

# Minister Julien Paluku Accelerates President Tshisekedi's Vision through U.S.–DRC Mineral Partnership and AGOA Renewal

HUNTERSVILLE, NC, UNITED STATES, July 4, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- H.E. Julien Paluku, the Minister of Foreign Trade of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is proud to submit this testimony for the Annual Review of the Eligibility of Sub-Saharan African Countries to Receive the Benefits of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) in 2026 as requested by the USTR. This initiative gives hope that AGOA benefits will be extended beyond 2026 in forms that further enhance trade between the United States and Sub-Saharan Africa, especially the Democratic Republic of Congo.



Minister Julien Paluku

In the report, the Ministry of Foreign Trade of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) proudly highlights the pivotal role of H.E. Julien Paluku in translating President Félix Tshisekedi's strategic vision for economic transformation into concrete results—particularly through his leadership in the implementation of the U.S.–DRC critical minerals partnership and the revitalization of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) agenda.

“

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*H.E. Julien Paluku, Congo DRC  
Foreign Trade Minister*

Under President Tshisekedi's reformist administration, H.E. Paluku has emerged as a tireless advocate for inclusive trade, transparency, and industrialization. His leadership has ensured that DRC is not only compliant with AGOA

eligibility criteria but is also positioning itself as a regional trade hub aligned with both African integration goals and U.S. commercial partnerships.

H.E. Minister Paluku has strongly supported the landmark U.S.–DRC mineral agreement focused on critical resources such as cobalt, copper, and lithium—essential inputs for clean energy and electric vehicle (EV) technologies. This agreement, backed by major U.S. private investors, including KoBold Metals, demonstrates the Tshisekedi administration’s openness to high-standard, rules-based investment frameworks.

“This is more than a mining deal—it is a symbol of trust, transparency, and the Congolese government’s determination to build value chains that create jobs and protect our people,” H.E. Paluku stated.

By embedding provisions for local value addition, contract transparency, and responsible sourcing, the mineral partnership reinforces Congo’s credibility as a global supplier of ethically sourced and strategically vital minerals.

Since 2021, H.E. Minister Paluku has led DRC’s return to AGOA with a new level of ambition. He spearheaded the creation of the National AGOA Export Strategy (2024–2030), identifying 26 priority sectors—including textiles, cocoa, coffee, and wood products—to diversify the country’s exports and create thousands of jobs.

Through the establishment of a National AGOA Committee, direct engagement with civil society, and support for SME financing via institutions such as FOGEC, H.E. Minister Paluku has transformed AGOA from a symbolic program into a national engine of industrial growth and inclusive trade.

As part of his ongoing efforts to deepen economic ties, H.E. Minister Julien Paluku is actively exploring the organization of a high-level trade mission of American investors to the DRC. The proposed mission will include B2B networking and matchmaking sessions with Congolese entrepreneurs and business associations. Site visits across various provinces—targeting priority sectors such as agro-processing, mining, logistics, textiles, and energy—will be organized to showcase real investment opportunities and connect U.S. firms with local partners.

From the modernization of customs systems (GUICE) and the promotion of the Lobito Corridor to the ratification of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, H.E. Paluku has actively aligned the DRC’s trade infrastructure with global standards. His actions support both AGOA goals and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), bridging U.S.–Africa and intra-African trade ambitions.

Under his guidance, the Ministry has prioritized anti-corruption, digital governance, and youth and women empowerment in trade, ensuring that economic growth is both inclusive and sustainable.

As the U.S. authorities debate the future of AGOA beyond September 2025, the DRC stands as a success story in progress. The mineral partnership and AGOA-driven reforms exemplify how

African nations and the United States can build mutually beneficial, values-based trade relationships.

H.E. Minister Paluku reaffirmed DRC's commitment: "This is more than a mining deal—it is a symbol of trust, transparency, and the Congolese government's determination to build value chains that create jobs and protect our people."

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