



NDC 3.0

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Shadow report

By SARW & Partners



SARW
Southern Africa Resource Watch

DRC, A SOLUTION-COUNTRY TO THE GLOBAL CLIMATE CRISIS

"I am proud to present the revised Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for the period 2021-2030, by which the country reaffirms its character as a Solution-Country through its immense forest massif, its dense hydrographic network, its energy potential and its strategic minerals."

Her Excellency, Ève Bazaiba, Deputy Prime Minister,
Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development,
2021

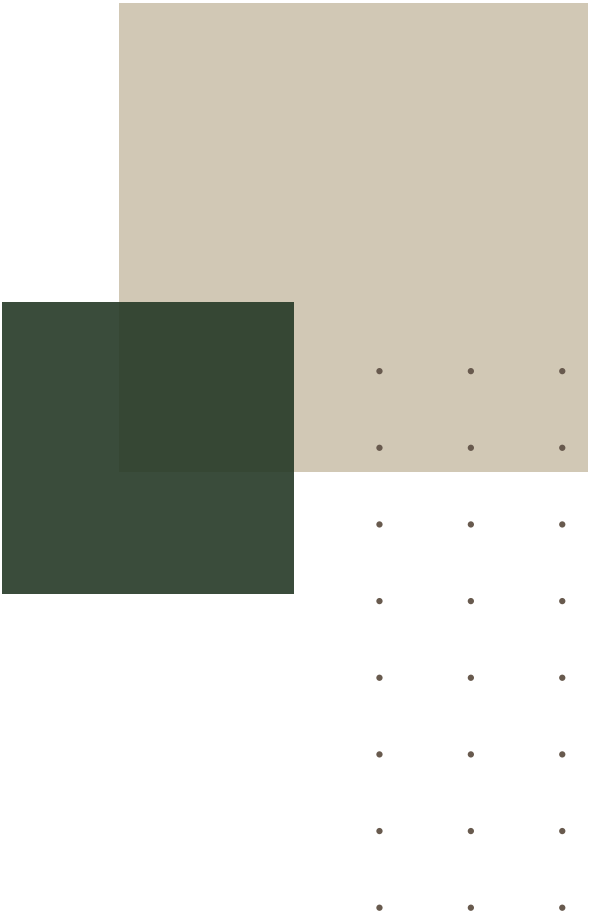


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Finally, SARW extends sincere appreciation to Prof. Celine Sikulisimwa for coordinating this process, as well as to all researchers, reviewers, and technical experts who provided constructive feedback throughout the preparation of this NDC 3.0 report – their insights were instrumental in shaping the final document.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) stands at a critical juncture as it prepares its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) 3.0. With over 152 million hectares of tropical forests, the world's largest peatlands, and vast reserves of critical minerals essential for the green transition, the DRC embodies the paradox of being both central to global climate solutions and among the countries most vulnerable to climate insecurity.

Its self-identification as a “solution country” highlights both promise and risk: the capacity to support global climate ambitions, but only if peace, governance, and inclusive development are addressed alongside mitigation and adaptation efforts. By defining itself as a “solution country,” the DRC positions its immense ecological and resource potential as central to achieving global climate goals; however, this potential can only be effectively harnessed if issues of peace, good governance, and inclusive development are addressed concurrently with mitigation and adaptation measures (Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo, 2023).

This shadow report, led by the Southern Africa Resource Watch (SARW) with support from the African Climate Foundation, reflects a comprehensive national consultation process that involved government, civil society, academia, parliament, development partners, and communities. It identifies key priorities for NDC 3.0, including protecting forests as the foundation of mitigation; delivering inclusive and conflict-sensitive adaptation strategies; decarbonising energy and mining systems; and safeguarding biodiversity and food systems from climate shocks. Notably, the process recommends that frameworks such as REDD+ include indigenous and forest-dependent communities, underscoring the need for governance reform and genuine participation.

The energy transition presents a significant challenge. Despite abundant hydropower, solar, and renewable resources, less than 19 per cent of the Congolese population has access to electricity, with rural electrification at just 1 per cent. NDC 3.0 should therefore combine bold renewable energy development with a robust clean cooking strategy, reducing dependence on wood and charcoal through improved cookstoves, fuel-efficient systems, and the Mission 300 Energy Compacts. Such measures would lower emissions, reduce deforestation, and improve public health—particularly for women and children. Equally important is the decarbonisation of the mining sector, where Ordinance-Law No. 23/007 and anticipated developments under the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) will make emissions reduction a matter of competitiveness. Mining companies must adopt low-carbon technologies, integrate renewable energy sources, and align operations with global net-zero supply chains.

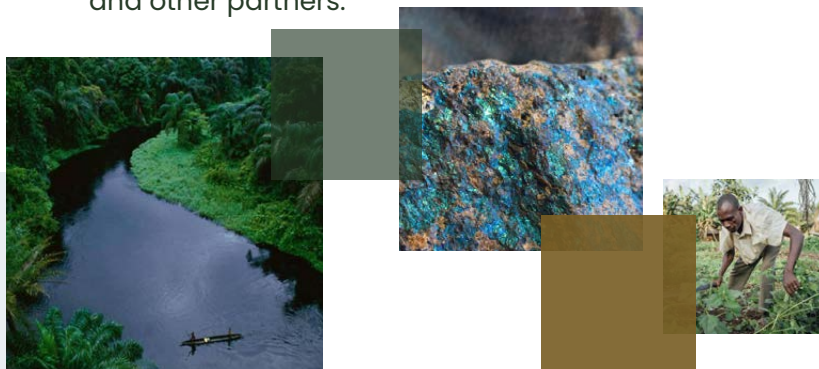
Governance and finance form the backbone of NDC credibility. However, weak institutions, overlapping mandates, and fragile peace continue to undermine implementation. This report recommends establishing a Presidential Commission on Climate Change and a Climate and Investment Development Platform to coordinate NDC delivery, mobilise blended finance, and anchor international partnerships drawing lessons from South Africa and Indonesia's Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETPs), which have experienced mixed outcomes. Without such frameworks, the DRC risks losing effective coordination with international partners and missing opportunities for green industrialisation and climate finance.

Furthermore, this report proposes several specific recommendations:

1. Develop a pragmatic transition strategy for new oil and gas exploration in forest and peatland areas.
2. Strengthen conflict-sensitive climate planning.
3. Mobilise climate finance through innovative mechanisms such as green bonds and performance-based payments.
4. Build inclusive governance systems that empower local communities.

If these measures are adopted, the DRC can transform its ecological wealth into a foundation for low-carbon development, peace, and resilience, positioning itself as a genuine solution provider in the global climate crisis.

Ultimately, this shadow report amplifies civil society's voice, underscoring its pivotal role in advancing an inclusive and just climate action agenda that integrates both mitigation and adaptation. The report is grounded in a robust methodology involving multiple consultations facilitated by SARW. While primarily targeting civil society, these consultations also included strategic discussions with academics, government departments, the development community, and other partners.



1 INTRODUCTION

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) expressed its climate ambitions through its first Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 1.0), submitted under the Paris Agreement in 2015, and later revised in 2021 (NDC). This version outlined the country's commitments to combating climate change, aiming to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 17% to 21% by 2030. Several key sectors were prioritised, namely Agriculture, Energy (including the oil, transport, and manufacturing industries), Waste Management, and Industrial Processes and Product Use (IPPU). To achieve these goals, a series of actions were proposed, focusing on both adaptation and mitigation measures.

In May 2024, the Southern Africa Resource Watch (SARW) launched a national consultative process to inform and support the revision of the DRC's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0), aligned with the next global climate pledge cycle. The initiative, implemented with assistance from the African Climate Foundation (ACF), has been widely recognised for its participatory approach. This technical report highlights the key areas requiring attention as the DRC finalises its national effort to develop NDC 3.0. It provides practical recommendations to guide and anchor the process. A central recommendation is the establishment of an international partnership to strengthen both the technical and financial dimensions of the NDC 3.0 process, and to facilitate the development of a Long-Term Climate Change Strategy consistent with the objectives of the Paris Agreement (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC], 2015).

At the outset of this SARW initiative, an analysis of NDC 2.0 was undertaken to identify its limitations and weaknesses. This report summarises the main findings of that analysis and offers recommendations aimed at strengthening NDC 3.0, ensuring that it is more ambitious, inclusive, and implementable.

2 METHODOLOGY

This shadow report amplifies the voice of civil society, highlighting its contribution to an all-inclusive and just climate action agenda that prioritises both mitigation and adaptation. The report is based on a robust methodology, which involved several SARW facilitated consultations. Primarily targeting civil society, the consultations utilised strategic conversations with academia, government departments, the development community, and other partners.

2.1 Sectoral Research Papers

Sectoral papers were commissioned to provide this shadow report, which amplifies the voice of civil society and highlights its contribution to an inclusive and just climate action agenda that prioritises both mitigation and adaptation. The report is based on a robust methodology, involving several SARW-facilitated consultations. Primarily targeting civil society, these consultations utilised strategic conversations with academia, government departments, the development community, and other partners – the discussion content aimed at a reimagined NDC. The following seven sectoral papers were commissioned and shared with the Ministry of Environment as written submissions into the NDC 3.0 drafting process. The papers served as the foundation for an NDC 3.0 National Stakeholder Workshop. A summary of these papers is included in table format as Annexure 2 to this report.

2.2 NDC 3.0 National Stakeholder Workshop

The consultative process concluded with a national workshop held on November 27–28, 2024, at the Sultani Hotel in Kinshasa. Seventy-two individuals participated in the workshop, representing various sectors from across the country.

- a. *National government*: parliamentarians; representatives of the ministries of Environment, Interior, Agriculture, Water Resources and Electricity, Fisheries and Livestock, Scientific Research and Technological Innovation, Social Affairs and Humanitarian Action and the Provincial Government of South Kivu (Ministry of the Interior).
- b. *Public bodies and companies*
- c. *Decentralised territorial entities*
- d. *Academic Institutions* (higher education and university institutions) such as the University of Kinsasha, University of Lubumbashi, University of Kisangani, National Pedagogy University, Université Catholique de Bukavu, etc.
- e. *Technical and Financial Partners*: United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the European Union (EU), German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), the Embassy of Sweden, etc., and
- f. *Civil society organisations and the media*.

2.3 Desk Review of Critical Literature

In-house, SARW assembled a team of resource persons who provided expert guidance. These efforts consistently supported the NDC work in the DRC, including drafting a technical report shared with the Department of Environment in February 2025 and developing this shadow report.

3 CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE REPORT

3.1 Global Context: NDC 3.0 – Raising Global Ambition

The DRC stands at a critical juncture as it prepares its NDC 3.0. With over 152 million hectares of tropical forests, the world’s largest peatlands, and vast reserves of critical minerals essential for the green transition, the DRC embodies the paradox of being both central to global climate solutions and among the countries most vulnerable to climate insecurity.

Its self-identification as a “solution country” highlights both promise and risk: the ability to support global climate ambitions, but only if peace, governance, and inclusive development are addressed alongside mitigation and adaptation efforts. By defining itself as a “solution country,” the DRC positions its vast ecological and resource potential as central to achieving global climate goals; however, this potential can only be effectively harnessed if issues of peace, good governance, and inclusive development are tackled simultaneously with mitigation and adaptation measures (Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo, 2023).

3.2 National Context

The DRC has over 152 million hectares of tropical forests, which account for roughly 10% of the world’s total, making it the second-largest tropical forest after the Amazon. It is also home to the world’s largest tropical peatlands, which represent approximately 30% of the planet’s tropical

peatlands and store nearly 30 billion tonnes of carbon (Dargie et al., 2017). Additionally, the DRC possesses abundant water resources and a wealth of critical, rare, and strategic minerals that are crucial for the global energy transition (World Bank, 2022).

Conversely, the DRC ranks among the least climate-resilient countries, regularly experiencing floods, droughts, and conflicts. The government faces a paradox: it must strengthen local peace and governance for its global environmental role to be effective. Addressing this challenge requires rigorous and practical actions involving all sectors of society, including both public and private actors, to ensure that national development aligns with climate objectives.

In the agriculture sector, the DRC has not yet achieved food security and remains highly dependent on food imports. However, the country has nearly 80 million hectares of arable land, of which only 10% is cultivated, and it benefits from favourable rainfall conditions. Rapid urbanisation and population growth, however, are driving land-use pressures and contributing to increased deforestation.

The energy sector highlights another significant challenge. Wood fuel remains the primary energy source, accounting for 94% of national consumption, while hydropower and fossil fuels are used sparingly. The DRC is one of the least electrified countries globally, despite the Inga Dam's estimated potential of 100,000 MW. Consequently, forest ecosystems face increasing threats from energy poverty and unsustainable resource extraction.

Rich in essential and strategic minerals, the DRC acts as a global reserve of cobalt and other vital materials for the energy transition. However, mineral exploitation, mainly by foreign firms, has led to environmental harm, water and soil contamination, and limited advantages for local communities, who remain impoverished and face worsening health issues. The DRC continues to face high climate vulnerability, further exacerbated by limited human, technical, material, and financial resources to respond effectively to climate impacts, which mainly affect the poorest populations.

Security and peace in the eastern regions remain among the DRC's most pressing challenges. Armed conflicts have stalled economic development, while the number of internally displaced persons continues to rise under precarious conditions. Governance weaknesses, particularly corruption, which permeates nearly every sector, further undermine the effectiveness of state institutions and the implementation of climate policy.

The government's climate strategy, outlined in its initial and subsequent NDCs and reflected in ongoing preparations for NDC 3.0 (the next cycle of global climate commitments), is grounded in the conviction that global climate goals cannot be achieved without conserving the DRC's ecosystems and managing its natural resources sustainably. This vision of the DRC as a "Solution Country" underscores the critical importance of its climate policies not only for its more than 110 million inhabitants, but for the entire planet. This new cycle presents a vital opportunity for the DRC to align ambition and action on climate change within its national development priorities. Through its NDC, the country must reconcile climate ambition, social justice, and economic sovereignty to deliver a just and sustainable future.

4 CLIMATE SOLUTION COUNTRY

Building on its natural capital, the DRC has, in recent years, positioned itself as a “solution country” in response to global climate challenges. The DRC defines this status based on four key factors:

- a. Abundant critical minerals for the manufacture of renewable energy technologies.
- b. Extensive forests that serve as major carbon sinks.
- c. Plentiful water resources for hydroelectric power generation; and
- d. Vast agricultural land for sustainable food systems.

This commitment must be reaffirmed in the draft of the third version of the NDC (2025–2035). In this context, NDC 3.0 should consolidate the emerging consensus that the DRC is one of the key countries under the Paris Climate Accords, capable of making significant contributions to global climate solutions. This potential should attract targeted international cooperation to support the DRC in delivering on this status.

However, the country faces a paradox: despite its ecological wealth and strategic importance, it grapples with multiple challenges that require urgent attention, including structural climate vulnerabilities, weak governance, persistent insecurity, widespread poverty, and an insufficient institutional and technological capacity to leverage its natural and human capital fully. Addressing these challenges is essential for the DRC to realise its vision as a valid climate solution country, while ensuring sustainable development and resilience for its population.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

5.1 Environmental Vulnerabilities

Although endowed with vast forests, fertile land, and abundant water resources, the DRC remains among the most climate-vulnerable and least prepared nations. The National Adaptation Plan (NAP 2022–2026) and the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) Index rank the DRC among the top five most vulnerable countries globally and the fourth least prepared to cope with climate risks.

Climate change impacts are already visible and intensifying:

- a. Heavy rainfall causes erosion, floods, and landslides, resulting in massive losses for households in Kinshasa.
- b. Droughts now occur even during rainy seasons, threatening agricultural productivity.
- c. Land degradation affects a country where 70% of the population depends on rudimentary rain-fed agriculture.
- d. Waste mismanagement contributes to ecosystem degradation and public health risks.

These realities underscore the need to integrate adaptation and resilience measures into the DRC’s NDC 3.0, transforming vulnerability into opportunities for innovation, sustainable livelihoods, and green infrastructure.

5.2 Governance, Security, and Corruption Challenges

Effective climate action in the DRC is inextricably linked to governance reform, peacebuilding, and institutional accountability. The country faces overlapping governance and security challenges

that constrain progress on environmental protection and climate policy implementation. The resurgence of violent conflicts such as those involving Mobondo, Mbororo, and M23 has displaced millions and destabilised communities, especially in the eastern provinces. These conflicts exacerbate ecological degradation, hinder conservation efforts, and divert resources from development priorities.

Corruption remains a systemic barrier, weakening institutional capacity, distorting resource allocation, and eroding public trust. Transparent governance, strengthened institutions, and the enforcement of environmental regulations are essential to ensure that climate finance and natural resource revenues contribute to national resilience and community development.

Addressing these interconnected challenges requires coordinated international cooperation, combining climate finance, technology transfer, and institutional capacity building. Such efforts would help anchor the DRC's transition toward sustainable development and secure its position as a genuine climate solution country under the Paris Agreement.

5.3 Structural Challenges

Beyond environmental and governance constraints, the DRC faces deep-rooted structural challenges that hinder its progress toward a climate-resilient economy:

- a. Massive imports of climate-resilient products and technologies that could be produced locally if climate funds were redirected to leverage Congolese scientific, technological, and industrial expertise.
- b. State fragility, infrastructure deficits, widespread poverty, and low community resilience continue to undermine adaptive capacity and economic diversification.

Overcoming these barriers requires a strategic redirection of climate finance toward local innovation, industrial capacity, and institutional strengthening. At the same time, the country must reinforce local peace and governance conditions. Sustained global cooperation, through enhanced climate financing and technological collaboration, should form an integrated program to drive the DRC's structural transformation toward climate resilience and sustainable development. Coordinated global cooperation, including scaled-up climate finance and technological partnerships, as part of an integrated program for the DRC's structural transformation toward sustainable development and climate resilience.

6 REVIEW OF PAST AND CURRENT NDCS

6.1 Climate Change Adaptation: A Significant Concern and Top Priority for DRC

Although its emissions, mainly from forestry and land use, followed by waste management, agriculture, and energy consumption (including the transport sector), make up a substantial part of its carbon footprint and require suitable climate action, they are among the lowest globally (MEDD, 2015). Nevertheless, the country remains highly susceptible to the effects of climate change. As a result, adapting to climate change is a significant concern and a top priority for the nation. Adapting to the impacts of climate change requires co-creating homegrown solutions, rather than importing technocratic models that are often ill-suited. Since 2023, the DRC has maintained a database of prototypes from the various editions of the Congolese Scientific Engineering Forums. It is time for the NDC to prioritise and support local adaptation solutions.

6.2 Absence of a JET Partnership or Climate Change Global Partnership for the DRC

Without a Just Energy Transition Framework, the DRC struggles to coordinate international aid. Unlike countries like South Africa, the DRC lacks a JET Road Map and a JET Investment Plan, making it challenging to secure coordinated global assistance.

6.3 Develop a DRC Long-Term Low-Emission Strategy (LTS)

The country currently lacks a Long-Term Strategy (LTS). It is imperative to revise its approach and establish a well-defined pathway within an LTS to support its NDC 3.0 effectively. In accordance with the provisions of the Paris Agreement (Article 4.19), all Parties are expected to formulate and communicate long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies that are tailored to their respective national circumstances, while upholding the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. During CMA.5, Parties were encouraged to submit or update these strategies by CMA.6 (November 2024), to facilitate just transitions towards achieving net-zero emissions by the middle of the century. The decision additionally highlighted the significance of aligning near-term NDCs with these long-term strategies.

This process of updating the last NDC therefore falls short of this requirement to cover the period 2025–2050, encompassing the entire economy. An LTS for the DRC must present emissions reduction options across the four IPCC reporting sectors, namely the Energy Sector, Industrial Processes and Product Use (IPPU), Waste Sector, and the broad Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Uses (AFOLU). For the DRC, this alignment is essential. The upcoming NDC 3.0 must be more than just an incremental update – it should demonstrate how short-term policies, particularly in the energy, land, and industrial sectors, align with a credible long-term pathway to net zero. This involves outlining a clear trajectory that addresses deforestation, increases renewable energy, and guarantees that critical minerals are utilised to support domestic industrialisation rather than perpetuate extractive dependence.

7 ENERGY SECURITY AND ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY

In the energy sector, the current NDC has focused on mitigation efforts across the industrial, transport, and residential sectors, based on the following assumptions: a more pronounced reduction in the energy intensities of petroleum products, electricity usage, and heat consumption. The following suggestions are proposed:

7.1 Expanding Renewable Energy Capacity

In the DRC, the energy sector represents both its most substantial opportunity for addressing climate change and a significant structural challenge. Hydropower has historically been the predominant energy source, contributing over 90 per cent of the installed capacity, primarily concentrated around the Inga I and II dams in Kongo Central province. Although these facilities are presently underperforming, they continue to exemplify the nation's potential to spearhead a continental energy transition through rehabilitation and expansion initiatives. The NDC should consider establishing a national program for access to renewable energy.

In urban areas, converting waste into thermal energy and then into electricity should be at the center of discussions, given the country's significant electricity deficit. NDC 3.0 should emphasise initiatives for alternative energy production to reduce pressure on forests. In developing its NDC

3.0, the DRC should not limit its focus solely to large-scale hydro projects. The lessons from past decades, where megaprojects failed to provide widespread electrification or resilience, highlight the need for diversification. Solar, geothermal, wind, and run-of-river mini-grids must be prominently featured as scalable and decentralised solutions, especially in rural areas where the national grid is unlikely to expand soon. Civil society actors emphasise that NDC 3.0 should set a credible, inclusive renewable energy expansion target that is clearly linked to both mitigation and adaptation objectives.

7.2 Improving Energy Access and Electrification

Energy poverty remains a key indicator of inequality in the DRC. According to the World Bank, fewer than 19 per cent of Congolese citizens have access to electricity—around 41 per cent in urban areas but just 1 per cent in rural communities. This is among the lowest rates of electrification worldwide, despite the country's vast energy potential. The DRC's NDC 3.0 must therefore establish ambitious electrification targets, aiming realistically to reach at least two-thirds of the population by 2035. Electrification should be seen not only as a development goal but also as a climate strategy, since it reduces reliance on biomass fuels, curtails deforestation, decreases household emissions, and enables broader co-benefits for health, education, and livelihoods.

Reducing dependence on wood fuel is a vital part of this strategy. Currently, wood and charcoal dominate household energy consumption, leading to extensive deforestation and exposing families to hazardous indoor air pollution. The clean cooking agenda must therefore be a key component of NDC 3.0. Priorities should include increasing access to improved cookstoves, investing in more efficient carbonisation methods, and speeding up the shift to fuel-efficient cooking systems. Importantly, this aligns with the DRC's commitments under the World Bank¹ and the Africa Development Bank (AfDB) sponsored Mission 300 National Energy Compacts,² which places clean cooking solutions alongside renewable electrification as critical elements of Africa's energy access agenda.

SDG 7: “Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.”

By building on this framework, the DRC can accelerate the adoption of clean cooking, reduce emissions from biomass, and protect the health of millions of households, especially rural women. The goal of energy access aligns with the UN Agenda 2030's Sustainable Development Goals, specifically SDG 7.

To promote a just and inclusive energy transition, NDC 3.0 must also rebalance the extractive-led model, where mining companies have traditionally dominated energy development. While mining remains crucial to the economy, new investments in hydropower, solar, and hybrid systems should be required to directly support national electrification targets rather than solely serving industrial facilities. In this way, the DRC's energy transition will not only drive growth but also advance justice – prioritising communities, safeguarding forests, and aligning domestic energy development with global climate commitments.

¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/energizing-africa>

² M300-AES-Compact-DRC.pdf

7.3 Decarbonising the Energy Mix

To achieve meaningful emission reductions, NDC 3.0 must prioritise the decarbonisation of the DRC's energy mix, balancing the country's development needs with global climate imperatives. This entails gradually phasing out dependence on fossil fuels and unsustainable biomass while scaling up investments in renewable energy sources such as hydro, solar, and biomass-to-energy systems. Expanding access to clean, affordable, and reliable energy, particularly in rural areas, will reduce deforestation linked to charcoal production and promote inclusive economic growth. The DRC's vast hydroelectric capacity, if modernised and integrated with decentralised renewable systems, offers a unique opportunity to power industries, including mining and manufacturing, through low-carbon means. Moreover, aligning energy investments with green financing mechanisms and regional power integration can enhance energy security and resilience. By decarbonising its energy mix, the DRC can position itself as both a renewable energy hub and a model for low-carbon industrialisation, reinforcing its commitment to a just and sustainable energy transition.

7.3.1 Decarbonising the mining sector

Decarbonising the mining sector is vital for the DRC as it prepares its NDC 3.0. Ordinance-Law No. 23/007 of March 2023 establishes a framework for taxing carbon emissions and regulating carbon trading, which means mining operations will face increasing pressure, both domestically and internationally, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. With the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) introducing levies on carbon-intensive imports, the competitiveness of Congolese critical minerals depends on how effectively the sector cuts its carbon footprint.

NDC 3.0 must therefore establish clear decarbonisation commitments for the mining sector, including mandatory emissions monitoring, the adoption of low-carbon technologies such as hybrid haulage and electrified equipment, and the integration of renewable energy sources into extraction and processing operations.³ The DRC's extensive hydroelectric potential offers a practical pathway to reduce reliance on diesel; however, this requires investments in grid stability and renewable energy infrastructure. By incorporating mining decarbonisation strategies into its climate policy, the DRC can maintain market access, align with global net-zero ambitions, and ensure that its role as a supplier of critical minerals enhances, rather than diminishes, its contribution to the worldwide effort against climate change.

7.3.2 Addressing the Fossil Fuels Dilemma

A credible NDC 3.0 must outline a plan for reducing the country's dependence on fossil fuels and unsustainable biomass. Although the DRC has relatively low emissions, widespread use of charcoal and firewood significantly damages forests and increases greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, shifting households to modern energy services, primarily through renewable electrification, should be seen as a key mitigation priority. NDC 3.0 must adopt a clear stance on fossil fuels in accordance with global commitments to phase down new investments in coal, oil, and gas. This includes assessing the risks of locking the country into stranded assets that will decrease in value as the world moves towards decarbonization.

7.4 Supporting Value-Added Industries

Decarbonising the DRC's development pathway requires a deliberate focus on technological, industrial, and scientific sovereignty as a foundation for sustainable growth and climate resilience. NDC 3.0 should therefore prioritize homegrown innovation rooted in local knowledge systems, frugal technologies, and the creativity of Congolese scientists, women, youth, and indigenous communities as a core engine of decarbonisation. Harnessing the DRC's vast reserves of critical

minerals such as cobalt, lithium, and copper presents an opportunity to move from raw material extraction to value-added green manufacturing, including the production of nano-detectors, greenhouse gas sensors, and renewable energy technologies. Such innovations would not only enable low-cost, localized climate monitoring and data collection but also build national expertise in green technologies, stimulating research, technical training, and industrial diversification. Aligning technological advancement with renewable energy expansion would further drive a low-carbon industrial revolution, linking climate action to inclusive job creation and economic sovereignty. Through this integrated approach, the DRC can transform its mineral wealth into the cornerstone of a decarbonised, innovation-driven economy, positioning itself as a leader in Africa's equitable and technologically empowered energy transition.

7.4.1 For Congolese Technological, Industrial, and Scientific Sovereignty

To be genuinely effective and aligned with both national and international realities, the NDC must go beyond conventional approaches and integrate concrete strategies to harness Congolese innovation. It is in this synergy between international climate commitments and the country's endogenous potential that a significant opportunity arises for sustainably mitigating the causes and effects of climate change in the DRC. Thus, the DRC cannot be a "solution country" without valuing its national ingenuity, including:

- a. Local knowledge and frugal innovations from rural communities.
- b. Congolese scientific and technological potential.
- c. Contributions from women, youth, indigenous peoples, and non-literate populations.

A strategic approach is the effective use of critical minerals in the production of advanced technological tools. The DRC is a leading global geological actor, with substantial reserves of cobalt, lithium, coltan, and other minerals essential to the worldwide energy transition (Arezki, 2025). While mining has often been linked to environmental and social challenges, this wealth can be leveraged to drive the country's technological and climate sovereignty.

Using these critical minerals to manufacture nano-detectors and GHG sensors represents a breakthrough application. Traditionally, monitoring GHG emissions requires expensive, imported equipment, often unsuitable for the DRC's complex and widespread contexts (forest basins, wetlands, scattered industrial sites), perpetuating dependency on external actors. Integrating nanomaterials derived from local minerals would enable:

- a. Localised, low-cost monitoring tools: Sensors based on cobalt or copper (used as catalysts or sensitive surfaces) (Chakraborty, Koushik, Chaudhary, & Mishra, 2024) could be widely manufactured and deployed to track methane emissions from peatlands, deforestation zones, or industrial facilities.
- b. National expertise in green technologies: Local development and manufacturing of these tools would create a technological value chain, fostering research, training of Congolese engineers and technicians, and the emergence of a climate innovation economy. Technological sovereignty is essential to ensure mitigation solutions are relevant, sustainable, and adaptable to the DRC's specific needs.
- c. Integrating this strategy into the NDC offers a double advantage. Firstly, it provides accurate, real-time climate data, boosting the credibility and effectiveness of mitigation and adaptation measures, as precise emission measurement is the foundation of any robust climate policy. Secondly, it values local innovation and mineral resources ethically and sustainably, shifting from a raw material export model to one focused on high-value technological solutions.



Furthermore, NDC 3.0 should link the growth of renewable energy to structural transformation. By supporting value-added industries, especially those processing critical minerals such as cobalt, lithium, and copper, the DRC can position itself at the centre of Africa's equitable energy transition. Renewable energy-powered value chains, such as battery manufacturing, offer opportunities not only to reduce emissions but also to create jobs, diversify exports, and increase government revenues.

Finally, NDC 3.0 should explicitly connect the energy transition with regional integration. No single country can manage the whole value chain of critical minerals or renewable technologies alone. Through bilateral and regional partnerships, particularly within the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the DRC can leverage its energy potential to develop industrial hubs and enhance continental resilience.

7.5 Just Energy Transition

The energy component of the DRC NDC 3.0 must go beyond general commitments. It should establish clear targets for expanding renewable energy, increasing electrification, and gradually phasing out fossil fuels, to decarbonise the national energy mix. More importantly, it needs to present these objectives as closely linked to social justice, environmental conservation, and Africa's broader industrialisation plans. In doing so, the DRC can demonstrate its commitment to being a 'solution country not only protecting its forests and biodiversity but also leading a people-centred energy transition that avoids stranded fossil assets, supports global climate goals, and aligns with national development priorities.

8 NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

8.1 Forestry

As highlighted in the DRC's 2021 NDC, national emissions are mainly dominated by the Forestry and Other Land Use (FOLU) sector, which contributes nearly 86 per cent of total emissions, compared to 11 per cent from Waste, 0.86 per cent from Energy, and 0.61 per cent from Agriculture. The DRC's forests are vital to the global carbon cycle as they store billions of tonnes of carbon. Successive NDCs have identified forestry as the cornerstone of mitigation, with the country submitting frameworks to the UNFCCC such as the National REDD+ Strategy and the Forest Reference Emissions Level, alongside ambitions to develop the Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions. However, it is essential to ensure that REDD+ initiatives promote community involvement and reduce inequalities by including indigenous peoples and forest-dependent communities in the decision-making process. NDC 3.0 must prioritise inclusive governance systems within forestry and land-use policies, guaranteeing that mitigation efforts promote both climate and social justice.

8.1.1 Forestry and Hydrocarbons and the Energy Transition, specifically in the Congo Basin

A significant dilemma remains regarding the DRC government's interest in auctioning licensing rights for numerous oil and gas blocks located in forest areas. This will open parts of the country's rainforest to exploitation, contradicting DRC's NDC commitments to increasing its emission reduction ambitions. Like several oil and gas-dependent African economies, this poses an existential dilemma that will require a pragmatic approach informed by a Just Energy Transition Framework and the DRC's national circumstances.

The re-auction of 27 oil blocks and 3 gas blocks (initiated in 2022 and currently suspended) is estimated at USD 650 billion. It is now essential to assess the real risks to sensitive ecosystems (peatlands, Virunga and Salonga parks) and to establish mechanisms to preserve climate balance while exploiting these resources for the benefit of the country, the world, and future generations.

8.1.2 Forestry and Carbon Markets

Forests remain both an invaluable resource and a contentious issue. For the DRC to utilise its forests as part of its 'solution country' narrative, the NDC 3.0 must take a firm stance on forestry governance. There is an urgent need for transparent agreements that guarantee performance-based payments under REDD+ and carbon markets, ensuring that these funds are reinvested in sustainable livelihoods and local governance systems. As the next section discusses biodiversity, the connection with the health of the forestry ecosystem is clear.

The DRC must expedite and finalise the lifting of the moratorium on forest allocations, which has been in effect since 2002. This process has been hindered by inadequate funding for geographic planning. The State budget must allocate resources to this vital component. The diverse array of forests within the country facilitates a balanced approach that includes preservation, sustainable utilisation, and systematic reforestation efforts. While considerable attention is often directed towards tropical rainforests, the DRC also features forests interspersed with savannas across various regions, such as Kasai, Katanga, Grand Bandundu, and Kongo Central.

8.2 Biodiversity

The DRC is one of the world's most biodiverse countries. It is home to 450 mammal species, 1150 bird species, 400 fish species, and over 15,000 plant species.⁴ This includes rare species such as the northern white rhinoceros, mountain gorillas, and endemic okapi, as well as endemic great apes (the eastern lowland gorilla and bonobo). Five natural World Heritage sites are in the DRC. A vast network of protected areas, covering about 8% of the national territory, conserves the country's diverse ecosystems. The Virunga National Park, home to the famous mountain gorillas, is an example. Its wetlands and rivers support unique aquatic life.

In socio-cultural terms, the DRC's rich biodiversity underpins food security, medicine, and the cultural identity of the Congolese. Once again, the threat from deforestation is severe, driven by mining concessions, agricultural expansion, and the direct effects of climate change. Therefore, it is vital to ensure that the expansion of critical minerals extraction does not undermine biodiversity protection if not carefully regulated. Strengthening REDD+ mechanisms and creating community forest monitoring brigades is essential. NDC 3.0 must consequently be explicit about the responsible sourcing of critical minerals needed for the world's energy transition.

9 LAND, WATER, AGRICULTURE, AND PEATLANDS

Land and water resources remain at the heart of the DRC's climate change adaptation strategy and must be given prominent consideration in NDC 3.0. Agriculture, which employs more than 60% of the population, remains highly vulnerable to climate variability. NDC 3.0 should therefore promote climate-smart agriculture and encourage a shift away from rainforest exploitation towards savanna-based farming, while addressing low productivity through targeted investments in infrastructure, access to inputs, and strengthened land governance.

⁴ <https://dicf.unepgrid.ch/democratic-republic-congo/biodiversity>

9.1 Good Governance of Land Management Systems

Good governance of land resources remains an absolute necessity to curb the effects of climate change through:

- a. Strengthening and stabilising institutions to ensure the monitoring of decisions and measures taken to combat global warming.
- b. Better land management through controlled urbanisation and responsible land use, capable of containing population growth and its impact on natural resources.

9.2 Implementation of the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach

Funding a national plan for the DRC's Integrated Water Resources Management to account for water resources and their interactions with climate change. This requires coordinated and sustained management of available water resources (surface and groundwater) to maintain fundamental climate balances. Thus, water governance also needs to be strengthened in NDC 3.0. Although the DRC's hydropower potential is vast, many people still lack access to safe drinking water. Urgent investments in irrigation and integrated water resource management are necessary to improve resilience and boost agricultural productivity.

With respect to agricultural practices, the following factors are essential:

- a. Promote agroecology and establish climate-smart pilot farms: Addressing food security and revisiting counterproductive practices in line with GHG reduction ambitions.
- b. Ensuring and implementing sustainable agriculture to maintain the balance between GHG emissions and their sequestration (e.g., agroforestry).
- c. Optimising effective, low-pollution agricultural practices (fertilisation, management of animal waste).
- d. Introducing climate-smart agriculture capable of ensuring food security and mitigating the impacts of climate change on natural resources (soil, water, seeds, pests).

9.3 Peatlands and Carbon Sinks

As noted earlier, peatlands add another dimension to the ambition of NDC 3.0. The scale of these ecosystems and their contribution to nature-based solutions could significantly boost the DRC's commitments. This region extends beyond the central basin and includes the West Lowland Forest, the Atlantic Coast, the Albertine Rift Valleys, and the Katanga Plateau. Therefore, peatland mapping, assessment, and wetland restoration – covering areas already used for agriculture and livestock – become a priority. Including peatlands in the national climate strategy will help protect carbon sinks while promoting sustainable land use, which is a vital part of the DRC's Solutions Country contributions. By adopting these measures, NDC 3.0 can help transform agriculture, peatland and wetland management, and water systems from vulnerabilities into foundations of food security, economic stability, and enduring climate resilience.

10 GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

“To Become a Climate Solutions Country, the Democratic Republic of Congo Must Strengthen its Institutions and Increase Investments”, the World Bank, 2023⁵

⁵ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2023/11/15/a-climate-solutions-country-afe-1123-democratic-republic-of-congo-institutions#:~:text=As%20a%20steward%20of%20large,Bank%20Country%20Director%20for%20DRC.>

10.1 Extensive Stakeholder Engagement

The credibility and effectiveness of the DRC's climate commitments largely depend on its governance and institutional capacity. Despite progressive legislation and policy frameworks, weak institutions, corruption, and overlapping mandates persistently hinder climate action.

Box 1: Key governance and research measures

- **Strengthen Institutional Coordination:** Establish and operationalize a specialized structure for greenhouse gas (GHG) management to coordinate inventories and actions across local, provincial, and national levels.
- **Equip and Build Capacity:** Provide this structure and related institutions with the tools, technologies, and training needed to conduct GHG inventories according to IPCC standards.
- **Enhance Data Infrastructure:** Ensure adequate tools, equipment, and systems for continuous data collection, analysis, and reporting to support climate decision-making.
- **Invest in National Innovation:** Promote Congolese scientific and technological research, emphasising local and frugal engineering solutions, especially innovations from marginalised and community-based actors.
- **Develop Early Warning Systems:** Establish and maintain early warning systems for floods and other extreme climate events, while strengthening meteorological services to generate predictive scenarios and manage data effectively.
- **Assess and Improve Climate Strategies:** Conduct a differential diagnosis of existing strategies to achieve NDC targets, identifying gaps and refining methodologies to enhance effectiveness.
- **Reinforce Climate Transparency:** Allocate adequate resources to strengthen the national climate transparency framework, in line with Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.
- **Advance Forest Monitoring:** Carry out annual forest mapping using modern remote sensing technologies to monitor forest dynamics and track changes in carbon stocks.
- **Secure Data Sovereignty:** Guarantee autonomous national management of forest carbon sequestration data through national facilities such as the Yangambi Carbon Tower.
- **Institutionalise an MRV Framework:** Develop and adopt a national Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) framework adapted to local realities for emission inventories and mitigation actions.

The Technical NDC Report (2024) highlights notable gaps in coordination between the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, provincial authorities, and sectoral ministries.

Civil society actors note that many of the ambitious targets in successive NDCs lack clear implementation strategies. This highlights broader institutional weaknesses: limited technical expertise, poor data systems, and inadequate funding allocations for climate action in the national budget.

At the provincial and local levels, governance faces additional challenges due to insecurity, limited administrative capacity, and the absence of mechanisms to include community voices. Without decentralized structures that empower provinces and local authorities, climate commitments remain inaccessible to affected communities. Urgent institutional reforms are essential. These include clarifying mandates across ministries, strengthening the Climate Change Division, and establishing effective systems for monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) to

ensure accountability. Increased investment in data systems would also enhance transparency and accountability, enabling the DRC to access performance-based finance and carbon markets. Civil society emphasises that governance must be strengthened both technically and politically. Diplomatic accountability requires that agreements made in international forums are implemented as domestic law and policy, subject to parliamentary oversight and public scrutiny. Without such accountability, the gap between global commitments and local realities will persist.

Therefore, governance and institutional capacity form the core of the DRC's NDC implementation. Enhancing them is not just a technical task but a vital public policy issue.

10.2 Water Governance

Water governance must also be reinforced in NDC 3.0. Although DRC has vast hydroelectric potential, many people still lack access to safe drinking water. Urgent investments in irrigation and Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) are necessary to enhance resilience and increase agricultural productivity. By implementing these measures, NDC 3.0 can help transform agriculture, peatland and wetland management, and water systems from sources of vulnerability into pillars of food security, economic stability, and sustainable climate resilience.

11 GEOPOLITICS AND PATHWAYS TO A CLIMATE SOLUTION COUNTRY

To reinforce its role as a solution country for the climate crisis, DRC must take decisive geopolitical steps that align peace, governance, and low-carbon development. The DRC should spearhead a global campaign to mobilise greater NDC financing from donor governments, multilateral institutions, private investors, and philanthropic organisations. Such a campaign would not only provide resources to meet its climate ambitions but also signal the DRC's pivotal role in advancing the energy transition across Africa and globally.⁶

The state must also intensify its negotiating stance with multinational corporations, ensuring that the country secures larger stakes in mining ventures and strengthens domestic control over the management of large-scale resource projects. Yet this effort cannot succeed without a parallel commitment to building stronger, more transparent institutions capable of managing conflict, corruption, and fragility.⁷ Renewed international initiatives to end the protracted wars in the eastern provinces remain essential, particularly given the well-documented links between multinational supply chains and the illegal exploitation of critical minerals. Without peace, the DRC cannot credibly implement its climate pledges or transition to a green economy.

Institutional reform is equally urgent. The DRC must strengthen its fragmented climate governance by establishing a clear national climate strategy and a central coordinating body. Such reforms would enhance NDC alignment and ease access to green bonds, international climate finance, and domestic resources. Simultaneously, innovation should be integrated into the country's climate strategy. Creating hubs and incubators dedicated to clean energy, mining, and environmental technologies would enable the DRC to shift from raw resource extraction towards fair, resource-based industrialisation. Overall, these steps would help the DRC capitalise on its geopolitical vulnerabilities by leveraging leadership-driven climate action to build resilience, enhance institutional capacity, and foster global cooperation.

⁶ SARW, Geopolitics and Critical Minerals Paper (Unpublished Southern Africa Resource Watch policy paper, 2024).

⁷ United Nations University, Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheet: Democratic Republic of the Congo (Oslo: NUPI, 2023), 5–6.

12 CLIMATE FINANCE

12.1 A biased global financing system favouring mitigation

Finance remains the most debated aspect of the DRC's climate strategy. Despite developed countries' commitment to mobilise USD 100 billion per year since 2009 (and the fact that polluting countries have exceeded their disbursements), climate financing remains uneven globally:

- a. In 2022, the OECD reported USD 115.9 billion mobilised, but Oxfam estimates the real value at USD 28–35 billion. The DRC needs its own verified figures – but with which experts?
- b. Most funding flows to industrialised emerging countries such as Indonesia, Brazil and South Africa are driven by mitigation goals and geopolitical alignment. The DRC must establish a national discourse on climate economic issues, grounded in scientific evidence and consistent among policymakers, scientists, and NGOs.

Successive DRC NDCs have set ambitious goals; however, they mainly depend on external funding. The 2015 NDC estimated a need of USD 21 billion by 2030 to meet its targets, while the 2021 NDC increased this figure to USD 48.68 billion. Consequently, over 80 per cent of these measures relied on international assistance. A more effective approach to climate action would be to boost the national budget allocated to the climate economy, starting from the 2026 fiscal year, rather than depending almost entirely on foreign funding. The strategy also involves establishing, within the pillars of NDC 3.0, a Congolese Fund for Climate Losses and Damages, financed through green taxes and mining royalties.

The government needs to conclude the process of lifting the moratorium on forest concessions by providing funding for the geographic planning that has been required since 2002.

12.2 The Absence of a Climate and Investment Development Platform

As previously indicated, the DRC's current NDC encompasses both unconditional and conditional targets, with the latter reliant on financial support from the international community, making it a key aspect of climate change diplomacy. In its revised 2021 NDC, DRC commits to an unconditional emissions reduction target of 2% and a conditional target of 21% by 2030. As the DRC aims to continue its efforts to become a "solution country" for the global climate crisis, it must develop an integrated framework supported by a Climate and Investment Development Platform. The example of South Africa provides valuable insight.

12.3 Drawing Lessons from South Africa: Just Energy Transition Frameworks and Partnerships.

In 2021, at COP26, South Africa introduced its Just Energy Transition Investment Plan (JET IP) 2023–2027, which underscores the extent of the requirements and investments necessary to fulfil the decarbonisation commitments outlined in its NDC. Despite specific challenges arising from unfulfilled financial and investment commitments from partner nations, the South African plan delineates a timetable for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and contributing equitably to the objectives of the Paris Agreement. Through its JET IP, South Africa has established a JET Partnership as a framework to mobilise an estimated R1.5 trillion (approximately US\$97 billion) to support its energy transition programme. The JET Partnership constitutes a cooperation agreement between the governments of South Africa and the International Partners Group (IPG), which includes



Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union. In 2021, the IPG pledged US\$8.5 billion to support South Africa's JET programme. In a joint Political Declaration, the parties committed to forming an ambitious, long-term partnership to facilitate South Africa's transition towards low-emissions and climate-resilient development. The DRC could consider adapting this model to its approach to NDC 3.0 by establishing a Climate and Investment Development Platform for the country, akin to South Africa's JET Investment Plan.

12.4 Develop a Climate and Investment Development Platform

The importance of innovative financing mechanisms, including performance-based payments for forest conservation, green bonds, and regional climate funds, is essential. Such mechanisms could diversify sources of finance and reduce overreliance on uncertain international pledges. Although finance remains a bottleneck, it also presents an opportunity for the DRC to redefine its approach. A strategy that combines domestic mobilisation, international accountability, and innovative instruments could transform the DRC's financial landscape. The following section examines adaptation and resilience, where financial resources are translated into tangible action on the ground.

12.5 Blended Finance to Avoid Debt Distress

As one of the world's Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the DRC requires a climate finance framework that synthesises national efforts with global solidarity, particularly as a Solution Country to the global climate crisis. Blended finance provides a mechanism to unlock investments by mitigating project risks and attracting private capital, while ensuring that public and concessional funds assume the initial layer of risk. For climate finance to be equitable and efficacious, concessional resources from donor governments, philanthropies, and development finance institutions (DFIs) should prioritise grants and highly concessional loans that bolster national capacity, rather than exacerbate unsustainable debt levels. This strategy would facilitate the DRC in mobilising catalytic investments in renewable energy, clean cooking solutions, and resilient infrastructure, whilst preserving fiscal space. The expansion of blended finance for LDCs, such as the DRC, will be pivotal in constructing an inclusive international financial architecture that ensures the most vulnerable populations to climate change are not marginalised.

12.6 Priority Actions and Climate Finance Challenges

Priority actions include sustainable forest management, climate-resilient agriculture, the energy transition, protection of coastal areas, water resources, and waste management, as well as strengthening the health system to withstand climate-related shocks. Yet, between 2012 and 2022, despite its enormous potential and a relatively modest NDC, the country mobilised only USD 750 million through National REDD+ Fund since its creation in 2012, of which USD 500 million came from the second letter of intent with the CAFI fund.

This situation is unacceptable given the DRC's negligible contribution to global emissions and its position as the 5th most vulnerable country according to the ND-GAIN index. In comparison, developed countries mobilised USD 116 billion for global climate efforts by 2022, making the DRC's envelope negligible (barely 1.5% of the expected financial mobilisation from polluter countries). Any drafting of the new NDC phase should therefore examine the mechanisms, processes, and causes of this low attractiveness of climate finance. This task is intended for scientific experts, not NGOs or advocacy groups.

Given that wealthy countries even exceeded their disbursement projections during the same period, why do other countries benefit more from climate funds than the DRC? The financing deficit, combined with donor-imposed restrictions on forest and oil exploitation, fuels growing frustration. Some Congolese voices have even called the current system a “vast international climate scam.” This gap between ambitions and available resources highlights glaring climate injustice and the country’s lack of competitiveness in international financing mechanisms.⁸

For example, why does the DRC, which produces negligible emissions, allocate a larger share of its NDC to mitigation? Why does the industrialisation of the DRC, based on Congolese scientific ingenuity and local materials (already documented in the last three editions of the Congolese Scientific Engineering Forum), not constitute a strategic pillar of the NDC? Is the preservation of Congolese forests and peatlands, considered the lungs of the planet, incompatible with natural resource exploitation? There is a need to consider answers to all these questions in NDC 3.0. The financial expression of the revised DRC NDC reveals two significant observations:

- a. The country’s climate commitment far exceeds the DRC government’s self-financing capacity relative to its GDP and national budget.
- b. Beyond budgetary constraints, the country faces multiple competing priorities for its limited national resources (security, hunger, health, education, governance, public infrastructure, civil servant salaries, etc.).

In this context, the DRC has a strong interest in diversifying its sources of climate finance. However, the country is not competitive, having left this sector in the hands of corrupt politicians and NGO activists, with little room for truly scientific experts. The main challenge of NDC 3.0 is therefore to turn the country’s ecological and climate potential into tangible economic and social benefits for the Congolese population and the public treasury. This requires a discourse rooted in the DRC’s strategic interests, improved governance, and a scientific and innovative approach – far from aid-based logic or donor-oriented narratives.

12.7 Research and Climate Governance

For Congolese technological, industrial, and scientific sovereignty, the DRC cannot be a “solution country” without valuing its national ingenuity, including:

- a. Local knowledge and frugal innovations from rural communities.
- b. Congolese scientific and technological potential.
- c. Contributions from women, youth, indigenous peoples, and non-literate populations.

To achieve true efficacy and ensure alignment with both national and international realities, NDC 3.0 must go beyond traditional methods by adopting substantial strategies through research and the development of innovative solutions rooted in Congolese centres of excellence. It is within this synergy between international climate commitments and endogenous potential that a significant opportunity arises to sustainably address the causes and effects of climate change in the DRC.

⁸ See South Africa Presidency, “South Africa establishes a historic international partnership to support a just transition” Tuesday, 2 November 2021. Available at: <https://www.thepresidency.gov.za/south-africa-establishes-historic-international-partnership-support-just-transition>

13 CONCLUSIONS AND PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The DRC's NDC 3.0 process represents a pivotal opportunity to consolidate its position as a global 'solution country'. The DRC's NDC 3.0 cannot be limited to a simple climate commitment document. It must become a lever for structural transformation, an instrument of climate justice, and a tool of economic sovereignty. Its vast forests, critical mineral reserves, and renewable energy potential make it indispensable to the international climate agenda. Yet realising this potential requires moving beyond rhetoric to credible, inclusive, and accountable action.

The credibility of the NDC 3.0 depends on five pillars: ambition, sovereignty, accountability, equity, and inclusiveness. The first involves setting ambitious targets aligned with the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C pathway. The second pillar, sovereignty, requires reducing reliance on external aid by strengthening domestic resource mobilisation and national policy ownership. Third, accountability means reaching transparent agreements, respecting the oversight role of Parliament, and engaging with citizens in climate action initiatives. Fourth, equity should involve benefit-sharing from forests, minerals, and other natural resources, as well as creating added value for local manufacturing and industrial linkages. Lastly, inclusivity consists in incorporating the voices of marginalised groups so they are heard and counted. This includes women, youth, and indigenous peoples at all stages of NDC design and implementation, in accordance with national and international human rights laws and principles.

Building on these principles, the following section presents recommendations focused on developing an NDC 3.0 that prioritises the needs of the Congolese people and the sustainability of the natural environment.

13.1 Renewable Energy and the DRC's Grand Inga Hydro-Power Projects

During the national consultations, the role of DRC's water bodies emerged as a key discussion point, with the Grand Inga Hydropower projects serving as a reference. Hydropower initiatives have the potential to improve access to clean energy significantly. The NDC should reaffirm the importance of the Grand Inga Hydropower projects in increasing the share of renewable energy within the DRC's national energy mix and promote SDG 7, which aims to "ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all." DRC's NDC 3.0 must also outline strategies and methods to finance this significant project, enabling the country to provide sufficient electricity to rural areas and reduce pressure on the forests.

13.2 Develop a Long-Term Low Emissions Development Strategy

The DRC must develop an LT-LEDS as the basis for NDC 3.0 and successor programs. The LT-LEDS will be important because it aligns with the DRC's long-term structural transformation and climate-resilient sustainable development. The DRC, if it has not already done so, must be provided with assistance to respond to the NDC Partnership's Global Call for NDCs 3.0 and LT-LEDS, with expertise and dedicated resources, to enable countries to align, update, and enhance their NDCs and LT-LEDS in line with the Paris Agreement.⁹ Further technical support mechanisms are proposed below.

⁹ The NDC Partnership is a global coalition launched in 2016 at COP22 in Marrakesh. It brings together more than 240 members, including more than 130 developed and developing countries and more than 100 institutions, to deliver an ambitious, transformational climate action that helps achieve the Paris Agreement and drive sustainable development. DRC has been a member since 2016 and has made several requests for technical assistance.

13.3 Creating a Presidential Commission on Climate Change

Institutionally, the DRC Presidency should establish a Presidential Commission on Climate Change, which could be an adapted version of the South African Presidential Commission on Climate Change. The DRC must prioritise climate action and elevate NDC 3.0 commitments to a multistakeholder Presidential Commission. This body must be established to oversee the implementation of climate policies at the local level, considering the specific context of each area. To achieve this, it will require:

- a. A climate planning system, with regular scientific and environmental reports.
- b. Strengthening the specialised structure for managing greenhouse gas emissions to ensure proper coordination of national GHG inventory results at the local, provincial, and national levels.
- c. Reinforcing this structure and providing the necessary resources and tools to carry out greenhouse gas emission inventories in line with IPCC guidelines.

13.4 Developing a DRC Climate and Investment Development Platform

As discussed earlier, it is recommended that the proposed Presidential Commission on Climate Change be tasked with developing a Climate and Investment Development Platform for the DRC. This mechanism will outline the investments, funding, and partnerships needed to support the DRC's NDC 3.0 and "Solutions Country" strategy, as well as the LT-LEDs. Led by the Presidency, the platform should serve as the foundation for the DRC's international engagements, promoting partnerships and diplomacy on climate change. Such a platform could be unveiled at COP 30 in Brazil.

13.5 Pragmatic Policy on Hydrocarbons Exploration and Development

As noted above, oil and gas developments are sensitive policy areas. However, hydrocarbon investments in ecosystems like forests and peatlands not only put biodiversity and forest carbon sinks at risk but also pose the threat of the DRC being locked into stranded assets as the world moves away from fossil energy. There is a need to integrate the country's hydrocarbon investments into long-term plans, with a focus on renewable energy, climate-resilient agriculture, and resource-led industrialisation.

13.6 NDCs Technical Assistance Framework and International Partnerships

It is proposed that the DRC establish an NDC Technical Assistance Unit to support the implementation of the NDC 3.0 and the development of an LT-LEDs. The above mechanism can be supported by a team comprising the following institutions: The African Climate Foundation, The African Development Bank (AfDB) NDC Resource Hub, the UNDP Country Office for the DRC, and the NDC Partnership. SARW can support the initiative and coordinate the input of CSOs into the process. The AfDB established the Africa NDCs Hub, a resource pool for African countries. It aids in coordinating various sector activities to fulfil Paris Agreement obligations.

¹⁰ Members of the Hub include: The African Development Bank (AfDB) • African Union Commission (AUC) • Centre de Compétences Changement Climatique du Maroc (4C Maroc) • Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) • Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) • Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) • International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) • International Trade Centre (ITC) • Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) • New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) • United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) • United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) • United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) • United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) • World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

13.7 Conditions Precedent: Governance, Peace, and Security

Facilitating national dialogue on peace and security in the country is a condition precedent for the success of NDC 3.0 and long-term climate action to occur. The DRC must address corruption and illicit trade/financial flows. A peace dividend is invaluable to the success of NDC 3.0 and LT-LEDs. Embedding conflict sensitivity into climate planning, ensuring that adaptation and mitigation strategies contribute to peacebuilding and stability, must be an integral part of NDC 3.0.

In conclusion, the DRC has the resources to lead Africa's fair energy transition and global climate initiatives. What is required is political resolve, responsible diplomacy, and full engagement of civil society. If these conditions are met, the DRC's NDC 3.0 can move from aspiration to reality, achieving climate justice domestically and credibility on the international stage.

ANNEXURE 1. RECOMMENDATIONS: TABLE OF THE NDC 3.0

Secteur d'action	Acteurs impliqués	Actions concrètes	Indicateurs	Recommandations stratégiques
Local Governance	Government, technical agencies, community leaders	- Train actors - Create monitoring committees - Integrate climate into local policies	Number of local action plans integrating climate	Decentralise climate actions and create climate units in all provinces
Green Finance	Ministry of Finance, donors, investors	- Access climate funds - Support community projects - Create partnerships	Amount mobilised for climate projects	Establish a national climate fund and facilitate access to regional, sub-regional, and international financing.
Health and Climate	Ministry of Health, hospitals, and community health workers	- Monitor climate-related diseases - Train healthcare providers - Inform families	Number of health centres trained on climate	Create a health alert system linked to climate events
Water	Public services, NGOs, universities, higher institutes, schools	- Develop an Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) plan and implement a program to protect water resources - Raise awareness on sustainable water management	Access to drinking water (% population) Number of sanitation infrastructures installed	Integrate water management into adaptation plans and strengthen rural infrastructures.
Clean Energy	Ministry of Energy, households, and companies	- Install solar panels - Promote improved cookstoves - Reduce wood use - Improve and expand existing infrastructure	% of households using renewable energy	Create a national program for access to renewable energy
Resilient Agriculture	Farmers, cooperatives, agricultural technicians	- Use adapted seeds - Diversify crops - Improve irrigation	Agricultural yield in vulnerable zones	Promote agroecology and create climate-smart pilot farms
Forests and Land	Ministry of Environment, local communities	- Reforest - Protect forests - Raise awareness among youth	Reforested area (hectares)	Strengthen REDD+ mechanisms and create community forest monitoring brigades.
Waste and Recycling	Municipalities, territories, NGOs, and engaged workforce	- Sort waste - Create recycling centers - Valorise organic waste	Recycling rate	Develop a national sustainable waste management policy and support local initiatives.
Sustainable Transport	Ministry of Transport, urban planners, private sector	Develop public transport	Reduction in transport sector emissions	Integrate climate considerations into mobility plans
Urban Planning and Housing	Architects, local authorities, Ministry of Housing	- Build resilient houses - Integrate climate risks into urban plans	% of housing adapted to climate risks	Revise building standards and promote green urban planning
Monitoring and Transparency	Government, climate units, researchers, observers	- Encourage capacity building in climatology - Establish indicators - Track progress - Adjust actions	Annual publication of climate reports	- Create a national MRV system (Measurement, Reporting, Verification) and strengthen transparency - Promote research on climate and climate impacts
Awareness and Communication	All actors	- Inform the population in various national languages on climate challenges and issues - Involve the population in climate-related actions	Number of campaigns, spots, posters, or other media	Integrate awareness campaigns into different climate-related actions
Research	Academics and researchers	- Identify tools and equipment to carry out greenhouse gas inventories according to IPCC guidelines - Ensure comprehensive coverage	Reports of studies conducted	- Conduct studies on evidence generation and promote the valorization of local research

ANNEXURE 2: SUMMARY – ISSUES EMERGING FROM RESEARCH AND CONSULTATIONS

No.	Thematic Area	Recommendations for NDC 3.0
a.	Analysis of the NDC 2021, Institutional and Legal Frameworks in place to address climate change in the DRC, and identification of gaps and options for a new NDC for 2025.	To the DRC government - Set up an inclusive stakeholder platform for validation, implementation and assessment of NDCs. - Improve technical and institutional capacity of national institutions in charge of NDC design, implementation and evaluation, particularly on estimation of greenhouse gas emissions and analysis of vulnerability to climate change impact. - Conduct inclusive data collection and research on greenhouse gas emissions and vulnerability to climate change impact to fuel the development of NDC 3.0. - Organise inclusive national, provincial and local workshops on the validation of NDC commitments. - Set up an effective Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to assess progress achieved in the implementation of NDC commitments. - Formalise the carbon credit market by adopting required regulations and establishing related institutions. - Develop and implement a national strategy on fundraising at national and international levels for climate finance. To the DRC government and developed/donor countries - Negotiate and implement a Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) focusing on developing renewable energies in the country. - Ensure inclusion and meaningful participation of civil society organisations, community members and other stakeholders in the design and the implementation of the JETP. - Provide financial resources for the implementation of JETP and NCD commitments (developed/donor countries). - Address governance challenges to ensure appropriate implementation of the JETP projects and initiatives (DRC government). To civil society organisations, universities and research institutions - Support and monitor the design and implementation of NDC commitments and the JETP. - Provide critical and independent views on the design and implementation of NDC commitments and JETP projects. About the sustainable management of DRC green mineral resources <i>To the DRC government</i> - Define a clear and comprehensive vision on green minerals' role in the country's development strategy. - Develop and implement effective policies and strategies on local value chains in line with the African mining vision (AMV) and its African mining governance framework (AMGF). - Enable doing business by addressing legal and governance challenges, including the unbending tax regime, legal and judicial insecurity and corruption.
b.	Green minerals and the manufacturing of renewable energy technologies (solar, wind, and battery technology), focusing on, but not limited to, the DRC-Zambia Battery Manufacturing Initiative	- An update of reliable geological information for the whole of the DRC must be carried out, using new scientific research technologies, particularly in the areas of satellite image processing. - Improve the business climate to attract new investors in the mining sector. - Improving the governance of the mining sector (by clarifying partnership contracts, ensuring compliance with applicable procedures for so-called fair factors, research carried out on the evaluation of the management of mining royalties granted to decentralised territorial entities (ETD), revealed weaknesses in the collection, management and allocation of mining royalties). - Ensure intergenerational equity with future generations by ensuring the proper functioning of the FOMIN (Mining Fund for Future Generations). - Implement Decree No. 05/006 of the directive of February 29, 2005, establishing the framework program for job creation and income, abbreviated PROCER, and promote the creation of added value. - Develop a local processing company for semi-finished products to support the creation of battery production companies and ensure strong economic growth in the country. - Ensure the supply of electrical energy by carrying out the various hydroelectric dam projects to support the industrialisation trajectory. - Effectively ensure the supervision of artisanal mining by granting viable artisanal mining zones (ZEA) that are more suited to the local context. - Comply with regulatory texts regarding the constitution, operation and management of mining cooperatives, to promote formalisation and migration to the formal sector, to ensure the middle class, - Rehabilitated and created communication routes whose deficient land infrastructure makes exchanges with neighbouring countries more difficult.

c.	Hydro-energy development and clean energy for a Just Transition, focusing on, but not limited to, the Grand Inga Project.	a. Establish a link between energy development policy and the development of strategic minerals for sustainable energy and ecological transition. b. The Grand-Inga program should significantly contribute to the decarbonization of mining in the DRC as part of this sustainable energy and ecological transition. c. Translating political will into concrete actions in the strategic planning of Grand-Inga. d. Protection of the interests of the beneficiaries of the communities of Inga by first setting up community projects before even starting with the construction of dams, and e. Strengthening the capacities and capital of the National Electricity Company (SNEL) and the Water Distribution Authority (REGIDESO) to make them competitive on the stock markets (BVM). f. As a framework measure g. Diversification and capitalisation of the energy mix in the DRC (Hydroelectricity, solar, wind, geothermal, green hydrogen, etc.) h. Decentralisation of energy projects by favouring renewable energies and micro-dams. i. Promote the implementation of the rural electrification programme by strengthening ANSER's technical and financial capacity for intervention. j. Promoting dialogue with local and Indigenous communities to consider their rights to share benefits from the Grand-Inga and other energy projects.
d.	Forestry and Carbon Sequestration: The Scope of Carbon Emission Reduction and Potential to Support Forestry Conservation.	As a framework measure Diversification and capitalization of the energy mix in the DRC (Hydroelectricity, solar, wind, geothermal, green hydrogen, etc.) Decentralisation of energy projects by favouring renewable energies and micro-dams. Promote the implementation of the rural electrification programme by strengthening ANSER's technical and financial capacity for intervention. Promoting dialogue with local and Indigenous communities to consider their rights to share benefits from the Grand-Inga and other energy projects. a. Promotion of good forest governance (remediation of forest exploitation), limitation and control of forest exploitation permit. At the institutional level: giving the means to specialised services. b. Establishment of a monitoring plan to use forest conservation and restoration funds (common forest protection fund). c. Finalisation of implementing the enhanced transparency framework (Article 13 of the Paris Agreement). Adaptation a. Funding research and popularising innovative mechanisms for adaptation (e.g., agroforestry and energy diversification (wind, solar). b. Develop alternative fossil energy sources (hydroelectricity, promotion of the processing and conservation of agricultural products). c. Improvement and construction of basic infrastructure (e.g. agricultural fields). d. Mobilising funds at the national level to support adaptation. e. Promoting engagement and transparency in the use of climate finance funds. f. Promotion by the Government of Consortia (international and national organisations) for managing climate funds.
e.	Implications of Climate Change Action on Food Systems, Agriculture, and Land Use.	To the government, a. Considering a concerted resource mobilisation plan. b. Strengthen existing structures on environmental quality monitoring. c. land development in rural areas, veterinarians, agricultural monitors and territorial agronomists, and d. Rehabilitation and tracing of new roads. To farmers, a. Identification and valorisation of ancestral endogenous knowledge in crop protection. b. Establishment of endangered local seed banks, and c. Promotion of family farming around agro-industrial parks. To civil society, a. Involving communities in sustainable land and soil management to cope with climate change and preserve the environment. To the Technical and Financial Partners a. Support for the beneficiaries of loans and grants in carrying out their projects' environmental, social and climate impact studies.

f.	Climate Change Action, Peace, and Conflict.	a. Consider in public policies the close relationship between conflicts, climate change and peace by integrating adaptation and resistance to climate change into national strategies. b. Pay particular attention to provinces most vulnerable to climate change and conflicts. c. Strengthen cooperation at various levels in the detection and monitoring of threats that climate change poses to internal and regional peace. d. Promote the development of internal security scenarios sensitive to climate change, conflicts and peace. e. Establish a Green Defence strategy, which is a policy for managing population migrations due to conflicts or climate change. f. Strengthen the consistency and transparency of the various green funds to ensure the effectiveness and readability of efforts in their use. g. Conduct a reflection to bring together the different climate funds (Cancun Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Fund, Climate Investment Fund) and coordinate their implementation within a structure.
g.	Geo-Politics and Climate Action in the DRC: Towards a JET Investment and Partnership Framework.	a. Join the Just Energy Transition Partnership (PTEJ) so that the DRC's status as a solution country for change is recognised. b. Launch a global campaign to boost NDC financing from donor governments, multilateral institutions and private companies, including philanthropic organisations. c. Intensify policies of negotiating larger stakes to gain an advantage in managing larger mines. d. Strive to build stronger, more resilient and more transparent institutions capable of addressing situations of increased conflict and fragility and invest substantially to achieve its ambitious climate goals. e. Renew international initiatives to end conflicts in eastern DRC, given the links between certain multinationals and the illegal exploitation of critical minerals. f. Strengthen institutional frameworks that establish a clear national climate strategy and coordinate research efforts, which would ensure adequate implementation of its NDCs. g. Strengthen institutional frameworks and establish a clear national climate strategy and coordinating body, which would improve climate finance, mobilise international finance, green bonds and domestic resources. h. Improve innovation in NDCs and critical minerals by adopting strategies such as developing innovation hubs and incubators. These hubs should focus on clean energy, mining, and environmental technologies.

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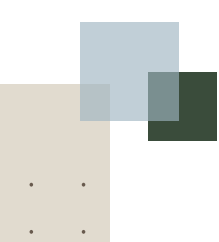
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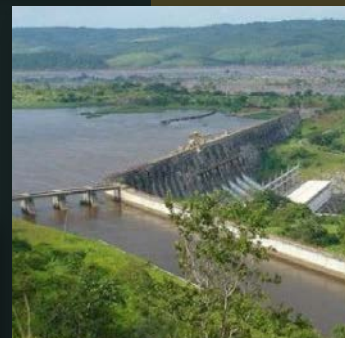
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