



NATIONAL MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ROUNDTABLE ON COMMUNITY FORESTRY IN THE DRC, 8th edition.

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

The 8th edition of the National Multi-Stakeholder Round Table on Community Forestry (TRMA-FC) was held in the government administration building in Kinshasa, DRC, from 12th to 14th October 2021.

In the run-up to **COP 26**, the Congolese government and international donors intend to place community forestry at the centre of solutions to combat climate change and promote sustainable development.

Local communities and indigenous peoples play a central role in conserving forest ecosystems that are essential to maintaining the global climate balance, as well as preserving biodiversity and providing livelihoods for at least 50 million Congolese. Evidence from many countries also shows that **securing community rights**, in addition to being a fundamental issue of social justice, is an essential condition for forest populations to be able to play this protective role effectively and sustainably, whilst also contributing to their socio-economic development.

Community forestry legislation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is the most innovative in Central Africa, as it offers communities an unprecedented opportunity to **secure** and **manage** the resources of their traditional lands. The multi-usage vocation of community forests and their granting free of charge and in perpetuity over large areas (up to 50,000 hectares each), are among the conditions for their success. To date, 109 Local Community Forest Concessions (*Concessions Forestières des Communautés Locales* - CFCLs), covering **2,054,228** hectares in 9 provinces, have already been allocated and another 48 initiatives are underway.

However, **significant and long-term support** is still needed for CFCLs to overcome many challenges, realise their full potential and contribute meaningfully to the achievement of the objectives of the National Strategic Development Plan and the DRC's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

The stakeholders gathered during this forum, in particular the delegates of: the Presidency of the Republic; the Congolese Parliament; the Ministers of the Congolese Government; the technical and financial partners; the international embassies; the scientific research and education institutions; the private sector; civil society, including representatives of local communities and indigenous peoples, have together confirmed their willingness to support the promotion and development of community forestry.

Thus, their commitment is reinforced through the following **priority actions** to be undertaken by 2022. Namely, to:

1. Consolidate a common vision and long-term **political and financial support**, including the integration of community forestry into climate and biodiversity agendas;
2. Develop a common approach to assess and evaluate the socio-economic and environmental **impact** of CFCLs;
3. Test, in the pilot sites, **community management** models that are both rooted in local usage and customs, as well as good governance and the inclusion of marginalised groups such as women and indigenous pygmy peoples;
4. Facilitate community entrepreneurship and **the involvement of a responsible private sector** to ensure the viability of CFCLs through resilient and sustainable management that promotes both the development of local markets and the protection of forests;
5. Promote synergies and **intersectoral** coordination at national, provincial and local levels, with a view to supporting the multi-usage vocation of CFCLs and to protect community interests;
6. Formulate concrete proposals to (a) **improve the legal and regulatory framework** relating to community forests; and (b) to integrate community forestry into relevant sectoral laws and processes, including forestry policy, land reform, land use planning, agriculture, etc.;
7. Continuously build the **capacity** of stakeholders in the community forestry process and raise awareness on the use and inputting of data into the Community Forestry Database (rdc.geocfcl.org) as a land-use planning tool;
8. Promote the achievements and benefits of community forests at COP 26 on climate and COP 15 on biodiversity, with a view to securing adequate financial resourcing for community forestry.

Agreed in Kinshasa, 14th October 2021

THE PARTICIPANTS