Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo signed a draft economic cooperation agreement on November 7, 2025, in Washington, D.C., marking a major step toward a full bilateral accord aimed at boosting trade, investment, and regional stability.

The signing coincided with the initialing of the Regional Economic Integration Framework (REIF), a pact designed to link economic development with peace and attract regional investment. Delegations from the United States, Qatar, Togo, and the African Union also attended the meeting.

The draft agreement outlines collaboration in several key areas, including mining, construction of the Rusizi III hydroelectric dam, cross-border trade and infrastructure, health sector development, and environmental conservation. Officials said once formally signed, the accord could deliver tangible benefits to citizens on both sides of the border while fostering long-term peace in the Great Lakes region.

The success of the economic pact is tied to progress on security commitments under the Washington Peace Agreement, including dismantling the FDLR rebel group and other militias operating in eastern Congo. For the first time, the Congolese delegation agreed to take concrete steps to neutralize the FDLR, a group long accused of fueling instability and undermining regional peace.

Plans for these operations were reviewed under the Concept of Operations (CONOPS) and Operational Order (OPORD) frameworks, signaling that the campaign will proceed with transparency and coordination. Participants acknowledged that progress has been slower than expected but pledged to redouble efforts and translate commitments into concrete actions on the ground.

The Congolese delegation also committed to refrain from hostile rhetoric against Rwanda, signaling a focus on implementing peace and security measures rather than public confrontation — a move welcomed by mediators and international partners.

Separately, Qatar reported progress in Doha-based talks between the DRC government and the AFC/M23, including prisoner exchanges and the launch of a ceasefire monitoring mechanism.

The draft agreement had been scheduled for signing on October 3, 2025, but Congolese President Félix Tshisekedi postponed the event, citing the need to first meet security provisions. Analysts say Congo’s decision to endorse the draft now is

a key step toward a full economic partnership deal, strongly encouraged by U.S. President Donald Trump, who has backed the Washington peace framework.