

Newsletter

December 2025 ISSUE



9th ICGLR SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

The 9th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), held on 15 November in Kinshasa, marked a pivotal moment for regional leadership and cooperation. Bringing together the highest authorities from Member States, the Summit reaffirmed the collective commitment to peace, security, and stability across the Great Lakes Region. Leaders reviewed progress made in implementing the Pact on Security, Stability and Development and exchanged views on emerging challenges that require a renewed spirit of solidarity and coordinated action.



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A key highlight of the Kinshasa Summit was the handover of the ICGLR Chairmanship from Angola to the Democratic Republic of Congo, marking the start of a new two-year rotational presidency. In his acceptance speech, H.E. Félix Antoine Tshisekedi affirmed that “there will be no peace without justice, no stability without shared security, no development without real integration,” setting a clear and ambitious tone for his mandate. The DRC’s leadership will focus on five priority areas:

- ✓ Advancing the institutional reform of the ICGLR;
- ✓ Restoring and consolidating peace, security, and regional stability;
- ✓ Strengthening judicial cooperation;
- ✓ Intensifying the fight against the illicit exploitation and trade of natural resources through a more robust mineral traceability program;
- ✓ Promoting deeper regional economic integration.



Dr. Mubita Luwabelwa Took Office as Executive Secretary

Shortly after the ICGLR Summit, on 30th November 2025, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) marked an exciting milestone as the Organisation welcomed its new Executive Secretary, H.E. Dr. Mubita Luwabelwa, during a warm and vibrant handover ceremony held in Bujumbura.

Among the distinguished guests were H.E. Floribert Anzuluni Isiloketshi, DRC Minister of Regional Integration and Chairperson of the Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee (RIMC), and H.E. Edouard Bizimana, Burundi's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and Development Cooperation. Their presence—along with that of Ambassadors from ICGLR Member States—underscored the positive spirit of cooperation that has been driving the ICGLR's work.



Dr. Mubita Luwabelwa, a seasoned Zambian diplomat with more than 25 years of experience at national, regional, and international levels, officially assumed office following his appointment by Heads of State during the Summit. His arrival came at a promising moment for the region, as the ICGLR continued to play a central role in advancing peace and stability.



The Regional Interministerial Committee Set the Stage for the 9th ICGLR Summit

Kinshasa hosted **the 9th Ordinary Meeting of the ICGLR Regional Interministerial Committee (RIMC)**, the executive body of the Conference, on the eve of the 9th Summit of Heads of State and Government. The meeting served as a decisive preparatory step toward the leadership transition from the Republic of Angola to the Democratic Republic of Congo. In accordance with the Pact governing the ICGLR, this change signified a handover of the presidency across all structural levels of the organization. During the session, the outgoing RIMC Chair, the Angolan Minister of External Relations, Amb. Tete António, formally transferred responsibility to the DRC Minister of Regional Integration, H.E. Floribert Anzuluni. The 9th Interministerial Meeting took place amid persistent security and humanitarian challenges in the region, underscoring the relevance and urgency of the ICGLR mandate.



"The Pact for Peace, Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region responds to the structural problems at the root of armed violence that jeopardize development in the region."

Reflecting on this context, H.E. Floribert Anzuluni emphasized the enduring value of the organization: "The Pact for Peace, Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region responds to the structural problems at the root of armed violence that jeopardize development in the region." His remarks reaffirmed the ICGLR's *raison d'être* nearly twenty years after the Pact's adoption: to ensure that this foundational instrument remains an active driver of peace and prosperity in the Great Lakes Region.



National Coordinators Mobilised for a Stronger ICGLR

National Coordinators of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) met in Kinshasa for their 20th Ordinary Meeting, setting the stage for the 9th Summit of Heads of State and Government. As the technical backbone of the ICGLR, the National Coordination Mechanism ensured coherence between national priorities and the regional agenda on peace, security, democracy, and development. Convened just days before the Summit, the Coordinators reviewed progress across ICGLR programmes, examined financial governance matters, and discussed ongoing institutional reforms aimed at strengthening accountability and operational efficiency.

The meeting reaffirmed the collective resolve of Member States to uphold the ICGLR Pact on Security, Stability and Development at a time when insecurity persisted in parts of the region. Discussions highlighted the need to sustain political dialogue, enhance resource management, and reinforce the organisation's institutional capacity to respond to emerging challenges. As the Democratic Republic of Congo assumed the ICGLR Chairmanship from Angola, the session symbolised a renewed commitment to regional cooperation and solidarity. The conclusions and recommendations from the Coordinators' deliberations fed directly into the work of the Regional Interministerial Committee and ultimately the Heads of State Summit—marking a key step in the region's continued pursuit of lasting peace and prosperity.



*Ms. Pambi Mudila Marie,
DRC National Coordinator*



Kinshasa brought together Defence Experts, Chiefs of Defence Forces/Staff, and Defence Ministers to assess security developments and strengthen regional cooperation across the Great Lakes Region.

The engagements began with the 2nd Meeting of the ICGLR Specialised Defence Experts Committee, where defence experts from all twelve Member States assessed the security landscape across the Great Lakes Region. Their one-day session aimed to prepare for the 19th Meeting of the Chiefs of Defence Forces/Staff (CDF/CDS).

Experts reviewed the security situation in each Member State and identified priority areas for enhanced cooperation, including information-sharing, conflict prevention mechanisms, and strengthened protection of civilians.

Building on the experts' technical inputs, the ICGLR Ministers of Defence convened in Kinshasa for their annual meeting to examine the regional security brief, deliberate on progress in joint operations, and consider measures to further advance peace and stability. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to coordinated defence efforts, regional solidarity, and sustained dialogue as the foundation for long-term security in the Great Lakes Region.

The series of meetings concluded with a unified call to strengthen collaboration among defence institutions, reinforce joint initiatives to address persistent and emerging threats, and ensure the safety and protection of communities across the region.





ICGLR Strengthens Regional Cooperation for Responsible Mineral Governance Through Three High-Level Meetings in Kinshasa

In November 2025, the ICGLR brought together Ministers in charge of Mines, the Regional Committee, and the Audit Committee—three pillars of the Regional Initiative against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources (RINR).

The 9th Ordinary Meeting of Ministers in charge of Mines

reaffirmed the political commitment of Member States to strengthen responsible mineral governance in alignment with the theme of the Heads of State Summit: “Consolidating Peace and Security for Sustainable Development in the Great Lakes Region”.

Ministers acknowledged the persistent link between illegal mineral exploitation and insecurity, especially in eastern DRC and Sudan. They called for enhanced cross-border cooperation, law enforcement, and community-centered development initiatives to ensure that mineral wealth benefits local populations.

During the 31st meeting of the Regional Committee,

representatives of the 12 Member States reviewed progress in the implementation of the six tools of the RINR, including the Regional Certification Mechanism (RCM). A major outcome was the adoption of the revised Regional Guidelines on the Formalization of the Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Sector. These guidelines seek to transform artisanal mining into a legitimate and income-generating activity through simplified licensing, harmonized taxation, and improved access to finance and markets.



The 27th Meeting of the Audit Committee further consolidated technical oversight of responsible mineral trade. Participants reviewed Third-Party Audit reports from the DRC and discussed capacity-building initiatives, including a new regional webinar programme to strengthen the skills of ICGLR-accredited auditors.

Committee Chair Mr. Philip Kiriú reiterated the central role of the Audit Committee as the technical backbone of the RCM, ensuring credibility and compliance in the regional trade of 3TG minerals (tin, tantalum, tungsten, and gold). Ambassador Yasir Ibrahim Ali Mohammed, Deputy Executive Secretary of the ICGLR, commended partners such as GIZ and Impact for their continued support to the RCM's implementation.



ICGLR Gender Ministers Commit to Strengthening Women's Role in Peace and Security

On 1 November 2025, **Ministers in Charge of Gender** convened under the chairmanship of H.E. Ana Paula do Sacramento Neto, Minister of Social Action, Family and Gender Promotion of Angola. The session was officially opened by H.E. Micheline Ombae Kalama, DRC Minister of Gender, Family, and Child, and attended by high-level officials, including H.E. Jacquemain Shabani Lukoo Bihango, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of the DRC, who represented the Prime Minister.

The Ordinary Meeting of **ICGLR Gender Focal Points**, held on 31 October 2025, brought together national representatives, the ICGLR Regional Women Forum (RWF), and partners to assess progress on WPS implementation across Member States.

Both meetings coincided with the 25th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, marking a renewed regional commitment to transforming women's leadership in peacebuilding and governance.

Countries reported notable achievements, including the adoption of National Action Plans aligned with UN Security Council Resolution 1325, expanded women's representation in governance, and strengthened legal frameworks against gender-based violence. However, challenges remain, such as limited funding, sociocultural barriers, and the impact of ongoing conflicts on women's participation.

The meeting adopted a key regional instrument – the 2nd Generation Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2026–2030) and took note of progress on the ICGLR Regional Gender Barometer II, which together provide a roadmap and monitoring framework for gender equality efforts in the region. Delegates also discussed the revitalisation of the Regional Women's Forum Secretariat and adopted recommendations for its reactivation.

2025 Year in Review



Extraordinary Meeting of ICGLR Ministers in Charge of Mines Held in Lusaka, May 2025

The ICGLR Secretariat facilitated the Extraordinary Meeting of ICGLR Ministers in Charge of Mines, held in Lusaka, Zambia, in May 2025. The meeting brought together Ministers from ICGLR Member States to deliberate on practical measures to curb the illegal exploitation of mineral resources and to advance peace and stability through responsible and transparent mineral governance. The event was officially opened by the Guest of Honour, Hon. Paul C. Kabuswe, Minister of Mines and Mineral Development, who reaffirmed Zambia's commitment to the principles of the Lusaka Declaration adopted 15 years ago, noting that illegal trade in minerals "continues to undermine national sovereignty, fuel conflict and threaten human rights" across the Great Lakes Region.

The meeting gathered senior government officials, representatives from regional and international organizations, and development partners, including the European Union, GIZ, and the African Union. The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment from all stakeholders to deepen cooperation and operationalize regional mechanisms that ensure mineral wealth contributes to peace, stability, and sustainable development across the Great Lakes Region.



ICGLR Deploys Electoral Observation Mission for Burundi's 2025 Legislative Elections



A 60-member ICGLR Electoral Observation Mission was deployed across Burundi during its 2025 legislative elections. The mission covered all five new provinces and reached down to commune levels, reflecting the Secretariat's commitment to transparency, democratic values, and electoral integrity.



ICGLR Advances Gender Data and WPS Monitoring with Updated Regional Barometer



ICGLR revised and validated new indicators for its second Regional Gender Barometer, reflecting a stronger focus on conflict-related gender violence and digital tracking. With data input from Member States and civil society, this tool will help monitor the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda more effectively.



ICGLR Establishes a Gender-Inclusive Pool of Mediators Under Its New Regional Strategy

In the first half of 2025, ICGLR reached a major milestone by finalising and operationalising its Regional Mediation Strategy. With 24 mediators trained from Member States – including women leaders – the Secretariat established a functional and gender-inclusive Pool of Mediators. The new Mediation Coordination Mechanism ensures better synergy among ICGLR organs and Fora, while the launch of the ICGLR Mediation Community of Practice platform enables practitioners to collaborate and share experiences across borders.

ICGLR Trains 26 Women Leaders from Burundi and DRC to Strengthen Gender-Inclusive Mediation



In a powerful boost for gender-inclusive peace efforts, 26 women from Burundi and the DRC received specialised training to strengthen their leadership in mediation. These women's networks are now equipped to play a more visible and impactful role in local and regional peace processes. The initiative not only amplified women's voices but also laid the groundwork for national-level replication.

ICGLR Launches Defence Experts Committee to Strengthen Regional Security Cooperation

The newly established ICGLR Defence Experts Committee, composed of senior military officers from Member States, held its inaugural meeting in Nairobi. This milestone has strengthened the technical backbone for security cooperation in the region, helping Member States tackle shared challenges through structured collaboration.



Innovating for Peace: LMRC Launches AI-Powered Tools to Monitor Conflict and Hate Speech



In May 2025, the Levy Mwanawasa Regional Centre (LMRC) launched the IPSMT conflict dashboard and an innovative AI system to monitor hate speech on social media. Both tools enhance early warning and peace monitoring. LMRC also began updating the Gender Barometer to better track gender-based violence and women's security indicators across the region.

The IPSMT is an ICGLR-customized dashboard that provides automated access to near-real-time conflict data from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED), Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP/GED) and other sources. Focusing on the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Sudan, the platform monitors full, partial and ongoing peace processes.

The outputs contribute to the functioning of the ICGLR Conflict Early Warning System (CEWRS) and its Mediation Unit, and empower ICGLR decision-making organs, associated civil society organizations, and partners to monitor risks and respond proactively.

As a concrete action, the ICGLR Secretariat, supported by the Embassy of China in Burundi, delivered urgent humanitarian assistance to more than seven thousands internally displaced persons living in the Mubimbi camps (Burundi). The mission targeted 1,026 households, providing food supplies, warm clothing, blankets, kitchen sets, dignity kits for women, and school equipment to restore learning spaces destroyed by strong winds. The distribution brought immediate relief to families facing cold weather, food shortages, and limited access to basic services, while giving children a renewed chance to learn. Local authorities and camp residents welcomed the intervention as a timely gesture of solidarity, strengthening partnerships and reinforcing the ICGLR's commitment to supporting displaced communities in the region.

Regional Stakeholders Collaborate on Draft Strategy for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons



The Gender Directorate coordinated regional efforts to respond to internal displacement and refugee crises. A series of consultative meetings led to a draft Regional Strategy on Refugees and IDPs, grounded in local realities and supported by key actors such as UNHCR, ReDSS, the China Embassy to Burundi, and the EU.



Over 120 Professionals Trained on MHPSS in SGBV Programs Across the Region



In a groundbreaking move, RTF integrated Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) into SGBV programming. Trainings conducted in Uganda, CAR, Burundi, and Rwanda reached over 120 professionals and will have a ripple effect across the region, equipping actors with tools to respond holistically to trauma.



Building Professional Capacity: RTF Trains Justice Actors on SGBV Response

RTF trained 125 law enforcement and justice sector actors in Uganda to ensure that responses to violence are rights-based and survivor-centred. The trainings aimed to reinforce professionalism and empathy in SGBV case handling.



RTF Advances SGBV Prosecution Through Forensic Technology Research

RTF conducted in-depth research into the use of forensic technologies — like DNA testing — to strengthen SGBV prosecution. The findings are helping shape future investment in justice tools across the region and are crucial for holding perpetrators accountable.



OECD FORUM



Paris Conference

ICGLR Takes the Stage on the Global Scene

The Secretariat amplified its voice and strengthened partnerships at global events such as the Paris Conference in Support of Peace and Prosperity in the Great Lakes Region, OECD Forum on Responsible Mineral Supply Chains , Antalya Diplomacy Forum, and the Namibia Forum on Commemoration of UNSCR 1325. These engagements raised ICGLR's profile as a serious actor in peace, governance, and gender across Africa and beyond.



Antalya Diplomacy Forum



Namibia Forum



Secrétariat de la Conférence Internationale sur la Région des Grands Lacs

Secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region

Vision

The Conference Secretariat (CS) is an efficient and effective institution and the focal point coordinating the implementation of the Pact and other related initiatives of Member States and other stakeholders.

Nous sommes une institution efficiente et efficace et le point focal coordonnant la mise en œuvre du Pacte et autres initiatives y relatives des pays membres et des autres parties prenantes.

Mission

To be an effective and dynamic institution which *Coordinates, Facilitates, Monitors* and *Ensures* the implementation of the Pact and other initiatives, in order to attain peace, security, stability and development in the Great Lakes Region.

La mission du Secrétariat est d'être une institution efficace et dynamique qui *Coordonne, Facilite* et *Assure la promotion et le suivi* de la mise en œuvre du Pacte et autres initiatives en vue d'aboutir à la paix, la sécurité, la stabilité et le développement dans la Région des Grands Lacs.



Season's greetings

*As the year comes to a close,
the International Conference on the
Great Lakes Region Secretariat
extends warm Season's Greetings to
its Member States, Partners, and
stakeholders.*

*We thank you for your continued
commitment to peace, security, and
development in the Great Lakes
Region, and wish you a peaceful
festive season and a prosperous New
Year.*

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Dr Mubita Luwabelwa
ICGLR Executive secretary

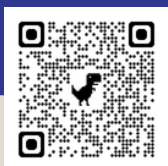
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PUBLISHER:
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