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Confronting Modern Slavery in DRC-UK Mineral Supply Chains

The award-winning ITSCI Programme is proud to champion traceability and due diligence in the 3T minerals supply chain.

On February 26, ITSCI's implementation partner Pact, in partnership with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), hosted a workshop on confronting modern slavery within mineral supply chains from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The session hosted a wide range of professionals and provided an insight into one of the biggest challenges for mineral supply chains. Mining companies, traders, downstream industry, associations, development practitioners, academics, and representatives from the UK government discussed modern slavery issues in the minerals supply chain and exchanged ideas on how to address it.

The workshop was part of a larger research and training project funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office via the British Embassy Kinshasa. It focused mainly on cobalt, of which artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) in the DRC produces approximately 12-24% of the world's supply and employs 60,000-80,000 people directly.

The role of the International Tin Supply Chain Initiative (ITSCI) that has been addressing forced labour issues in the 3T supply chain since its implementation in 2010 served as an example of what can be done to address human rights abuses in the mineral supply chain.

ITSCI was confirmed in an independent OECD assessment to be the only industry system having standards 100% aligned with the OECD due diligence guidance. Since its establishment, the programme recorded and mitigated 7,160 incidents in the supply chain.

Every month ITSCI's on the ground team and reporting officers undertake around 500 to 600 visits to mining areas and processing facilities to monitor trading of the 3T minerals in central Africa. Despite limited resources and many challenges related to the complexity of the high risk areas, ITSCI has been mitigating risks in the DRC through it's on the ground assessment and by working closely with local communities and stakeholders.

ITSCI is committed to nurturing responsible sourcing of minerals by helping companies respect human rights and avoid contributing to conflict through their mineral purchasing decisions and practices.