



REPUBLIQUE  
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DU CONGO

Ministère de l'Environnement,  
Conservation de la Nature et Tourisme



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## News Release

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# Agreement reached to proceed with largest forest carbon program in Congo Basin

**Kinshasa – 8 March 2013** – A diverse partnership of forest stakeholders has come together in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to submit a design for the largest ever carbon project in the Congo rainforests. In a three-day forum last week, forest stakeholders and government officials met to finalise DRC's Emissions Reductions Program Idea Note (ER-PIN). This highly participative process paves the way for DRC to harness important REDD+ conservation and financial opportunities, with the potential for up to US\$60-70 million in REDD+ funds from the Carbon Fund of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). The forum was organized under the authority of the Minister of Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism (MECNT) with the support of the global conservation organization WWF and the National REDD+ Coordination agency (CN-REDD), and funding from the government of Norway's development agency Norad.

Forum participants included a wide cross section of REDD+ stakeholders including community, forest concession holders, cattle ranchers, UN implementing agencies, civil society, indigenous peoples, business leaders; representatives of local, national and international non-profit organizations; and local, provincial and national level government officials. The group released an official statement, the *Kinshasa ER-PIN Communiqué*, mapping out the commitment and steps necessary to submit DRC's ER-PIN to the Carbon Fund of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) in the first half of 2013.

Key participants made the following statements in support of the initiative:

**DRC MECNT Minister Bavon N'sa Mputu Elima**

"This experience will contribute to the improvement of socio-economic conditions of our people through economic alternative investments associated with REDD+."

**Vice-Governor of Bandundu Province, Alexis Kiala**

"The Provincial Government supports the forum's outputs...The province is working effectively to strengthen existing mechanisms to monitor exploitation of forest resources and to fight against deforestation and forest degradation, to increase forest carbon stocks and gradually build a province where our daughters and sons live in harmony with nature."

**Bosulu Keddy, deputy secretary general of REPALF, a network of indigenous and local communities for sustainable management of DRC's forest ecosystems**

"Indigenous peoples NGOs represented by REPALF support this initiative as a way to further strengthen the sustainable management of our forests while reinforcing our traditional rights to inhabited land and forest resources. This will also contribute to our communities' development through sectoral programs that are participatory and adapted to our local contexts; based on the concepts of payment for environmental services and benefit-sharing, and carried out in accordance with the approach of free, prior and informed consent."

**Erick Kassongo, Groupe de Travail Climat REDD (GTCR)** "Congolese civil society supports the finalization of the ER-PIN and endorses its conclusions, while maintaining that social safeguards be implemented at all stages of implementation, particularly with sectoral activities that enable the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples and benefit sharing activities. Civil society also hopes to be involved in all technical discussions and exchanges as related to finalizing the ER-PIN for submission to the FCPF."

**Raymond Lumbuenamo, director of WWF-DRC, and Bruce Cabarle, leader of WWF's global Forest and Climate Initiative**

"WWF shares DRC's vision that REDD+ has the opportunity to deliver transformational impacts that benefit people and nature. We have pledged to continue to provide technical and scientific support to our partners here in DRC to help them harness REDD+'s full potential."

**Mike Korchinsky, CEO of Wildlife Works**

"ERA and Wildlife Works were very pleased at the progress that was made in this workshop towards a jurisdictional REDD program, and we are enthusiastic about continuing to support the Ministry of Environment Conservation of Nature and Tourism in developing this incredibly important program for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We would like to thank CN-REDD, WWF and Norad for hosting the workshop."

**Martin McLaughlin, Acting USAID-CARPE Director**

"The diversity of participants and organizations including the Government of DRC, the private sector, local communities, research institutions, and NGOs at the workshop illustrates the range of partners that will be necessary to implement low emissions development in an economically and environmentally sustainable fashion. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) has supported the development of a variety of tools that helped create the foundation for the Mai Ndombe project. For example, USAID/CARPE funded the Observatoire Satellital des Forest d'Afrique Central (OSFAC) to develop accessible information on forest cover change. Additionally, USAID/CARPE has supported WWF in the development of extensive village-based land use planning that was implemented by a diverse array of local and international partners and the identification of sensitive zones for globally significant biodiversity conservation within the Mai Ndombe project area. Ultimately, these efforts will benefit both local residents and the global community through actions that contribute to mitigating the risks of global warming."

**Jostein Lindland, Counsellor - Forest and Climate Change, Embassy of Norway, Kinshasa**

"The jurisdictional approach has huge potential for reducing deforestation and promoting development at the local and provincial levels in Bandundu. It is hoped that all the partners can work together to realize this potential."

During the three-day forum, participants agreed on key issues, including:

**Program area:** The area will encompass the future province of Mai Ndombe, including the current Districts of Plateau and Mai Ndombe, for a total of 12.5 million hectares of land, including approximately 9.2 million hectares of forest – and 3 million hectares of a mosaic of agricultural lands including savannah. This landscape includes the Kinshasa firewood deforestation frontlines, the world's largest Ramsar site, and critical habitat of the endangered bonobo – a great ape that only exists in DRC.

**Program implementation:** The project will be led by the Government of the DRC, as sole owner of the carbon, which may delegate the project management and coordination to one or more organizations for rapid implementation, in accordance with principles of transparency and good

governance. Stakeholders will be integrated into the strategy and decision-making process. The project will take a jurisdictional approach – meaning that it will be developed using consistent baselines and crediting approaches at the level of the proposed province of Mai Ndombe, and thereby reducing the risk of displacement of the drivers of deforestation and degradation (known as “leakage”), double accounting between independent activities, and enabling the scaling up of REDD+ beyond that which is possible solely at the project level.

**Reference Levels:** The baseline will be developed for the program as a whole, using the political boundaries of the future province of Mai Ndombe.

**Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV):** Implemented in accordance with the FCPF, which calls for maintaining strong synergies with the national level. In principle, there should be consistent methods and information sharing. In the short-term to make the program quickly operational, these will be developed at the national level – to provide a framework for implementation of similar systems at the provincial and project levels with the direct participation of communities.

**Payment for performance and benefit sharing:** Payment for performance must be distributed to all stakeholders through an agreed upon mechanism, while the social and environmental impacts of the program will be monitored by a process that is accurate and in compliance with environmental and social safeguards.

**Budget and Funding:** Budget has to be consolidated according to the Carbon Fund/ FCPF requirements and stakeholders are requested to channel information at their disposal, relating to the cost of implementation of sectoral activities, in order to finalise the budget.

The full official forum statement, the *Kinshasa ER-PIN Communiqué*, is available at:  
<http://bit.ly/ERPINcommuniqué>

For more information on DRC’s national REDD+ strategy, visit : <http://www.mecnt.cd/>  
For more information on WWF’s REDD+ conservation efforts, visit: [www.panda.org/forestclimate](http://www.panda.org/forestclimate)

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**Thank you for supporting the REDD+ process in districts of Plateau and Maï-Ndombe, Bandundu Province.**

