

## Press Release

For immediate release: 20 June 2016

# Fairphone establishes a transparent supply chain for all four conflict minerals

**Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 20 June 2016** – Today, Fairphone announces that conflict-free tungsten from Rwanda will become part of its supply chain. With this achievement, Fairphone has successfully managed to transparently source all four of the conflict minerals (tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold).

Fairphone began in 2010 as a campaign to increase awareness for the use of conflict minerals in consumer electronics. Six years later, this social enterprise has released two smartphones and more than 100,000 Fairphone owners have joined their movement, but this cause is more relevant than ever.

Most consumers are still lacking information about how their products are made, including where the materials come from and how they are sourced. A smartphone, for example, contains about 40 different minerals which come from every corner of the globe. The starting point of the mineral supply chain – the mining sector – is often fraught with environmental and human rights abuses ranging from pollution and dangerous working conditions to child labor.

A selection of these minerals, namely tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold, have been singled out as especially problematic. In some instances, mining and trading of these so-called ‘conflict minerals’ have contributed to fund rebel groups and thus support conflict and other adverse impacts, including serious human rights abuses. The Dodd-Frank Act, passed in 2010, requires all electronics manufacturers listed on the US stock exchange to report on the use of minerals sourced from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and surrounding countries and to show they do not finance conflict. Last week EU agreed an outline deal on a law that aims to address the use of conflict minerals in the European Union.

### **Finding a way to responsibly source minerals from conflict regions**

While the Dodd-Frank Act put a spotlight on the issue of conflict minerals, there were also unintended consequences in the countries where these minerals are mined. To avoid being associated with the harmful mining practices in the DRC and African Great Lakes region, most electronics manufacturers stopped sourcing from the region entirely, delivering another economic blow to local residents.

In 2013, in order to better understand and uncover issues related to electronics manufacturing, Fairphone began producing its first smartphone. The company focused on a range of projects to improve social and

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environmental aspects across its entire supply chain, including conflict minerals. Fairphone wanted to find a way to source traceable, conflict-free minerals directly from countries like the DRC to improve the mining practices and incomes of the communities most affected by conflict.

By partnering with programs such as the Conflict Free Tin Initiative (CFTI) and Solutions for Hope, Fairphone began sourcing [tin](#) and [tantalum](#) from validated conflict-free mines in South Kivu and Katanga, DRC for the Fairphone 1. The production of its latest phone, the Fairphone 2, has enabled the company to expand its activities. For example, at the beginning of this year, Fairphone became [the first consumer electronics manufacturer to integrate Fairtrade gold into its supply chain](#).

## Tungsten completes Fairphone's quest to trace all four defined conflict minerals

In parallel to setting up the pilot project for Fairtrade gold, Fairphone has been working closely with Austrian smelter [Wolfram Bergbau und Hütten AG](#) to support the reopening of the tungsten trade from Rwanda. Today, Fairphone is pleased to announce that the conflict-free tungsten will officially become part of its supply chain. Based on the current production schedule, this tungsten will be present in the Fairphone 2's vibration mechanism starting from August. With this achievement, Fairphone has successfully managed to transparently source all four of the conflict minerals identified in the Dodd-Frank Act.



*After leaving the mine in Rwanda, the tungsten is refined in Austria and then continues on to China where the vibration mechanism for the Fairphone 2 is manufactured.*

Compared to the artisanal tin and tantalum mines in the DRC, the semi-industrial tungsten mine in Rwanda provide clear improvements in working conditions, especially in terms of health and safety. Wolfram Bergbau, who was successfully audited by the Conflict-Free Smelter Program in April 2014 and re-audited in April 2015, has gradually started sourcing tungsten again from Rwanda including the New

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Bugarama Mining Company in Rwanda. Located in the north of Rwanda, near the city of Kidao, the mine employs between 700 and 1200 local miners (depending on demand) and is a key source of income for the community.

## Showing the rest of the industry what is possible

Fairphone's motivation for finding transparent sources of conflict minerals extends far beyond its own smartphone. The company wants to pave the way for the rest of the electronics industry to show that traceable mineral sourcing is indeed possible. Fairphone is working to create a different mindset among manufacturers, suppliers and consumers to continue to improve awareness of the issues related to electronics production and increase acceptance of sourcing from high-risk areas in a responsible way.

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### Note to the editor

#### **About Fairphone**

Fairphone is a social enterprise that is building a movement for fairer electronics. By making a phone, we're opening up the supply chain and creating new relationships between people and their products. We're making a positive impact across the value chain in mining, design, manufacturing and life cycle, while expanding the market for products that put ethical values first. Together with our community, we're changing the way products are made.

[www.fairphone.com](http://www.fairphone.com)

#### **About the Fairphone 2**

The Fairphone 2 is designed to last longer with a ground-breaking modular design that enables users to repair the phone themselves. The creation of this phone also allows the organization to build stronger relationships with suppliers, improve production processes and select more responsibly sourced components and materials. To learn more about the Fairphone 2, please refer to the [technical specifications](#) or view the [cost breakdown](#) for insight into the organization's business model and what each Fairphone 2 purchase supports.

The Fairphone 2 is currently available in [Fairphone's online store](#) with one-week delivery, as well as through selected [retail partners](#).

[www.fairphone.com/phone](http://www.fairphone.com/phone)

#### **Additional resources**

Video "The journey of conflict-free tungsten into the Fairphone 2": <https://youtu.be/2ONjzELD4r0>

Photos: [fairphone.com/press](http://fairphone.com/press)

Fairphone blog "Good vibrations with conflict-free tungsten":

<https://www.fairphone.com/2016/06/20/fairphone-2-good-vibrations-with-conflict-free-tungsten>

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