



3rd July 2026

**To Her Excellency the Prime
Minister of the Democratic
Republic of the Congo**, Head of
Government of the Democratic
Republic of the Congo.
Prime Minister's Office
Kinshasa/Gombe

Copy sent for information to:

- To His Excellency the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Head of State.
Palais de la Nation, Kinshasa/Gombe
With the utmost respect.
- To Her Excellency the Minister for the Environment, Sustainable Development and the New Climate Economy (MEDD-NEC).
- To the Secretary-General for the Environment, Sustainable Development and the New Climate Economy (SG MEDD-NEC).
- To the Director-General of Forests (DGFOR).
- To the Director of Forest Inventories and Management (DIAF).
- To the Coordinator of the Technical Committee for Monitoring and Evaluation of Reforms (CTR)
All in Kinshasa/Gombe.
- To the international partners within the Inter-Donor Group on Environment and Climate in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (GIBEC).
In Kinshasa/Gombe.
Au Secrétariat du Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI).
A Genève/Suisse.

Subject: Maintaining the moratorium on the granting of new industrial forest concessions

Your Excellency the Prime Minister,

In the context of the ongoing forestry reforms in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), we, more than 60 Congolese and international organisations, are writing to express our serious concern over plans to lift the national moratorium on the allocation of new industrial forest concessions.

As organisations working for the defence of the environment and human rights in the DRC and globally, we commend the several steps the government has taken over the past year to reduce deforestation and improve forest governance. Recent initiatives such as the Intergovernmental Land Tenure Commitment and National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, together with legal and policy reforms on forests, land-use planning and Indigenous Peoples rights and the creation of the Kivu-Kinshasa Green Corridor, are all positive examples of the DRC living up to its 'solutions country' reputation.

This is why we are deeply concerned that advanced plans to open potentially tens of millions of hectares of the DRC's forests to the logging industry will undermine this progress. For reasons outlined in this letter and detailed in the [attached briefing](#), we call on you to uphold the moratorium until key legal conditions have been met and broader forest and land sector reforms have been completed.

The importance of the DRC's forests to the climate, biodiversity and the lives of tens of millions of forest-dependent people cannot be overstated. Introduced in 2002 and then reinforced by Presidential decree in 2005 against a backdrop of profound disorganisation in the industry, the moratorium remains an essential regulatory tool today as many of the structural weaknesses that justified its introduction persist: weak governance, inadequate oversight mechanisms, limited transparency and the still incomplete protection of the rights of local communities and Indigenous Peoples.

The inclusion of the moratorium lifting in the first draft of the forestry code and the development of a draft legal decree therefore raise fundamental legal, moral, economic and environmental problems. First, these parallel processes present several significant legal and procedural concerns, not least that the preconditions set out in the 2005 presidential decree — particularly regarding geographical planning resulting from a participatory and transparent process — have not been met. The available documentation does not, as things stand, allow for a coherent allocation of land, nor does it prevent the risks of overlapping claims and conflicts of use.

Second, research shows that a hasty lifting of the moratorium could legitimise widespread illegal practices, fuel the uncontrolled expansion of forestry concessions, and worsen conflicts and rights violations. With weak governance and limited oversight, expansion would only deepen existing challenges for forests, communities and workers.

Third, it would also undermine climate and biodiversity commitments made by the DRC on the international stage and compromise several ongoing national land and forest related reform processes. As the President of the Republic himself reiterated during the Council of Ministers meeting on 22 May 2026, “Our country’s international credibility is also at stake [...] The Democratic Republic of the Congo’s natural leadership in these forums must be underpinned by coherent national policies, credible governance mechanisms and a clearly affirmed political will.”

Fourth, the expected economic benefits of expanding industrial logging appear limited. The industry contributes only marginally to national revenue and continues to face major compliance challenges. Its economic viability is also in question, as many operators have converted their titles to conservation concessions.

Finally, the environmental case for lifting the moratorium is similarly weak. While the causes of deforestation in the DRC are complex and multi-layered, the answer is not to hand over large, bounded areas as industrial concessions. Many existing concessions still lack government-approved management plans and a growing body of research highlights the risks associated with the industrial logging concession system, particularly the role that logging roads play in opening previously intact areas of forest to new forms of deforestation.

Under these circumstances, expanding this model risks exacerbating social and environmental harm without guaranteeing any significant developmental benefits for the national economy or local communities. Considering these factors, which are further detailed in this [briefing](#), we respectfully call on you to uphold the national logging moratorium and advance the following measures:

- Halt current efforts to lift the moratorium, including removing it from the draft forest code and withdrawing the draft decree.
- Complete ongoing legal reforms on forests, land and Indigenous rights in line with international standards before reviewing the moratorium.
- Ensure lawful, participatory land-use planning that reflects community forests, climate goals and other priorities.

- Strengthen enforcement by investigating violations, prosecuting offenders and revoking illegal permits, alongside measures such as a log export ban and expanded independent and community monitoring.
- Prohibit new industrial concessions in the Kivu-Kinshasa Green Corridor.
- Expand support for community forests as a core part of forest management and land use.
- Mobilise international climate and development finance to support these actions.

We are convinced that such an approach, based on legal rigour, transparency and respect for rights, will enable the sustainable consolidation of forest governance in the DRC, whilst preserving its strategic role in the fight against the climate and biodiversity crises.

We remain at your full disposal for any further discussion or information you may require.

Yours sincerely,

Signatories

Action des Jeunes pour le Bien-Être Social (AJBS), DRC, Mongala

Action pour la défense des droits des femmes et lutte contre le changement climatique (ADFLC), DRC

Action pour la Défense des peuples de forêts et protection de la Nature en RD Congo (ADN), DRC, Thsopo

Actions pour la promotion et protection des peuples et espèces menacés (APEM), DRC, Kinshasa

AFREWATCH International, US

AFRICAPACITY, DRC, South Kivu

Ajemalebu Self Help (AJESH), Cameroon

Alerte Congolaise pour l'environnement et les droits de l'homme (ACEDH), DRC, North Kivu

Alliance Climatique, Switzerland

Alliance Sud, Switzerland

Arcus Foundation, UK

Association de Réveil pour le Développement Endogène (ARDE), DRC, North Kivu

Association Paysanne pour la Réhabilitation et Protection des Pygmées (PREPPYG), DRC, North Kivu

Biofuelwatch, Scotland, UK

Biomass Action Group, Australia

Cadre d'Acteurs et d'Actions pour le Développement Durable (CAADD), DRC

Centre d'accompagnement de la population pour le développement de Maï Ndombe ONGD (CADEM), DRC, Kongo Central

Centre d'Actions pour le développement, Republic of Congo

Centre d'Appui à la Gestion Durable des Forêts Tropicales (CAGDFT), DRC

Centre d'accompagnement pour le développement durable et protection de l'environnement (CADDPE), DRC, Ituri

Centre de Développement Rural (CEDERU), DRC, North Kivu

Centre d'Education Nutritionnelle et Environnementale pour le Développement (CENED), DRC, North Kivu

Civil Society Independent Forest Monitors, Liberia

Coalition des organisations de la société civile pour le suivi des réformes et de l'action publique (CORAP), DRC, Kinshasa

Comité Schone Lucht, Netherlands

Congo Watch, DRC, Kinshasa

Cool Earth, UK

Dynamique des Groupes des Peuples Autochtones (DGPA), DRC, Kinshasa

Earth Insight, US

Earthsight, UK

Ecosystèmes et Développement (ECODEV), Cameroon

Ei polteta tulevaisuutta, Finland

Environmental Investigation Agency US, US

Fern, Belgium

Forest Watch Indonesia, Indonesia

Forests & Finance Coalition, United States

Forêts et Développement Rural (FODER), Cameroon

Forum Ökologie & Papier, Germany

Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland, UK

Geofirst development, DRC, Kinshasa

Global Witness, UK

Greenpeace Africa, DRC, Kinshasa

Groupe d'action pour sauver l'homme et son environnement (GASHE), DRC, Equateur

Groupe d'encadrement pour le développement integral (GEDI), DRC, Kinshasa

HEKS, Switzerland

Information Climet, Switzerland

Initiative Locale pour le Développement Intégré (ILDI), DRC, Kinshasa

Initiative pour le Développement Local (IDEL), DRC, Kinshasa

Interfaith Rainforest Initiative, DRC, South Kivu

Leemilieu, Netherlands

ONG Muyissi Environnement, Gabon

Partenariat pour les Forêts du Bassin du Congo (PFBC), DRC, Kinshasa

PREMICONGO, DRC, Haut-Katanga

Profundo, Netherlands

Rainforest Foundation Norway (RFN), DRC, Kinshasa

Rainforest Foundation United Kingdom (RFUK), UK

Rainforest Foundation US (RFUS), US

Rainforest Relief, US

Réseau d'Initiatives Locales pour le Développement durable (REID), DRC, North Kivu

Réseau National des Observateurs Indépendants des ressources naturelles en RDC (RENOI-RDC), DRC, Kinshasa

Réseau pour la Conservation et la Réhabilitation des Ecosystèmes Forestiers (Réseau CREF), DRC, North Kivu

Réseau Ressources Naturelles (RRN), DRC, Kinshasa

Ressources naturelles et développement durable, DRC, Kongo Central

Rettet den Regenwald / Rainforest Rescue, Germany

Simon Counsell, Independent, Switzerland

Size of Wales, UK

Snow Alliance, China

Solidarité Pour La Promotion Socioéconomique Et La Protection De L'environnement (SOPSE),
DRC, North Kivu

Sustainable Development Institute/ Friends of the Earth, Liberia

The International Land and Tenure Facility Fund, Sweden

Appendix – Briefing