter-Ministerial Committee and National Coordinators Committee, etc.) with a possibility to monitor and evaluate the achievements of the ICGLR Secretariat. Though experiences of recent years show that national elites did not strongly focus on the agenda of the ICGLR, the implementation of its programmes and their impact. The main focus was on the political and security situation in the region. This one-sided attention had a negative impact on the dynamics and performance of the ICGLR Secretariat and its management because the supervisory as well as the programmatic priority setting roles of the decision-making organs were not fully exercised.

But the ICGLR helped to reduce many tensions and conflicts among countries and created a relatively conducive environment for dialogue, collaboration and partnership. Other regional organisations did exist to this effect but none of these covered the Great Lakes region more specifically and bridged the gap between the EAC and ECCAS. Their respective regions end along the border separating Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi on one side and the DRC on the other side. The confirmation of the principles of non-interference in internal affairs³⁸ is considered by elites as a milestone as it was noted from the past that the support to a local armed group by a country could lead to the overthrow of the government in a neighbouring country. Though there are also negative consequences linked to this principle (see box 11).

Box 11: Consequences of the principle of non-interference

As the ICGLR does not have provisions related to sanctions, when there is no implementation, there is no negative consequence for the ICGLR member states and their elites when agendas are not adhered to. For example, when the Summit of Heads of States decided a deadline for disarming by force the Rwandese armed group (FDLR) which refused to disarm peacefully in the eastern parts of DRC in 2015, the decision was not respected by DRC without any further consequences for the country. Some countries suggested to give more time to the issue while DRC committed itself to handle the issue with the UN peacekeeping Mission (MONUSCO). Even if there is a lack of capacity of the DRC army to conduct the disarmament, it appears that the level of political will to do so is not high.³⁹

The confirmation of the principle of non-interference in internal affairs as well as the practice to reach decisions by consensus, combined with the existence of legal instruments in key sectors, including democracy and good governance, allowed ruling elites also to use the ICGLR Framework to validate their internal practice even if they did not respect, or only partially respected, what is contained in the 2006 Pact or Protocols. For example, ICGLR electoral observation missions are used in some countries to validate the results of elections even if problems have been identified in terms of transparency or the fairness of the electoral process⁴⁰.

There are also topics, for which country elites chose other regional bodies or structures to advance regional cooperation. One of them is the Greater Virunga Transborder Collaboration between DRC, Uganda and Rwanda. It is a mechanism for the collaborative management of rangers of the Greater Virunga Landscape and has expanded in scope towards tourism, community conservation, research and monitoring⁴¹. Another example is the exploitation of gas from the Lake Kivu for which DRC and Rwanda collaborate through a joint commission. Related to this is the construction of an electricity line to Goma

³⁸ See ICGLR Protocol on Non-aggression and mutual defence, 2006.

³⁹ For the evolution of relationship and collaboration between DRC army and MONUSCO, see <https://monusco.unmissions.org/>.

⁴⁰ At the special ICGLR Summit in January of 2010, the ICGLR received the mandate for election observation missions in Burundi, the Central African Republic, DR Congo, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. EOMs were sent to Rwanda (2013), Sudan (2015), Zambia (2015) and Uganda (2016). See also preliminary statements of ICGLR Electoral Observation Missions in some countries: www.icglr.org and two electoral process reports: <https://www.icglr-lmrc.org/index.php/electoral-processes-reports>.

⁴¹ <http://greatervirunga.org>.

and Kigali. There is also the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (ECGLC/CEPGL). Founded in 1976 by DRC, Burundi and Rwanda, it has an economic orientation but its activities are rather limited.⁴²

Exploitation of minerals

Information from DRC and Rwanda about the exploitation of minerals suggests a diversity of interests among ruling elites, private sector and interest groups and armed groups, some of them overlapping or converging, others standing against each other. In the Eastern parts of DRC, a multitude of armed groups exist who are benefitting from the illegal exploitation and trade of precious minerals. Revenues from this business finances their engagement in conflicts and allows them to keep their territories outside the sphere of influence of the Government. Their interest in the trade of conflict free minerals, controlled by central authorities, is naturally limited. Against these interests stand, in principle, the interests of central and regional authorities to regulate the exploitation of minerals, to bring their trade under government's control, to get higher prices for certified minerals on the international market resulting in more income and higher tax revenues. ICGLR stakeholder comments that their capacity has been substantially reduced could not be confirmed during the study.

A look at the official export statistics of Coltan (columbite and tantalite) and Tungsten (Wolfram) from Rwanda and DRC for the years 2009 to 2013 reveal some interesting information and suggests the existence of interest groups and elites (possibly inside as well as outside governments) which are working against the goals of the ICGLR as described in the RINR (see table 1). Employment figures are for 2010 (Rwanda) and 2013 (DRC), so figures cannot be compared fully.⁴³ But it is interesting to see that approximately the same amount of persons were working in both countries while the production and resulting export of this labour intensive Artisanal and Small Mining (ASM) sector differs substantially. This suggests that either a considerable amount of minerals from DRC are traded illegally, or that minerals from DRC are illegally transported to Rwanda and exported legally from there, or a mix of both. The substantial increase of exports has been explained by one interviewee by the Rwandan Government's priority given to the mining sector. But other interviewees raised the question whether in a country as small as Rwanda the increase of exports over a period of five years origins all from Rwandan soil. It raises also questions about the interest groups benefitting from this situation in both countries, the extent to which they function in the illegal domain and the extent to which they have ties to official institutions and channels.⁴⁴ The figures underline, however, that Rwandan Government and its mining sector has benefitted from the RINR resulting in the export of more certified minerals and more income from the international market notwithstanding their origin.

Table 1: Exports Coltan and Tungsten Rwanda and DRC (2009 to 2013)

(in metric tons)	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Rwanda					
Columbite-tantalite	952	560	890	1,144	2,466

⁴² The Community was paralysed between 1997 and 2007 but was reactivated in 2009. Germany supports the construction of power lines in the region financially via the CEPEGL.

⁴³ Figures from Rwanda are based on a census; the figures from DRC on a survey and estimations which makes a comparison difficult. Though the surveyed areas in DRC are geographically larger than Rwanda revealing a similar number of miners while legal exports reduced.

⁴⁴ In 2013/2014, an anecdotal evidence, the Rwandan policy arrested illegal traders and minerals were given back to DRC suggesting that illegal trading is fought against in Rwanda. Statistics about the arrest of illegal traders over the years 2009 to 2013 could unfortunately not be researched.

Tungsten	870	764	1,006	1,751	2,218
In 2010 (the latest year for which data were available), about 35,000 workers were employed in the Rwandan mineral industry (main minerals are Coltan, Tungsten and Tin).					
DRC					
Columbite-tantalite	464	440	536	586	500
Tungsten	365	45	87	71	57
In 2013, a partial survey of mines in Katanga, Maniema, Nord-Kivu, and Sud-Kivu Provinces found that about 35,000 miners were employed in niobium, tantalum, tin, and tungsten mining.					
Source: United States Geological Survey, 2013 Minerals Yearbook Rwanda & DRC					

4. On the areas with most traction for regional cooperation

4.1. Potential traction for regional cooperation and integrations

As discussed above, the ICGLR works broadly on four areas with developmental benefits and scope for further regional cooperation and integration. These are i) peace and security; ii) governance, with a focus on the transparency of natural resource exploitation and trade; and iii) SGBV; iv) all three areas have been linked to a number of cross-cutting issues, i.e. the development of civil society, including youth, women and the private sector. The governance dimension has been additionally addressed through the support to parliamentary development in the 12 ICGLR countries.

These three topics (and sectors) plus the cross-cutting issues already see a degree of regional momentum and have resulted in concrete activities, outputs and outcomes. On peace and security, there have been a multitude of meetings during which, over the years, tensions between countries could be discussed and resolved (e.g., the M23 conflict). As for natural resources, the RINR has been designed and is implemented with support provided by external partners. And the civil society dimension has been supported in various ways to help develop fora on youth, women, civil society and the private sector. The Parliamentary Forum has been supported in addition.

Given the width of the 10 Protocols, the ICGLR could potentially do more if the ICGLR MS would provide more political and financial support to their organisation and for the activities set out in the Pact in their home countries. This has not been the case over the past 10 years. Though in view of several other regional organisations engaged in sectors that overlap with the mandate of the ICGLR, stakeholders raised the question whether the ICGLR should do all of the activities it has an ambition to be involved in. More coordination and joint action with other regional organisations was suggested.

On peace and security with regards to the Great Lakes Region – the organisation has shown its value as a regional dialogue mechanism to address conflicts in the Eastern parts of DRC. Though ICGLR member states and stakeholders have expressed disappointment about the ICGLR's role with regard to other conflicts in the region. Through the Pact expectations were raised which the ICGLR could not fulfil with regard to CAR and South Sudan in particular, but also not concerning the Burundi crisis.

The initiatives concerning natural resources have meanwhile developed into an area of work for which the ICGLR has been recognised internationally but the extent to which it could create more regional integration, in the sense of countries working more intensely together, is not clear. There is scope for creating more developmental benefits from these initiatives, in particular for countries which have shown strong interest to continue with the RINR, i.e. Rwanda, DRC, Tanzania and – more recently – Uganda.

Questions were raised during interviews about the value added of regional fora for youth, women, private sector and civil society. While the ICGLR has set up these fora in line with its foundational idea to create dialogue among a wide range of actors in the region, their sustainability and effectiveness is an issue. Wouldn't it suffice if there was one civil society forum, only? Civil society is also involved in the monitoring mechanisms of the RINR making the need for separate voice mechanisms less urgent. Another point mentioned was that particular issues on the agenda for these fora, such as SGBV or youth employment, needed to be addressed primarily at the national level. The extent to which regional initiatives, generated through the ICGLR, could promote these topics more strongly (beyond the current level of accompaniment of the ICGLR) was further questioned.

The four areas mentioned do not necessarily align but they are strongly complementary to each other. Improved peace and security in the Great Lakes region will provide the conditions for investments, trade and economic development. The transparent exploitation and trade of precious minerals can potentially help to create economic development and can contribute to stability. A transparent exploitation of these minerals may also help to improve governance. And initiatives to strengthen the governance-related role of civil society and parliaments, in terms of watchdogging and parliamentary control, will promote governance and stability further.

This theory of change underpins in principle the engagement of ICGLR MS, civil society and international partners in the region. But the intensity of this engagement varies, leading also to activities which are not very targeted and strategically relevant. The various civil society fora, each with its own structures and substructures, are one example where initiatives were questioned above. Questions should also be raised to what extent the ICGLR can afford - given its capacity and the existence of other regional organisations - engage more pro-actively in other conflicts than the Great Lakes. Doing rather less than more and communicating this clearly to the outside should be considered as a way to intensify complementarity and strengthen the alignment of activities.

Of the three areas mentioned, peace and security is clearly the most prominent sector where national, regional and international agendas and interests converge. Witness to the role played by the UN Special Envoy to the Great Lakes region, sent with the consent of the international community, there is a clear intention to create synergies between countries in the region and the regional level. As for the conflicts in CAR and South Sudan, the existence of the ICGLR is recognised but it is rather not seen as a vital partner given the existence of other regional organisations and mechanisms to address these situations. The Burundi crisis, highlighted above, is particularly problematic to address given the unsolved internal root causes of the crisis and the present absence of a direct dialogue between Rwanda and Burundi. Considerable diplomatic efforts will be needed to address the internal Burundian crisis and to restore the relationship with Rwanda.

As for natural resources, international agendas and regional interests, expressed by the ICGLR member states exist. The alignment and complementarity concerns specifically the so-called conflict minerals (3T plus gold) from DRC, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania. The RINR initiative aligns squarely with the stated economic and development-related interests of the Governments of Rwanda and Tanzania (gold exploitation and transport) and with the interests of DRC, though the ability of DRC authorities to exercise

a strong control on the reform initiatives for the legal and transparent exploitation and trade of natural resources is rather limited. The latter gives space and opportunities for the illegal exploitation and trade of precious minerals. Questions need to be raised about the role of mining and trading companies throughout the region and the extent to which their interest aligns with those promoted under the RINR. Authorities in Kenya and Uganda also have an interest in natural resources which aligns with the international agenda, but mainly from the perspective of shaping stability, economic development and trade.

There is also broad policy coherence between international, regional and national agendas for better governance and the pro-active engagement of civil society. The alignment is particularly high on SGBV. But the extents to which the national levels support this agenda need to be questioned and the role which a regional organisation can play in creating more traction at these national levels. Civil society is very weak, and is kept weak – given the limited support of ICGLR member states for its fora. In working with established national civil society groups, there is also a risk that civil society engagement at the regional level is captured by national elites with a view to control and exercise influence on their agenda's as interviewees have indicated.

Related to security questions are the interests of ICGLR member states to address humanitarian and social development issues, in particular given the huge number of refugees and IDPs in the region. But concrete initiatives beyond dialoguing have not been launched.

4.2. Key conduits to support reforms

Looking at the ICGLR from different angles, the core of ICGLR's purpose has been and still is the conflict in the Eastern parts of DRC and, beyond that, in the Great Lakes Region. These foundational aspects have been used as motivators for engagement in the three broad areas mentioned and continue to offer opportunities for more regional integration as discussed above. But expectations of what can be realised through this regional mechanism, the ICGLR, needs to be clarified and put into perspective.

The need to focus – after more than 10 years of existence – is as big as never before given the critical comments, which the organisation has received by its member states during the recent past. The risk of being diverted into too many directions, also influenced through the policy preferences of international development partners, has been recognised but there has been no clear approach set out so far how the ICGLR wants to implement a more focused engagement. An ICGLR intervention strategy, or a theory of change that would more systematically underpin the choices of engagement does not exist. The new ICGLR Executive Secretary works on these challenges and should be supported in his efforts.

As for the latter, the ICGLR's role of providing a platform, or several platforms for dialogue among country leaders who did not talk to each other before the creation of the ICGLR should not be underestimated. External involvement in this domain is solicited as long as it is supportive to on-going initiatives and not undermining regional agendas – even if they are at times not very clear and in need of time and space to emerge. *“Supporting such processes is costly, but the costs of conflict would be much higher”*, as one interviewee mentioned.

The ICGLR does not have a champion, or hegemon, among its ranks similar to – for example – Nigeria in the case of ECOWAS (which is at times a conduit through which reforms are supported). Though the organisation did have certain champions during its lifetime at particular moments and concerned with dedicated topics. It still functions in this manner. Since the foundation of the organisation, certain

countries (sometimes supported by co-opted member states) did take a lead at some point in time influenced by a constellation of national interest and leadership, internal (in-)stability, inter-regional constellations and external influencers or pressures (see box 12).

Such dynamics and interests of a specific lead country can be used to support an initiative. Though there are also topics in the political and developmental sphere for which the ICGLR framework is not considered robust or suitable enough. Those need to be recognised as well so that support is not wasted.

Box 12: Examples of individual ICGLR member states advancing the implementation of the organisation

Tanzania, under its late president, played a pro-active role in the early years of the ICGLR's existence and facilitated the inclusion of civil society into this initiative (through the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation). Zambia, under its late president Lewy Mwanawasa, promoted strongly the idea of good governance, which has been incorporated within the 10 Protocols. The collaboration between DRC and Rwanda on peace and security should also be noted. The former accepted in 2009 to conduct a joint military operation with Rwanda against FDLR rebel groups.

Uganda, during its ICGLR Chairmanship and informed by internal security-related reasons, engaged strongly in solving the M23 crisis. Rwanda, in search for promoting its economic development, took a lead in reforming its mining sector following the passing of the Dodd Frank Act in 2010 (and making good use of the external support provided by international partners). Angola, continuously concerned with the security in its far-away corners bordering the DRC, agreed to chair the ICGLR twice in a row and financed the organisation substantially, even at times when the drop of the oil price hit the country.

Equally important is to take into account the existence of non-ICGLR countries which influence directly or more indirectly the organisation. There are for one the ICGLR co-opted countries. They are mentioned in the Pact but are not signatories – they are heard and consulted if need be. Their role is relevant if neutral actors are required to solve particular problems. Malawi has been such a case witness to their sending of troops as part of the UN Force Intervention Brigade when the M23 crisis was addressed. Another example is South Africa, not a co-opted member but a friend of the ICGLR. The country also sent troops to clear the M23 crisis in 2012/2013 and is seen as the regional (economic) power that can't be excluded from anything concerning the Great Lakes Region.

In terms of other entrance points and channels, several might be considered. It depends on the topic as well as the respective country situation of an ICGLR MS. For example, Kenya is earmarked as a potential new chair for the ICGLR but the upcoming elections in Kenya (August 2017), potential internal conflicts and change of government make it difficult to count on this country at present.

Given the diversity of actors and the fluidity and flexibility of cooperation and collaboration between regional organisations in this part of Africa (state institutions as well as non-state actors) interviewees mentioned on several occasions that sector-specific or theme-specific coalitions should be considered to promote reform agenda's. Better collaboration between the ICGLR and the EAC, in particular concerning the exploitation and trade of precious minerals, was mentioned. Concerning the fight against the LRA and its attempt to connect with extremist movements in Eastern Africa, the DRC, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania are likely to be more interested to join forces than other ICGLR MS.

There are also the sub-structures of the ICGLR, the two Goma Centres (intelligence and security sector reform related foci), the Regional Training Facility on SGBV in Kampala and the LMRC in Zambia. Working with the latter could be particularly important to produce evidence-based policy options for ICGLR decision making but supporting such a structure is difficult due to the time-bound contracts of its staff (following the same regulations as the ICGLR Secretariat staff) and the loss of institutional memory once this staff has to leave the organisation. Given the wide choice of entrance points, the support should

rather be limited to selected actors with a view to create effective leverage for particular reforms within the domains of women and gender, peace and security, natural resources or governance. Attention should be given to support activities that help to link up the respective actors, for example the creation of more synergies between the LMRC and the ICGLR Secretariat. This could help to strengthen the Secretariat's role vis-à-vis the ICGLR member states and help to position and profile the ICGLR more strongly towards other regional organisations and towards international partners.

Among civil society, there was no mention of particular champions during interviews. The obvious entry points are national civil society organisations with an interest in developments at the regional level and/or the respective Fora Secretariats; or the Parliamentary Forum. But their strength would need to be assessed. The civil society initiatives, in the domains of youth, women and private sector, risk developing into silo's, each one competing with the other for the same resources. More collaboration between these civil society entities could help to join forces and bring out a more harmonised voice of civil society on principal issues (i.e. beyond the more topical issues relating to youth, women, private sector, etc.). For example, a meeting to exchange on how to move forward more strategically and what topics to promote vis-à-vis the ICGLR Secretariat and/or the Heads of Summit Meeting has so far not taken place.

4.3. Remaining questions

Given the scope and time available for this study, we could only scratch at the surface of the ICGLR. The following six questions remain:

- What are the political interests of different elites and other national stakeholder groups in the ICGLR MS and what is driving or blocking their engagement at the regional levels?
- While multiple civil society fora translate the need for dialogue and exchange which is embedded in the conference formula of the ICGLR, how effective has this set-up become?
- To what extent has the RINR benefited other countries in the region than Rwanda and how sustainable has this been?
- To what extent are the regional mining sector and its companies re-shaping and/or professionalising under the influence of the RINR and how has this influenced regional dynamics?
- Which activities that have been implemented under the umbrella of the ICGLR could have been executed by other regional organisations and/or where executed in parallel to the activities of these other regional organisations?
- What are the benefits and downsides of having various African states (conflict affected plus neutral states) grouped around one central problem area, the Eastern DRC, plus an additional circle of neutral (co-opted) states around it? What learning can be drawn from this for other regional organisations?

5. Conclusions

This report for the PEDRO study summarises the political economy findings of the ICGLR study to answer a number of questions related to its political traction at three levels: the traction in the regional organisation, the political traction in member states and the sector, or thematic domain with most likely traction for regional support.

To explain the ICGLR, its *raison d'être* and its performance in a nutshell, the following can be concluded from the findings:

The First and Second Congo Wars in the second part of the 1990s created pressures on regional leaders to attend to this situation in search for peace and security. Pressures came from within governments and societies of the region as well as from the international level. The UN was instrumental in this regard.

Neither ECCAS, nor the EAC were appropriate regional organisations to attend to this situation. The Great Lakes region is at the outskirts of their respective mandate areas. The dividing line between both separates DRC on one side and Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi on the other. A regional organisation bridging both sides while integrating relevant surrounding stakeholder countries, like Tanzania, Zambia and Kenya did not exist.

In the absence of an African regional organisation focusing on the Great Lakes region, in particular, the idea of a Conference was born to bring together all war-involved countries from the region as well as their allies and civil society.

Intense talks between regional leaders and between regional leaders and the international community led to the foundation of the ICGLR in 2004 through a Pact. It was set up to facilitate dialogue and exchange in the region on peace and security, while recognising the need to attend to the underlying problems that

have fuelled the conflicts: the illegal exploitation of natural resources, severe governance problems, human rights violations (in particular aimed at women), economic problems and humanitarian needs.

The ICGLR grew beyond its original purpose with the adoption of the 10 Protocols and the creation of rather heavy institutional governance structures and substructures that resembled, at least, an African Regional Mechanism. While the 10 Protocols addressed important aspects, some of them could have potentially been dealt with under the auspices of the EAC or ECCAS, or – under the umbrella of a Conference formula – in close collaboration with both RECs.

The 12 ICGLR member states have numerous memberships in other regional organisations which does not help to shape clarity when and for what the ICGLR should be engaged. Though stakeholders pointed out the advantage of having different platforms to choose from, depending on political constellations, priorities or weak performance/capacities at a particular point in time.

The ICGLR Secretariat and its sub-structures are financed through assessed contributions of the ICGLR MS. The programmes are principally paid by international partners. They support activities related to civil society, parliamentary development and SGBV. The area receiving major funding is the RINR, which was implemented as of 2010 when international pressures to exploit and trade 'conflict-free' minerals gained their peak with the adoption of the Dodd Frank Act in the USA. Rwanda and DRC, also Tanzania and Uganda are the principal beneficiaries of the RINR.

The ICGLR member states who have a major responsibility to implement the Protocols at home were not able to deliver on the expectations raised with the exception of peace and security relating to the Eastern parts of DRC (no more major war took place since the 1990s). Other areas of the Pact and the Protocols were not attended to by ICGLR member states and basically left to the financing of those areas of the Pact which were a priority of international partners.

The ICGLR Secretariat's role was to coordinate and to facilitate but was deprived from undertaking executive tasks more proactively without the consent of the Heads of State. Disappointments about the functioning of the Secretariat and the ICGLR as a whole resulted in a reduced willingness of ICGLR member states as well as international partners to finance the ICGLR and its Protocols. Today, there remain only two international partners supporting the organisation substantially: Germany and the EU. There is no future funding in the pipeline from the AfDB nor USAID.

Due to the overall low, some observers even say very low performance of the ICGLR over the past 10 years, little progress in the East of the DRC to address the underlying problems more clearly and shifting international priorities the future existence of the ICGLR is not assured.

In essence, by looking at the ICGLR's overall performance, the organisation has set its mark as an inter-governmental platform to deal with peace and security in the East of DRC that has tried, but did not succeed, to become a more substantive Regional Mechanism/REC. Its need for regional coordination beyond the political dialogue about peace and security became only partially evident over the recent 10+ years – mainly in relation to reducing the illegal exploitation and trading of precious minerals from the region for which the ICGLR got also international recognition.

But questions remain with regard to the political interests of elites and interest groups in the respective ICGLR MS; the extent to which the RINR has benefitted other countries in the region than Rwanda; whether the regional mining sector has been able to contribute to further regional integration and, finally,

a picture displaying the (potential) overlap between activities executed under the ICGLR vis-à-vis other regional organisations.

The thematic domains with most likely traction for regional integration are obviously peace and security. Though the focus should be on the core mandate of the ICGLR, the Great Lakes Region. Maintaining and further nurturing the dialogue and platform dimension of the ICGLR, informed by evidence-based knowledge and information generated and fed into this dialogue through the ICGLR Secretariat and its sub-structures will be essential.

Support to peacebuilding activities, such as track two and track three mediation⁴⁵ and early warning, if started under new EU funding, needs to be done very carefully as these are sensitive activities for which in-depth knowledge of sub-regional dynamics are needed. In many cases, such activities are already happening for which a regional body, like the ICGLR, might have little added value.

With regard to the RINR, a critical assessment – possibly an in-depth political economy analysis – would be worth doing. The extent to which this initiative supports regional dynamics, traction and interaction and whether this is primarily benefitting individual states or interest groups without wider outreach to the region should become more transparent. This information would be helpful to further carve out support to this important domain and the role which the ICGLR could play. New developments at the international level, in particular the looming end of the Dodd Frank Act under the Trump government in the USA and its potential effect on the mining of precious minerals in the region, need to be critical monitored as well.

Finally, an ICGLR Secretariat that is given more space to pro-actively engage and to coordinate will be indispensable to make this organisation a relevant actor in the region. A more capacitated organisation could organise and inform the ICGLR organ meetings with more respect, help to identify which areas are more strategic than others to support, strengthen ties within the ICGLR family, including various civil society groups, and facilitate better coordination with other regional organisations of what to do and what to leave to others.

⁴⁵ Simply put, track one is generally at the level of senior government and heads of state; track two is with intermediate levels, bringing together state actors with organisations and associations working at the regional and/or sub-regional levels. Track three is primarily at the community level.

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Annex - List of interviewees

Name	Function	Organisation
Ambassador Ambeyi Ligabo	Director Democracy & Good Governance Programme	ICGLR
Dr. Frank Okuthe	Executive Director	LMRC; Zambia
Dr. Chantal Niyokindi	Head of Fora and Observatories	LMRC; Zambia
Pamphile Sebahara	Head of Research, Training and Documentation	LMRC; Zambia
Philipp Wiederspahn	Technical Advisor	GIZ-Burundi Office; Kigali
Doric Houthoff	Head of Administration & Finance	GIZ-Burundi Office; Kigali
Markus Wagner	Former leader GIZ ICGLR project (2009-2012)	Director GIZ-Togo Office; Lomé
Dr. Rudolf Mauer	Project Manager BGR – ICGLR Cooperation	German Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR); Hannover
Angelika Sülzen	Desk Officer Burundi and Regional Organisations	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development; Bonn
Hans Raadschilders	First Secretary Great Lakes	Netherlands Embassy; Kigali
Pim Wientjes	Second Secretary – Political Affairs	Netherlands Embassy; Kigali
Martha Mutisi	Programme Officer	IDRC Regional Office; Nairobi
Stephen Singo Mwachofi	Former Head of Peace at ICGLR	Deputy Director Security Research and Information Centre, Nairobi
Stella Sabiiti		Peace and Security Consultant; Facilitator/Trainer; Addis Ababa
Annonciata Ndikumasabo	Support to ICGLR Programme for Parliaments	Swiss Development Cooperation; Nairobi
Giancarlo De Picciotto	Regional Head Swiss Cooperation	Swiss Development Cooperation; Nairobi
Eric B. Mbok	Regional Peace and Development Advisor	UN Special Envoy Office to the Great Lakes; Nairobi
Nene Bah	Political Affairs Officer	UN Special Envoy Office to the Great Lakes; Nairobi
Danae Bougas	Political Affairs Officer	UN Special Envoy Office to the Great Lakes; Nairobi
Carole Doucet	Senior Gender Advisor	UN Special Envoy Office to the Great Lakes; Nairobi
Gabor Beszterczey	Senior Program Management Officer	UN Special Envoy Office to the Great Lakes; Nairobi