

ICGLR REGIONAL FORUM SPARKS MOMENTUM FOR MINERAL VALUE ADDITION IN GREAT LAKES REGION



The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) held a Regional Forum from 6-8 November 2024, on mineral value addition in Juba, Republic of South Sudan, marking a key milestone in unlocking the economic potential of the region's mineral wealth. As an area rich in resources, the Great Lakes Region focuses on strategies to increase domestic beneficiation and transform its mineral sector, shifting from raw exports to value-added processing.

Held in partnership with the Republic of South Sudan and other stakeholders, the forum brought together industry experts, and private sector players to discuss a shared vision for building a more resilient and profitable mineral industry. In his remarks, the ICGLR

Executive Secretary, Ambassador João Samuel Caholo, emphasized that “value addition offers the potential for economic growth and fosters stability in a region historically affected by conflict over mineral resources”.

Building Local Capacity and Industry Value

One of the forum's highlights was a panel discussing strategies to strengthen local capacity in refining and processing minerals. The ICGLR actively promotes skills development and technology transfer to support value addition, particularly in the artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) sector. Empowering local talent and creating value-added industries within ICGLR Member States can improve job opportunities and economic diversification.



The economic potential of value-added mineral exports, as shown in the chart, underscores the benefits of retaining more processing activities within the region. ICGLR member states show strong political will to shift part of the mineral supply chain toward domestic processing. For example, the Council of Ministers of

the Republic of South Sudan endorsed a proposal to establish gold refineries and mineral trading centers within the country. This endorsement followed a presentation by Honorable Martin Gama Abucha, the Minister of Mining, to the Council of Ministers in Juba.

Enhancing Trade, Transparency, and Responsible Sourcing

The core focus of the forum was to strengthen a conducive environment for responsible sourcing and transparent trade. This aligns with the commitment of participating companies to uphold responsible mining practices that meet international standards. By ensuring that mineral supply chains remain free from conflict financing, these efforts contribute directly to the goals of the ICGLR’s Regional Certification Mechanism (RCM). This mechanism plays a pivotal role in verifying that minerals are sourced responsibly and are certified as “conflict-free,” thereby promoting transparency and accountability.

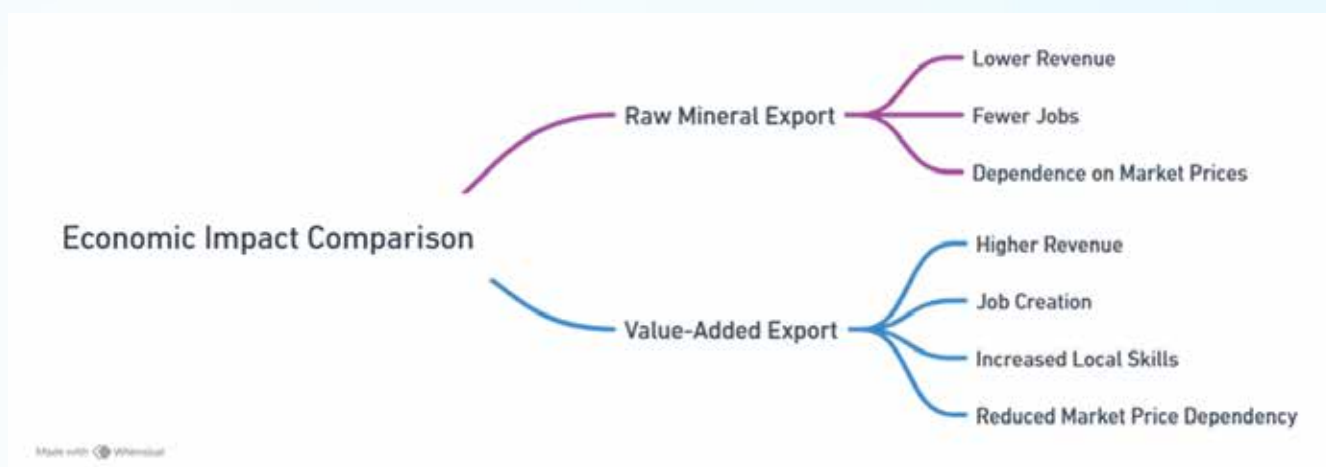
Through the ICGLR RCM, the region has seen significant growth in certified conflict-free mineral exports, providing international buyers with assurance about the ethical origins of Great Lakes minerals. This mechanism was hailed as instrumental in raising the region’s profile as a reliable source of ethically sourced minerals.

Outlook for the Future

The ICGLR Regional Forum on Mineral Value Addition emphasized the need for robust infrastructure, stable legal frameworks, and regional cooperation to attract investments and prioritize value addition over raw material exports. It called for partnerships between governments, academia, and the private sector to advance innovation and provide low-cost financing for artisanal mining. By promoting inclusivity and sustainable practices, the forum underscored the region’s potential to model responsible mining aligned with global market demands.

As the Great Lakes Region pushes forward with this vision, the impact on local economies and the global mineral supply chain is set to grow, presenting an exciting future for investors and stakeholders alike.

Comparison of Economic Impact – Raw Mineral Export vs. Value-Added Export



Source: <https://thedawn.com.ss/2024/10/14/cabinet-endorses-proposal-to-establish-gold-refineries/> European Union Delegation to South Sudan, Africa Mineral Strategy Group, Transparency International Kenya, Kivu Resources Minerals, OXFAM Kenya, Burundi Mining Authority, Rwanda Mines, Petroleum and Gas Board, University of Burundi, African Minerals and Geosciences Centre (AMGC), ...