



February 21, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
United States Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

Re: Advancing a U.S.-DRC Strategic Partnership for Critical Mineral Security and Global Stability

Dear Secretary Rubio,

The United States and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) share a common interest in strengthening strategic mineral supply chains, ensuring economic resilience, and advancing mutual security objectives. As the world's leading economy and a champion of global security, the United States is well-positioned to forge an enduring partnership with the DRC—a nation that possesses over \$24 trillion in untapped reserves of critical minerals. These resources are indispensable to 21st-century defense, technology, and energy industries.

As the world's largest supplier of cobalt and a major producer of lithium, copper, tantalum, and uranium, the DRC's resources are integral to U.S. industrial competitiveness and national security. A U.S.-DRC partnership would not only reinforce supply chain stability but also serve as a model of responsible and ethical resource development—one that aligns with American values and global leadership in secure and transparent trade.

The moment is ripe to deepen this relationship and formalize a long-term economic and security partnership that benefits both nations. In a recent interview, President Félix Tshisekedi publicly called on the United States to invest in the DRC's vast mineral sector, signaling a clear desire to shift away from China's dominant influence and strengthen economic ties with the West. This presents a unique opportunity for the United States to establish a reliable and exclusive supply chain while reinforcing regional stability.

To advance these discussions, Senator Pierre Kanda Kalambayi and I propose an urgent high-level visit for President Félix Tshisekedi to meet with you and other key U.S. leaders in Washington, D.C. This engagement would serve as a foundation for long-term cooperation and ensure that the U.S. leads in securing access to the minerals critical to its future economic and national security interests.

Additionally, we strongly encourage President Trump's direct involvement in these discussions. A meeting between President Trump and President Tshisekedi would be pivotal in aligning strategic priorities and securing the necessary congressional support to solidify this landmark agreement.

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I. Strengthening U.S. Supply Chain Resilience Through Partnership

The Department of State plays a crucial role in advancing U.S. diplomatic and economic interests worldwide, including securing critical resources for national security. The Democratic Republic of the Congo offers the most viable solution, given that:

- The DRC supplies over 70% of the world's cobalt, essential for aerospace, defense, and advanced technology industries.
- The DRC holds some of the world's richest deposits of lithium, tantalum, and uranium, which are vital for next-generation military applications and energy independence.
- A direct supply partnership with the U.S. would mitigate reliance on third-party refining and distribution networks, ensuring a secure, uninterrupted flow of critical materials.

While China has historically dominated mineral supply chains in the DRC, the recent policy shift from President Tshisekedi presents a rare opportunity for the U.S. to establish a direct and ethical supply chain—one that prioritizes transparency, sustainability, and long-term stability.

The absence of U.S. engagement in this sector could lead to:

- A widening strategic gap, where adversarial nations continue to monopolize Africa's resources.
- Greater supply chain vulnerabilities that put American industries and defense capabilities at risk.
- A loss of economic leverage in an increasingly competitive global landscape.

II. A Strategic Alliance to Ensure Stability in the DRC and Beyond

For over two decades, the DRC has faced security challenges linked to foreign-backed militant groups that exploit its natural resources. These activities have led to:

- Over 15 million Congolese deaths, making this the deadliest conflict since World War II.
- Displacement, violence, and human rights abuses tied to illicit mining operations controlled by militant groups.
- The systematic looting of high-value minerals, many of which end up in unregulated markets, fueling rogue state activities.

Most recently, on January 22, 2025, hostile forces seized 10% of Congolese territory, targeting the highest-value mineral deposits. If left unchecked, this instability could:

- Undermine regional security and economic development.
- Create illicit trade networks that bypass U.S. export controls, potentially funding unauthorized weapons programs.
- Destabilize global supply chains, increasing volatility for U.S. manufacturers and defense industries.

A U.S.-DRC strategic partnership would serve as a stabilizing force, ensuring that resources are extracted, processed, and distributed through legal, transparent, and U.S.-aligned channels—blocking pathways that could otherwise be exploited by hostile actors.

III. Proposed U.S.-DRC Economic & Military Partnership

1. U.S. Access to Strategic Minerals
 - Granting U.S. companies extraction and export rights to secure a stable, direct supply chain for defense and technology sectors.
2. Banana Deep-Water Port Development
 - The DRC proposes granting operational control to U.S. firms, ensuring American oversight of a key African mineral export hub.
3. Establishment of a Joint Strategic Mineral Stockpile
 - The DRC is prepared to work with the U.S. to develop a strategic stockpile of Congolese minerals, enhancing U.S. economic and security resilience.
4. Strengthening Military Cooperation
 - Training and equipping the Congolese Armed Forces to protect mineral supply routes from foreign-backed militant groups.
 - Granting the U.S. access to military bases in key zones to protect strategic resources.
 - Replacing ineffective U.N. peacekeeping operations with direct U.S.-DRC security cooperation.

IV. A Shared Vision for the Future

For decades, Africa has been underutilized in U.S. strategic planning, despite its immense economic potential. The DRC offers the U.S. a unique opportunity to:

- Secure access to the world's richest mineral deposits.
- Build a resilient supply chain that aligns with U.S. national security objectives.
- Strengthen economic ties with Africa and counter foreign influence in the region.

This is not just an economic agreement—it is an opportunity to establish a model for responsible, ethical, and long-term resource partnerships that benefit both nations.

V. Urgent Call for Action

Secretary Rubio, this is a historic opportunity to solidify a U.S.-DRC strategic partnership—one that secures America's economic and military leadership for the next century.

We request your immediate engagement to schedule a high-level meeting with President Tshisekedi in Washington, D.C., followed by a direct discussion with President Trump to finalize this historic agreement with congressional backing.

We stand ready for immediate discussions and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Dr. Aaron Poynton, U.S. President of the Africa-USA Business Council

██████████ (m) | ██████████@africa-usa.biz ██████████@omnipoynt.com

On Behalf of Senator Pierre Kanda Kalambayi
Chairman, Committee on Defense, Security, and Border Protection
Democratic Republic of the Congo

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