

29 August 2023, Johannesburg



Eurasian Resources Group in Africa

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MEDIA RELEASE

Boss Mining and its host communities in the Lualaba province (DRC) sign Community Development Plan Agreement

Eurasian Resources Group in Africa (ERG Africa) continues its investment in community initiatives to deliver sustainable socio-economic benefits to its 22 host communities in the province.

On 26 August 2023, Boss Mining signed a Community Development Plan Agreement (Cahier des Charges) committing to support local, sustainable development initiatives – which will impact the lives of approximately 84,000 people – over the next five years.

The Cahier des Charges was collaboratively developed through regular, facilitated dialogues between Boss Mining, community members, and government officials. The projects were then collectively agreed upon to ensure transparency, align expectations and establish collective ownership among all stakeholders.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mr Giresse Kalombo, Assistant Supervisor of the Boss Mining Cahier des Charges (representing the Lualaba Provincial Minister of Mines and Hydrocarbons) said, “It should be noted that the commitment of both parties, Boss Mining on the one hand, and the communities impacted by its projects on the other – which we supervised on a daily basis – led to the signing of this socio-economic agreement for sustainable development. This marks an era of open collaboration between the mining company and the communities impacted by its projects.”

The consultation phase, which commenced in May 2022, identified five priority areas of development: health, water, education, agriculture, and communication. The resulting agreement encompasses initiatives that address immediate community challenges, as well as long-term development projects to create lasting impact.

Initiatives outlined in the Cahier des Charges include constructing and furnishing clinics and healthcare centres; providing a new ambulance for medical emergencies; building two morgues to provide respectful funerals; implementing solar-powered borehole systems for easier access to water; and setting up a community radio station to keep communities connected and informed.

Highlighting the importance of investing in educational infrastructure, Mr Joachim Nzuzi, ERG Africa's Chief of Staff, commented, "We firmly believe that education is the key to unlocking opportunities and breaking the cycle of poverty. Through education and capacity building, we are striving to develop the skills of our communities so that they can become the skilled workforce and entrepreneurs of tomorrow and, most importantly, to become the next generation of leaders who will bring positive change to their communities."

The Cahier des Charges also includes the construction of new primary and secondary schools with equipped classrooms, as well as refurbishing and adding classrooms to existing schools in the area. Boss Mining will also build a technical school in Kakanda where community members can qualify as technicians, mechanics, and electricians – which will position them for employment opportunities or to establish businesses that can be integrated into the regional supply chain.

The reach of Boss Mining's existing agriculture programme will also be extended, and will include establishing farmers' associations, and equipping farmers with additional materials, tools, and capacity building to facilitate higher crop yield and aid the transition from subsistence farming to profitable agriculture.

These interconnected initiatives aim to empower Boss Mining's surrounding communities to engage effectively and equitably in skilled employment, agricultural markets, and value chains that foster community resilience, food security, and economic participation.

"The agreement we have entered into comes from the unwavering dedication of both Boss Mining and its communities to foster a mutually beneficial relationship. It is a testament to the strong bonds we have forged in working together towards our common goal – which is harnessing the power of responsible mining to bring about broad-based upliftment," said Ms Mimi Lukonde, ERG Africa's Safety, Health and Sustainability Administrator, highlighting the collaborative spirit that exists between Boss Mining and its communities.

Ms Lukonde's sentiments were echoed by the Grand Chief of the Bayeke, Mwami Munongo Mwenda Bantu Godefroid Junior Kaneranera, who expressed his support and hopes for the future, before blessing the Cahier des Charge. "We have come a long way with Boss Mining. It was the lifeblood of Kakanda and the surrounding areas, but when Boss Mining closed, we were all miserable, traditional chiefs and local people alike. It was a dark time. Our children were suffering. For us, this is a rebirth, a revival, that Boss Mining can come back and sign this Cahier des Charges with us. We have always trusted you, and you have always supported us. We, the Balopwe, bless you from the bottom of our hearts. So, you are with us."

"Apart from communities standing to benefit further through employment and supplier opportunities, our commitment is to ensure that our communities reap all the benefits from the three pillars of social development laid out in the Mining Code: the stipulations outlined in the Cahier des Charges, the 0.3% endowment, and the mining royalties for development. As we transition into the project implementation phase, we eagerly anticipate and rely upon ongoing collaboration between ERG Africa and its communities and local government," added Ms Lukonde.

Mr Giresse Kalombo added, “The provincial government of Lualaba, led by Her Excellency Ms Marie-Thérèse Fifi Masuka Saini, Governor of the Province, is convinced that the speedy implementation of the Cahier des Charges will not only help to meet the vision of His Excellency Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the Republic and Head of State, of seeing the development of communities at grassroots level, but will also beautify the landscape of our province.”

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About Eurasian Resources Group Africa:

Eurasian Resources Group (ERG) is a leading diversified natural resources group with integrated mining, processing, energy, logistics, and marketing operations. The Group operates in 15 countries and is a major employer in the industry.

ERG Africa combines the Group's assets on the African continent and forms a key part of the Group's long-term international growth strategy.

ERG Africa is a principal producer of cobalt and copper in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and has further assets and development projects in manganese, fluorspar, bauxite, platinum and thermal coal in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mali, Zambia and Mozambique. SABOT, a leading cross-border road haulier in the Southern and Central African region, also forms part of its operations.