



# JOINT STATEMENT

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Position of the DRC and Zambia Civil Society on the Cooperation Agreement to Manufacture Batteries for Electric Vehicles (EVs) signed by two Governments.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zambia met over two days in Lusaka to deliberate on the DRC-Zambia cooperation agreement to manufacture batteries for electric vehicles (EVs). The EV batteries require cobalt and copper as feedstock. These minerals are abundant in both countries.

The initiative is significant for the DRC, Zambia, and Africa. It is also crucial for civil society to constructively support the two governments to ensure that this project is successfully implemented for the benefit of the people of the two nations.

Many Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) have been signed to support the cooperation agreement. For example, CSOs have learnt of the USA, DRC and Zambia tripartite MoU concerning support for the development of a value chain in the EV battery sector, the European Union (EU)-Zambia MoU on a partnership on sustainable raw materials value chains, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and Afrexim Bank framework agreement with the DRC and Zambia for the establishment of special economic zones (SEZs) to produce battery electric vehicles (BEVs) and related services.

It is regrettable that the documents related to the joint battery manufacturing initiative are not accessible to the public in both countries, despite claims that civil society organizations (CSOs) are vital partners in the development process. The opinions and perspectives of the communities involved must be acknowledged and taken into consideration. Unfortunately, the leaders have yet to demonstrate a sincere commitment to prioritising the needs of their citizens, especially the youth and women, in developing this initiative.

<sup>1</sup> The meeting was convened by the Southern Africa Resource Watch (SARW)

During the meeting, it was emphasized that citizen participation is crucial for the battery initiative to be sustainable, effective, and meaningful. Leaders should prioritize the interests of their people and demonstrate transparency that earns the respect and trust of the communities they represent. To ensure responsible mineral resource governance, every citizen should have the right to participate in all decisions that affect them. This right should be central to the battery initiative, from project design to implementation, operations, and decommissioning. We must learn from past mistakes of irresponsible extraction and use of resources and avoid repeating them.

As the battery initiative gathers momentum, our governments must develop comprehensive policies on critical minerals extraction and beneficiation that must be aligned with industrial and economic transformation.

**As civil society, we are making the following requests to the governments of the DRC and Zambia:**

a. Governments need to implement a deliberate skills policy to train the Congolese and Zambian youth in skills and technology in preparation for the takeoff of the battery industry to avoid importing specialised labour. Five years is long enough for both countries to have adequate skill levels. There is a need for governments to make use of the already existing higher learning institutions such as the University of Zambia (UNZA), University of Lubumbashi (UNILU), which hosts the African Center of Excellence on Batteries, the Copperbelt University (CBU) and the Technical Education, Vocation and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA) and introduce, in partnership with international technical experts, special skills on EV Battery manufacturing in the wake of the planned establishment of the industry.

b. Governments need to be more transparent when coming up with MoUs rather than excluding the communities affected by decisions made. An inclusive, bottom-up approach needs to be implemented.

c. There is an urgent need for the governments to engage in a comprehensive consultative process on the planned establishment of the EV battery manufacturing industry in the DRC and Zambia. The two governments need to create enough space for consultation and engagement before putting ink into any document, especially regarding anything in the interest of the citizens of the two countries.

d. It is essential that the two governments respect the local people's land rights where the factories for EVs are to be set and proper resettlement procedures are in line with applicable policies and legislation.

e. The two governments should promote local procurement and transparency, take strict measures against corruption, and uphold ESG best practices.

Given the above recommendations, the CSOs from the two countries, DRC and Zambia, on the 21st day of the year 2023 at Pamodzi Hotel in Lusaka, Zambia, agreed to establish a forum to be called "**Pamoja Critical Minerals Forum**", whose main objective is to monitor and engage with the implementation of EVs cooperation agreement and to mobilise communities to hold both governments to account.

Jointly issued and supported by: <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> FEMIAAC: Femmes Entrepreneurs dans les Mines, de l'Agropastoral et divers secteurs au Congo, IDD: Initiative pour le Développement Durable , PP: Prospérité Partagée , CAJJ: Centre d'Aide Juridico-Judiciaire , ADDH: Association de Défense des Droits de l'homme, MUZ: Mine Workers Union of Zambia , SARW: Southern Africa Resoure Watch, NCA-DCA: Noweigian Church Aid-Joint ouuntry Programme , ASD: Acion for Sustainable Development, SUNREI: Sustainable Natural Resoure Empowerment Initiaive , DEGHA : Democratic Governance and Human Rights Advocates, FPZ: Future Preneurs Zambia ,AMSC: Association of Mine Suppliers And Contractors , CSPR:Civil Society for Poverty Reduction , PWYP: Publish What You Pay Zambia , ZCCN:Zambia Climate Change Network , FIAN-Zambia

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