

Press Statement

First Bags of Conflict-Free Tin leave a Congolese mine

With the first bags of conflict-free tin leaving the mine in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo, on 24 October the Conflict-Free Tin Initiative (CFTI) has officially started. This marks the beginning of the flow of minerals through a controlled supply chain outside the reach of armed groups.

Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation Ben Knapen: 'After years of exclusion from international trade and the resulting mass unemployment among miners the CFTI has allowed one of the mines in South Kivu to restart operations. This first bag of conflict-free tin brings us one step closer to new prospects for a conflict-ridden region with many wrongs to make right.'

The mine has been validated as conflict-free by a multistakeholder team including officials of the DRC Government, the United Nations, the German Geological Service (BGR), the local project manager of the ITRI Tin Supply Chain Initiative (iTSCi), representatives of local business and civil society. This is the first step in the pilot. A robust traceability system, the iTSCi Programme, has been put in place by the field teams of Pact, a nongovernmental organization. There are at least six levels in this supply chain from mine to end-user, all of which are needed to make this pilot project a success.

The Netherlands Government is the neutral broker that brought the partners along the supply chain together, from mine to smelter to end-user. The industry partners participating in the CFTI pilot consist of Royal Philips Electronics, Tata Steel, Motorola Solutions, Fairphone, HP, Research In Motion (RIM), Alpha, AIM Metals & Alloys, Malaysia Smelting Corporation Berhad (MSC), Traxys, ITRI and the local exporters and mining cooperatives. Also, the United States and the South African Government through the Department of Trade and Industry's Regional Spatial Development Initiatives Program (RSDIP) are involved in the establishment of the CFTI.

While celebrating the accomplishments so far, Minister Knapen realises there are no guarantees for future success: 'Progress will depend on continued strong industry commitment as well as developments in the security situation in South Kivu. I call on all parties involved to keep up the good work and on others to join.'

More information about the Conflict-Free Tin Initiative can be found on the official website: <http://solutions-network.org/site-cfti>.