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Eurasian Resources Group in Africa

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MEDIA RELEASE

Eurasian Resources Group in Africa's (ERG Africa) Chawama community agricultural programme at Frontier mine harvests 513 tonnes of maize in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

The programme has also expanded to include fruits, such as papaya and watermelon, to bolster food security in the Haut-Katanga Province

The Chawama programme's bountiful harvest comes at a critical time when the DRC is facing significant crop shortages, and an estimated 25,8 million people are experiencing food insecurity, in the country. The growing price of mealie meal in the DRC over the past eight months has worsened the situation, with a bucket of this staple currently trading at 4,000 Congolese francs.

The Chawama programme's 513 tonne yield comes from 114 hectares of arable land managed by a cooperative of 40 farmers (of which 12 are women) from the Kimfumpa, Kabumba and Kaloko villages in the vicinity of ERG Africa's Frontier mine.

Sergei Verbitckii, ERG Africa's Acting CEO, commented on the harvest, saying, "The Chawama community agricultural programme illustrates ERG Africa's commitment to improving livelihoods and fostering long-term sustainable development in the DRC. By supporting the government's food security policy, we aim to make a positive and lasting impact on the lives of the communities alongside which we operate."

Chawama, a commercialised and growing agricultural initiative, has the primary goal of empowering communities to harness the land's potential to provide farmers with a sustainable income and food security. Apart from personal consumption, the farmers generate an income by processing their produce with the Mwabombeni milling cooperative (another Frontier initiative) to produce mealie meal and stock feed. Mwabombeni then sells the products to the open market, while Frontier purchases some of the mealie meal to supply its catering needs and as part of its employee incentive programme.

Frontier plays a pivotal role in the success of the Chawama programme by providing farmers with essential inputs such as seeds, fertiliser, and equipment. Additionally, the cooperative receives ongoing technical training to enhance crop yield.

“Mining is a key contributor to the economic growth of the DRC, but to ensure long-term socio-economic benefits for our local communities, ERG Africa partners with its communities to ensure they reap the maximum benefit from the projects outlined in their Community Development Plan Agreements [Cahier des Charges]. It is the joint commitment of the farmers and Frontier that has led to Chawama’s success and its subsequent expansion to include an additional five villages for the next planting season,” adds Verbitckii.

In 2023, Frontier’s agriculture programme also increased in scope to include papaya and watermelon farming to augment the production of maize. The pilot field currently covers four hectares comprises more than 1,600 plants, with plans to expand to an estimated 193 hectares of fruit and vegetables, and 255 hectares of beans by 2026, involving and benefitting an additional 330 households.

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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.