

**People, Forests and Nature: Partnership for the New Climate Economy of the  
Democratic Republic of Congo  
Dubai, COP28, December 2, 2023**

Declaration by: Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United States of America, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Norway, the Bezos Earth Fund, the Seed Fund (France, Conservation International, the Walton Foundation, the Moore Foundation), Forest People Climate, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers, Southbridge Investments

1. *Welcoming* the Forest and Climate Leaders' Partnership, which aims to accelerate global progress to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030, while delivering sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation.
2. *Recognizing* the crucial role of tropical forests in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the ecosystem services they provide for the achievement of global climate and biodiversity goals and for goods and services that underpin livelihoods and resilience;
3. *Noting with concern* that low crop yields, food insecurity, and energy poverty in the Democratic Republic of Congo are driving increased slash and burn agriculture and demand for charcoal for cooking, leading to acceleration of deforestation in the last two decades;
4. *Welcoming* the Democratic Republic of Congo's intention to build a New Climate Economy based on high-value forests and peatlands and key biodiversity areas, which drives investment in sustainable infrastructure, nature-positive sectors, and livelihoods and decent jobs for communities across the country;
5. *Underlining* the global importance of peatlands in the Congo Basin, which contain an estimated 30 gigatons of carbon, and the major role of the Democratic Republic of Congo, which hosts an estimated 120 000 km<sup>2</sup> of peatlands, in safeguarding these areas;
6. *Stressing* the importance of increasing the value of standing forests and peatlands to better meet food security and renewable energy needs, create decent jobs, and spur inclusive economic growth, in part through the generation of high integrity carbon credits;
7. *Welcoming* the promulgation by the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo of Law No. 22/030 of July 15, 2022, on the protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous Pygmy peoples and in particular its articles 20 and 39 on consultations and free, prior and informed consent ensuring an inclusive new climate economy;
8. *Building on* the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and *recognising* the Democratic Republic of Congo's commitment to effectively conserve and manage at least 30 per cent of its terrestrial and inland water areas, and of its marine and coastal areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement, and the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use;
9. *Stressing* that this Declaration builds on the objectives and milestones of the Letter of intent signed between the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) in November 2021, and that this Declaration seeks to complement and reinforce the CAFI Letter of Intent by highlighting additional efforts; and
10. *Welcoming* Country Packages for Forest, Nature, and Climate, which will be bespoke to the priorities and circumstances of the host country, with content, structure, and coordination approach driven by the host country and therefore highly customized to reflect the ambitions, capacities, challenges, and current programs of the host, and capacities of interested partners;
11. *Noting with appreciation* the commitment by the Democratic Republic of Congo to conserve and sustainably manage its peatlands.

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**The Democratic Republic of Congo and partners resolve, as relevant, to:**

12. *Establish* an ambitious long-term partnership, driven by the Democratic Republic of Congo, to develop and finance the transition to the New Climate Economy. This partnership will support the Democratic Republic of Congo's commitment to effectively conserve and sustainably manage its peatlands, high value forests, and key biodiversity areas.
13. *Collaborate*, as appropriate, through international funding, financing, and technical assistance, to deliver on this transition, with an initial focus on the following actions:
  - i. Effective conservation and management of the Democratic Republic of Congo's high value forests, peatlands and key biodiversity areas. Relevant consultations will be initiated in 2024, with the aim of finalizing consultations by COP30, to allow for continued international support and investments to materialize. These consultations will include a focus on decent jobs and livelihoods for indigenous peoples and local communities and promote and protect their rights;
  - ii. To expand private investment in the New Climate Economy, development of investment plans and resource mobilization mechanisms, through a combination of appropriate financial instruments, for sectors that can provide sustainable development whilst reducing pressure on forested areas, with the aim of sustainable and decent job creation and supporting livelihoods for local populations, especially youth, women, and indigenous peoples. Sectors could include, but are not limited to, sustainable agriculture, sustainable forestry and in-country timber processing, plantation forestry for the production of timber and charcoal, renewable energy, clean cooking (including e-cooking) and eco-tourism. Actions will also include the identification and implementation of reforms to enable the mobilisation of private sector investment in the aforementioned sectors and development of an investors' charter to ensure that private sector investors contribute to this transition.
  - iii. Establishment of a robust domestic policy and institutional framework to support the Democratic Republic of Congo to access and benefit from high social and environmental integrity international carbon markets, as well as results-based payments, including, inter alia, under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.
14. To capture the monetary benefits generated by the conservation, restoration, and sustainable management of forests, peatlands, and other relevant ecosystems, and in order to support the Democratic Republic of Congo's climate goals and the President's vision for a New Climate Economy, the Democratic Republic of Congo, with support from interested partners, will *identify and define*, by the end of 2025, an appropriate financial structure to receive carbon market revenues and other appropriate sources of funds. Appropriate financial structures will provide inclusive governance, administration and alignment with international best practices on fiduciary principles and standards; these structures may include a new fund;
15. *Explore* additional sources of domestic and international financing and include additional domestic and international partners over time to support the Democratic Republic of Congo's forest and climate ambition;
16. *Regularly evaluate* the partnership to ensure the effective conservation and sustainable management of peatlands, high value forests, and key biodiversity areas; and
17. *Report* at COP29 on progress, challenges, investment plans, compliance with social and environmental safeguards, programs, partnerships, and investments of the Partnership for the New Climate Economy of the Democratic Republic of Congo.