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Eurasian Resources Group

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## Media release

### **Eurasian Resources Group supports inaugural Bon Pasteur child protection centre in Kolwezi for almost 1000 children to take them out of mining and provide free education and other services**

**Eurasian Resources Group (“ERG” or “the Group”), a leading diversified natural resources group headquartered in Luxembourg, is pleased to support the launch of the new Bon Pasteur child protection centre at Kolwezi in the Lualaba province, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), as part of its longstanding partnership with the Good Shepherd International Foundation.**

Part of the Bon Pasteur programme, which puts the elimination of child labour at the heart of community development, the centre is expected to accommodate almost 1,000 children in 14 newly equipped classrooms in the Kanina – Domain Marial artisanal cobalt mining community.

A comprehensive facility, the centre provides free education but also other initiatives much beyond this including healthcare, nutrition, counseling and human rights training, as well as an opportunity for families to learn about alternative livelihood opportunities. It will also host the activities of the Bon Pasteur Kolwezi community-based development programme, which is aimed at tackling child labour in artisanal mining communities.

The ribbon cutting ceremony was attended by Mr Richard Muyej Mange Mans, Governor of Lualaba, Monsignor Nestor Ngoy Katahwa, Bishop of Kolwezi, Cristina Duranti, director of the Good Shepherd International Foundation, Sr. Catherine Mutindi, Program Director of Bon Pasteur Kolwezi and Mr Benedikt Sobotka, CEO of Eurasian Resources Group.

*Benedikt Sobotka, CEO of Eurasian Resources Group, said: “We are proud and grateful to be a part of this important initiative which goes right to the root of the challenge of child labour and affords a safe space for good choices and sustainable opportunities to be created.”*

Over the past seven years, the Good Shepherd Foundation’s Bon Pasteur programme has helped address acute challenges faced by local communities including forced child labour, gender-based violence, food insecurity and a lack of vital social infrastructure.

“We’ve been on the ground in the artisanal mining communities in Kolwezi since 2012 and our right-based approach integrating child protection and community development has succeeded in getting nearly 2,000 children out of the mines and into the classroom”, said *Cristina Duranti, Director of the Good Shepherd International Foundation*. “These impressive results, together with the foundation of the Bon Pasteur Centre, could not be achieved without the fruitful long-term cooperation with Eurasian Resources Group. This partnership will support a durable social change for the local communities, eradicating child labor and human right abuses and achieving sustainable improvement in the living conditions of artisanal miners.”

“Paving the way for this project is our strategic cooperation with the Good Shepherd International Foundation, as part of which over 1800 children have been protected from the worst forms of child labour in 2018 and early 2019. We are committed to continuing to advance our wider commitment to strengthen the socioeconomic development of local communities across our operating regions and help eliminate child labour from the sector,” added *Mr Sobotka*.

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**About Eurasian Resources Group:**

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. In 2019, Eurasian Resources Group celebrates its five-year anniversary and the Group also marks 25 years of its business in Kazakhstan.

ERG is the world’s largest high-carbon ferrochrome producer by chrome content and one of the largest producers of alumina and iron ore products in Eurasia. It is the only producer of high-grade aluminium in Kazakhstan. The Group is also among the principal copper and cobalt producers.

ERG represents one third of the metals and mining industry in the Republic of Kazakhstan. It is also a key power supplier and a large railway operator in Central Asia. ERG manages production entities in Kazakhstan that are among the nation’s foremost enterprises, including Kazchrome, SSGPO, Kazakhstan Aluminium Smelter (KAS), Aluminium of Kazakhstan, Eurasian Energy Corporation, Shubarkol Komir, Transportation Group TransCom, 3-Energoortalyk and ERGService.

In Africa ERG mines and processes copper and cobalt ore and has also recently launched the Metalkol Roan Tailings Reclamation (RTR) project, a major tailings reprocessing operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Group has further development projects in thermal coal, manganese, platinum, bauxite and fluorspar in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mali and Mozambique. ERG controls its own supply chain on the continent through its company Sabot, a North-South Corridor logistics specialist.

In the State of Bahia in Brazil, ERG is pioneering an integrated mining and logistics project comprising the Pedra de Ferro iron ore mine, the Porto Sul deep-water port and the associated new FIOL broad-gauge railway.

ERG is a founding member of the Global Battery Alliance launched on the platform of the World Economic Forum and dedicated to ensuring that there is an ethical and sustainable global supply chain for the lithium-ion batteries that help power the Fourth Industrial Revolution and a low carbon economy, through electric vehicles, renewable energy technologies and smartphones.

**The Good Shepherd International Foundation**

The Good Shepherd International Foundation (GSIF) is a non-profit organization founded in 2008 by Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, an international Congregation of women religious operating in 70 countries, to support the Good Shepherd’s mission in the world. The Foundation is committed to offer assistance to children, girls and women in 25 countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, focusing on poverty eradication, human trafficking, migration and elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination. Since 2012, the GSIF has been supporting Bon Pasteur Kolwezi in DR Congo with technical assistance in planning and management of their program, communication at the international level and resource mobilization to ensure the program sustainability.

[www.fondazionebuopastore.org](http://www.fondazionebuopastore.org)

## **Bon Pasteur Kolwezi - DRC**

In the past first six years, Bon Pasteur has been one of the most effective NGO in Kolwezi in preventing human rights abuses and reduce child labor in artisanal cobalt mining communities, helping more than 5,000 people – mostly children, girls and women-- escape the harsh life of the mines to attend schools, build alternative livelihoods and build more secure communities. More specifically, since 2012, the Bon Pasteur program in Kolwezi has accomplished:

- 2,000+ children miners have quit work in the cobalt mines. They go to school and enjoy improved health and nutrition;
- Bon Pasteur children are safer. They've taken responsibility to educate other youth from neighboring communities about their rights and the dangers of working in the mines.
- 500 women have quit dangerous work in the mines to gain skills through income-generating initiatives such as in one of three farming coops. They report having improved physical and psychological health, plus they've increased their families' food security and income.
- 500 girls are engaged in skills trainings and dignified income-generating activities;
- The ASM community of Kanina is more unified and peaceful. Its residents are more aware of their rights and are capable of holding government and mining companies accountable to provide basic infrastructure and services;

To implement its new strategic plan 2018-2022, aiming at taking 4,700 children out of the mines and in the schools and give 4,000 women and girls skills and access to alternative livelihoods, Bon Pasteur needs significant investment and support and collaboration from all stakeholders, upstream and downstream companies within the cobalt supply-chain, Government and other NGOs.

For more information about the Bon Pasteur Project in Kolwezi, please see:

<http://www.fondazionebuonpastore.org/congo>

The Bon Pasteur project was featured in the 2015 award-winning documentary “Maisha: a New Life Outside the Mines” that was awarded at the 2016 Barcelona Human Rights Film Festival and played at more than 10 film festivals around the world.

[www.maishafilm.com](http://www.maishafilm.com)