



Final statement from the workshop on forest resource governance and conservation in Greater Katanga in the face of mining and energy pressures



1. Introduction

A multi-stakeholder workshop on forest resource governance and conservation in Greater Katanga was held in Lubumbashi, the capital of Haut-Katanga province, from February 16 to 18, 2026, in response to growing pressure from mining activities and energy shortages. The workshop was held at the ARRUIPE Center, at the initiative of the Coalition of Civil Society Organizations for Monitoring Reforms and Public Action (CORAP), in collaboration with Upemba National Park and the NGO Defense of the Environment and Sustainable Development (DEDUR).

The workshop brought together representatives of the Haut-Katanga provincial government, technical and scientific institutions, civil society organizations, local communities, mining and energy companies, the media, and partners in a spirit of constructive and inclusive dialogue.

The discussions took place in a context marked by:

- The intensification of mining, linked to growing global demand for strategic minerals for the energy transition
- A structural energy deficit, both for households and industries;
- Increased pressure on miombo woodlands and the Upemba and Kundelungu landscape, mainly through wood energy production, the allocation of mining concessions, and land conversion.

2. Some key findings shared by participants

At the end of the workshop, participants unanimously noted the following findings:

- The province of Haut-Katanga has an estimated electricity access rate of around 28%, which means that households and economic activities remain heavily dependent on wood energy, thereby exacerbating deforestation and the degradation of miombo forests.
- The lack of an ambitious clean cooking policy, combined with limited access to sustainable energy alternatives, contributes significantly to increased pressure on forest ecosystems.
- The Upemba landscape, as a major reservoir of biodiversity and essential provider of ecosystem services, is exposed to serious threats, with potential impacts on the sources of the Congo River, a structuring element of the Congo Basin;
- The DRC has advanced legal and policy frameworks for forests, the environment, conservation, and climate; however, their effective implementation remains limited, particularly at the provincial level, due to institutional weaknesses and insufficient control mechanisms.

- There is still insufficient cross-sectoral coordination between policies and regulations relating to forests, energy, mining, land tenure, and land use planning, which encourages overlapping uses and conflicts between conservation and resource exploitation. Laws are also not harmonized with each other.
- Participants highlighted the opening up of the mining cadastre to increased collaboration in order to better integrate protected areas and sensitive landscapes, while warning of the persistent risks of overlap with mining concessions. They called for strengthened collaboration with the ICCN to improve mapping and clear demarcation of protected areas, particularly around Upemba National Park.
- There is no clear landscape management plan, even though a National Land Use Policy exists.
- The cultural, tourist, historical, and identity dimensions of Upemba National Park remain insufficiently recognized and valued in conservation and territorial development strategies, despite its national and regional importance.
- Technical, institutional, and community capacities remain limited to effectively address the complex challenges of forest governance, biodiversity conservation, and energy transition.
- Current mining practices generate significant environmental pollution and ecological disruption, compromising biodiversity, ecosystem health, and the livelihoods of local communities.
- However, participants noted that local and provincial authorities are open and willing to support actions aimed at strengthening forest governance, protecting biodiversity, and finding sustainable solutions that reconcile conservation and development.

Participants emphasize that biodiversity conservation can be reconciled with development, provided that the exploitation of natural resources is governed by responsible and sustainable public policies and that these policies are respected. This reconciliation is based on a just energy transition that reduces pressure on forests, inclusive forest governance involving local communities, increased responsibility on the part of extractive industries, and science-based land-use planning that ensures the protection of key ecosystems and ecosystem services.

At the end of the workshop, participants decided to set up a multi-stakeholder working group/forum to ensure effective follow-up, coordination, and operational implementation of the recommendations resulting from the workshop.

With this in mind, participants unanimously expressed their desire for the Provincial Ministry of Environment, Mines, and Energy to coordinate this framework in order to ensure its institutional anchoring, the consistency of the actions undertaken, and better articulation with ongoing public policies and reforms at the provincial level.

3. Recommendations

As a result, the following recommendations have been made :

II. National authorities

- Strengthen the harmonization of the various laws (Mining Code, Nature Conservation Law, Law on Fundamental Environmental Principles, Electricity Sector Law, Land Use Policy and Law, Land Law, Law on Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples, and others) with each other;
- Renforcer le suivi et sanctionner strictement le non-respect des lois et politiques publiques par les opérateurs, spécialement dans le secteur minier ;
- Strengthen monitoring and strictly punish non-compliance with laws and public policies by operators, especially in the mining sector;
- At the land level, strengthen and ensure a balance between different land uses (mining, conservation, energy, water, and others);
- Improve facilities for operators who want to invest in the transition to clean cooking.

II. Provincial authorities

- Identify landowners in urban centers in Greater Katanga to create a green corridor;
- Encourage multi-stakeholder governance, strict environmental regulation, and a link between mining and energy;
- Strengthen monitoring to ensure strict enforcement of laws promoting environmental protection and biodiversity conservation;
- Strengthen the development of a land use plan, involving the various stakeholders to ensure harmonization and ownership;
- Establish an interdepartmental unit for harmonious coordination.

III. In the private sector

- Compliance with national and international standards;
- Developing alternatives for clean cooking;
- Supporting reforestation projects to restore Miombo forests;
- Strict implementation of biodiversity mitigation and restoration plans during and after exploitation;
- Supporting the development of inclusive activities for the economic development of local communities;

IV. To civil society

- Strengthen the capacities of actors and stakeholders on the issue of biodiversity conservation and preservation;
- Increase the dissemination of legal and policy texts;
- Create frameworks for consultation between stakeholders;
- Advocate for zoning planning and define buffer zones between different activities (mining concessions, protected areas, and others);
- Denounce non-compliance with laws and public policies;
- Train community leaders on forest governance, rights related to protected areas, and national laws in the Democratic Republic of Congo;

- Launch a petition on national parks to support their protection and visibility;
- Set up working groups with schedules, focal points, and responsibilities.

V. To local communities

- Adopt improved stoves and develop alternatives to wood energy (briquettes, biogas, solar energy);
- Promote agroforestry and assisted natural regeneration to reduce dependence on the park's forests;
- Actively participate in participatory mapping of park boundaries, community areas, and sensitive areas;
- Work closely with the ICCN to prevent conflicts of use, manipulation, and encroachment;
- Establish community alert mechanisms (reporting) against violations of HRDs, pollution, and environmental degradation;
- Promote cultural, tourist, and historical knowledge related to Upemba National Park, Kundelungu, and other protected areas as a lever for conservation and local development;
- Stimulate the creation of income-generating activities (IGAs) in the community.

VI. Universities

- Allocate a budget for research by young students to improve knowledge of the flora in Upemba, Kundelungu, and other protected areas;
- Share studies and other findings with other stakeholders to improve ownership, collaboration, and advocacy;
- Develop research programs on alternatives to wood energy (improved stoves, sustainable biomass, biogas, solar energy), adapted to the local context.
- Produce scientific data on the dynamics of miombo forests, deforestation, and ecosystem degradation around Upemba National Park, Kundelungu Park, and other protected areas.
- Contribute to participatory mapping of land use (forests, agriculture, mines, cultural areas).
- Support the analysis of overlaps between mining concessions and protected areas, in collaboration with the ICCN.
- Develop interdisciplinary training courses linking environment, mining, land tenure, and land use planning in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- Document the cultural, historical, tourist, and identity dimensions of Upemba National Park.
- Disseminate research results to decision-makers (contribute to change), communities, and the general public in order to inform conservation and development policies.

VII. Technical and Financial Partners

- Finance efforts to promote reforestation and ecosystem protection;
- Support income-generating projects to empower local communities.
- Support environmental education projects in the Greater Katanga region.
- Support the development of alternative activities to the extractive economic system, namely the development of agroecology, sustainable tourism, and other activities that align with the principles of sustainable development.

VIII. At ICCN / Upemba and other Protected Areas

- Promote tourism in Upemba Park and other Protected Areas;
- Train local communities in Upemba to take ownership of the Park's protection;
- Promote community autonomy by creating income-generating activities (IGAs) and community development activities (agroecology, fish farming, tourism, agroforestry, etc.);
- Create employment opportunities to reduce the convergence of young people into armed groups;
- Introduce park management courses at the community level;
- Recruit and train eco-guards within communities to protect parks;
- Capitalize on participatory management with local communities (particularly in hunting areas);
- Raise awareness among communities about behavioral change to avoid practices that are harmful to conservation;
- Strengthen collaboration with local NGOs to set up sustainable development projects with mining stakeholders;
- Clearly identify species and draw up a priority list for conservation;
- Map sensitive habitats;
- Promote the park as a driver of green development in the region.

For the Organizers

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Workshop participants

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