

The Congolese landscape, a horizon for national renewal — conceptual illustration

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

BREAK WITH THE PAST — RENEWAL — EMERGENCE

The Pact for National Renewal

A Roadmap for the Emergence of the DR Congo

Concept and writing

Drawing on Joseph Kabila's public statements
Document for discussion with Joseph Kabila

26 October 2026

Reader’s note

> **English edition.** This is a faithful translation of the French working manuscript. English renderings of quotations are translations for reading, not independently authenticated original English statements. The French text and cited sources remain the reference for exact wording.

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Prologue — A break with the past, national renewal, emergence

The essentials

> This book proposes an editorial guiding thread: **BREAK WITH THE PAST — NATIONAL RENEWAL — EMERGENCE**. These words are neither a quotation nor an institution's programme. They describe the civilian framework of this manuscript: to break legally with what obstructs development and damages trust; to renew institutions, mindsets and guiding values; to pursue human, economic and civic emergence whose results can be measured, without violence, without a personality cult and without exclusion.

A break with the past through the rule of law

The break with the past called for here targets neither individuals nor a change of power by force. It means breaking, through democratic and legal channels, with arbitrary rule, impunity, opacity, disregard for service users and practices that divert resources from education, healthcare, water, work and justice. A public decision must be open to understanding, challenge and correction. Expenditure must be traceable. A victim must be able to be heard. This break with past practices also rejects the idea that an emergency could justify violence, armed recruitment or the erasure of rights.

Institutional renewal that makes the state reliable

Institutional renewal does not mean changing the name of a governing authority. It means making institutions reliable: effective law, an administration that gives reasons for its actions, elected representatives and services subject to scrutiny, published budgets and accessible avenues of redress. It is evident when rights do not depend on closeness

to an official and when public services fulfil their responsibilities to the people they serve.

Civilian and ethical renewal of mindsets

The profound transformation sought is ethical and civic, not violent. It makes integrity, merit, responsibility and the common good concrete guiding values within the family, schools, administration, businesses, the media and voluntary associations. It does not promise to change consciences by decree: it creates rules that reward fair work, make conflicts of interest visible, protect the freedom to speak and make correcting an error a public obligation rather than a humiliation.

Emergence measured in people's lives

Emergence is the ultimate goal, not a label to proclaim. It must be visible in safer lives, children who learn, families with access to healthcare, better-supported productive activity and genuinely accessible justice. Economic growth matters, but it is not enough if services remain inadequate or rights remain unequal. For this book, emergence therefore combines economic progress, human dignity and public responsibility. Every ambition must be linked to verifiable results, with a baseline, a responsible actor, a timetable and clearly stated limits.

The programmes devoted to the diaspora, refugees and internally displaced people follow this same guiding thread. They demand no allegiance: they combine freedom of choice, protection, public responsibility, consultation and evidence. The final roadmap ties them to identifiable responsible actors, guarantees, approved budgets and indicators that make it possible to establish an improvement, a limitation or the need to stop.

Introduction — Reading this Roadmap

This book is a proposal for institutional work. It does not ask for allegiance to a person, a party or an organisation: it invites readers to examine rules, rights, budgets and services against a simple question — does the Republic effectively protect people and account for its actions?

Three levels of reading

The reader will first encounter **documented facts**. They are dated, sourced and accompanied by their limitations: an estimate is not a census, a projection is not a result, and a national indicator does not describe every territory. The numbered references lead to the final bibliography. Data from different years are not combined: the available data may therefore relate to 2023, 2024, 2025 or 2026, depending on the field and the publication date.

The institutional analyses presented here address enduring issues: effective access to the law, public services, oversight of those in charge, knowledge, the environment and dialogue. They are developed as proposals specific to the book, without claiming institutional continuity.

Finally, the arrangements introduced by the phrases “the manuscript proposes” or “the roadmap could” are **new proposals**. They do not commit any person, institution or organisation. The proposals attributed to Joseph Kabila in the addresses of 2025 and 2026 remain attributed to their authors and to the media that reported them. [1], [2], [3], [4]

A necessary separation

The Front for National Renewal (FRN), announced in October 2026 and described by the BBC as a political-military movement, is distinct from this manuscript. [6] The book excludes any call for the use of force, any military strategy and any recruitment. It adopts a civilian framework: protection of people, pluralist deliberation, recourse to the law, independent oversight and public correction of errors.

How to assess the proposals

No reform is treated as a given merely because it has been announced. A measure can only be examined alongside its legal basis, the person responsible for it, its full cost, its source of funding, its timetable, its rights safeguards, its avenues of appeal and an outcome indicator. Examples identified as hypothetical serve only to make a mechanism understandable; they do not describe an achievement.

The final roadmap organises these principles according to proposed deadlines. It is not a timetable of authenticated commitments. Its implementation, if chosen by competent institutions, would require public debates, constitutional scrutiny, finance laws, regulatory approval and independent evaluation.

CHAPTER 01

The Meaning of National Renewal



The Congolese landscape, a horizon for national renewal — conceptual illustration

The Essentials

> This book proposes a civilian, verifiable and non-violent **break with the past**, **national renewal** and **emergence**. A break with the past uses the law to combat arbitrary power, impunity, opacity and disregard for public service; national renewal makes institutions, rights, public services and ethical standards more reliable; emergence seeks measurable human, economic and civic progress. This editorial framework is a proposal specific to the manuscript, without personal or institutional attribution.

The method remains the same: protection of people, effective law, structured dialogue, governance subject to scrutiny, value created in Congo and measurable public services. The book distinguishes documented facts from proposals specific to the manuscript.

Giving the Triad an Operational Meaning

A break with the past, national renewal and emergence are not three separate stages. Without a break with arbitrary power, a reorganised institution can reproduce the same inequalities. Without institutions capable of honouring their commitments, ethical renewal remains a wish. Without changes in behaviour, even the best-written rule can be circumvented. Without observable results in people's lives, emergence remains a word. The book therefore links each proposal to a responsibility, a legal basis, identifiable funding, a guarantee of rights, an avenue of redress and public evidence.

Renewing mindsets begins with ordinary actions: refusing an informal payment, respecting an announced deadline, declaring a personal interest, treating a woman, a young person, a person with a disability, a displaced person or a refugee as a rights-holder, and acknowledging an error when the facts demonstrate it. It does not require unanimity; it requires that people's voices, merit and the common good count for more than fear, favour or identity. Emergence then becomes visible in security, learning, work, the quality of services and the equal ability to assert one's rights.

National renewal cannot be an elegant name for a change in those who hold power. It denotes a more demanding undertaking: restoring to the Republic what holds a political community together—people's safety, law that protects without selecting its beneficiaries, an administration that explains its actions, an economy that circulates value, and services that give everyone a concrete reason to believe in the State.

National renewal calls for a Republic in which democratic institutions, civil peace and public action put residents first. It links this ambition to economic activity, law, the transmission of knowledge and collective services. This connection is an analysis developed in this book: it must be judged by its guarantees, its means and its results.

The address attributed to Joseph Kabila on 23 May 2025, for its part, sets out a twelve-point "citizens' pact". The reports consulted link this pact to ending the war, restoring State authority, democracy, freedoms, reconciliation, good governance and dialogue with neighbouring countries. [1], [2] The address of 9 October 2026 returns to this critical assessment and presents the national emergency as the result of proposals that the speaker considers to have been ignored. This

date, the title of the message and several quotations are corroborated by separate media outlets. [3], [4], [5]

The FRN announced in October 2026 must be distinguished from this approach: the BBC describes it as a politico-military movement. [6] That characterisation cannot provide the method for a book devoted to the civilian renewal of the Republic.

Making Dialogue an Institution Again

Dialogue loses its meaning when it becomes a mere succession of speeches or an instrument of capitulation. It becomes necessary when it brings differences, grievances and interests under a shared set of rules, where the lack of a public forum would otherwise turn them into fear. The address of 9 October 2026 refers to an inclusive national dialogue; the pact of 2025 mentions sincere and continuing dialogue with neighbouring countries. [1], [3] For this book, lasting bodies in which conflicts can be examined and defused are a condition of civil peace.

Serious national renewal therefore separates dialogue from all armed pressure. It makes its purpose public, protects its participants and makes its results clear. Useful dialogue does not ask citizens to abandon their convictions. It gives them a lawful means of defending them, challenging them and translating them into compromises subject to scrutiny.

Making Peace a Condition of Shared Life

Peace is not the interval between two conflicts. It is the ability of a family to travel, work, obtain healthcare, attend school and assert a right without fearing arbitrary power. For local disputes, it requires procedures based on impartial rules, supported by accessible local justice and an administration that is effectively present.

The pact of 2025 reported by Radio Okapi likewise places ending the war, reconciliation and regional dialogue among its priorities. [1] From this convergence, the book can draw a simple rule: no economic, institutional or social promise has value if civilians cannot experience it in their lives. But this rule requires the rejection of shortcuts. The protection of people and respect for humanitarian law must be non-negotiable limits, not benefits expected from a balance of power.

Making the Rule of Law Visible in Everyday Experience

The rule of law is not measured primarily by the beauty of a constitutional text. It is recognised when an arrest is subject to scrutiny, when a decision can be challenged, when justice is not dispensed according to origin, connections or wealth, and when public freedoms do not depend on the tolerance of the moment. The administration, police, justice system and other public services must be made more effective and subject to scrutiny.

The proposals attributed to the pact of 2025 include a return to the fundamentals of the rule of law and the restoration of fundamental freedoms. [1] This connection does not remove the need to ask the decisive question: what guarantees remain when power is challenged? This book project's answer is institutional, not personal. A rule contributes to national renewal only if it also protects the person who criticises the leader tasked with applying it.

Governing with Accountability

Governance is where the idea of national renewal can become verifiable. Preventing the misappropriation of funds requires oversight bodies, access to information, a skills-based civil service, parliamentary scrutiny and the freedom to inform or organise. The address of 2025 links development to good economic governance, administrative and financial management described as orthodox, and an equitable distribution of national resources. [1]

We must go beyond the word "good". Governance is good when revenue, expenditure, contracts and results are understandable to the public; when those responsible explain what they have done with their mandate; when oversight bodies can publish without fear; and when failure leads to correction rather than silence. Power is not restored through opacity, even when it invokes the public good.

Putting Economic Sovereignty at the Service of People

Economic sovereignty does not mean isolation. It means that the country's resources, the agreements it signs and the businesses operating within it contribute to the collective ability to decide and live with dignity. Economic activity can remain open while being subject to public rules that protect the collective interest: diversification, local

processing, agriculture, energy and limiting economic rents are complementary means of achieving this.

In the address of October 2026, the concerns expressed about strategic minerals and the continuity of international commitments point to the same question: who protects the interests of present and future generations? [3] This question deserves more than a slogan about resources. It requires published contracts, clear tax obligations, social and environmental criteria, an explicit share for the territories concerned and an independent assessment of the value actually created in Congo.

Sovereignty is also at stake in food, knowledge and energy. A country that processes more of what it produces, supports its citizens' skills and guarantees essential networks becomes less vulnerable to decisions it does not control. Wealth is sovereign only if it becomes the capacity to live, produce and choose.

Starting with the Services That Make the State Credible

Water, healthcare, schools, energy, passable roads and an administration that responds are not the social decoration of a political project. They are where people encounter the Republic every day. Having enough to eat, studying, obtaining redress, receiving healthcare, having housing, working in decent conditions and being protected against social risks are essential conditions of life. Health, education, transport, energy and rural development must therefore be evaluated by their actual effects.

The pact reported in 2025 speaks of reviving development through equitable governance; this intention can be judged by the standard of services. [1] A budget without water, a mining policy without schools, an administrative reform without redress for service users renew nothing. The book must therefore favour indicators of real life over announcements: the distance and cost of access to a health centre, continuity of water supply, teachers' presence, a service's response time, transparency in a local market.

New Proposals in This Manuscript

The following proposals are new editorial avenues. They commit neither Joseph Kabila, nor the FRN, nor any government.

A public national renewal dashboard. Each institution responsible for an essential service would publish, in a short and comparable format, its budget, annual objectives, timetable, observed discrepancies and the response provided. This would be less a communication tool than a citizen's right to understand.

A sovereignty test for major contracts. Before signature and at regular intervals, every agreement concerning a strategic resource would be examined through public questions: what value is created locally? what revenue is expected? what environmental and social obligations are subject to scrutiny? what share goes to the territories concerned? what recourse exists in the event of non-compliance?

Local law and service centres. In territories where institutional remoteness fuels mistrust, a single location could guide residents free of charge towards administrative redress, civil registration, civil mediation, information on health services and the documentation of collective needs. Its role would be to make rights usable, not to replace courts or administrations.

A pact on public language. Authorities, parties, media outlets and civil society organisations would be called upon to publish their basic data, distinguish fact from accusation and publicly correct information acknowledged to be wrong. Civil peace also begins with this discipline in speech: not turning identity, fear or insult into a political resource.

A services-first clause. Any new exceptional revenue derived from natural resources should be subject to a publication stating, before commitments are made, the share allocated to water, health, education, local energy provision or improved access to isolated areas. This clause does not replace budgetary debate; it gives that debate the evidence that everyday life demands.

National renewal begins when a promise becomes a clear obligation. It does not ask Congolese people to forget their disagreements; it gives them institutions capable of accommodating those disagreements without destroying their common bond. It does not seek unanimity born of circumstance, but the patiently earned confidence that a right

will be applied, a contract will be scrutinised, a child will be able to learn and a family will be able to seek justice without being silenced.

CHAPTER 02

The twelve public policy directions of the citizen pact



Joseph Kabila

The essentials

> On 23 May 2025, Joseph Kabila presented what he called a “citizen pact” in twelve proposals. Radio Okapi published the full list the following day. On 9 October 2026, he returned to these same priorities, stating that they had been ignored. Actualité.cd again reproduced the twelve points, in very similar terms. [1] [4]

This chapter explains these policy directions as publicly reported. It claims neither to know an internal vision developed within his office nor to turn the speaker’s criticisms into proven facts. When he denounced a “dictatorship”, a poorly conducted war or fractured cohesion, Joseph Kabila was expressing his political analysis; the media

consulted report that analysis, without themselves making it evidence. In October 2026, he concluded: “The Congo is in peril. Saving it is an imperative and an urgent necessity.” [3]

The twelve headings are therefore retained, but their meaning is placed within a civilian framework: enforceable rights, pluralistic debate, accountable institutions, civilian protection and negotiation consistent with the law. This book is neither an electoral directive nor an invitation to join a party, the FRN or an armed force. It is not signed, approved or mandated by Joseph Kabila.

End dictatorship

The first proposal is reported in these terms: “End dictatorship”. [1] In May 2025, as in October 2026, it forms part of a criticism attributed to Joseph Kabila of the way power was exercised. That criticism alone cannot establish a legal classification of the regime.

From an institutional perspective, the issue is to limit all power through the Constitution, the judiciary, Parliament, a free press and the right to challenge it. Ending arbitrary rule cannot mean replacing one personal authority with another. It requires reasoned decisions, independent oversight and genuinely accessible remedies. Chapter 4, devoted to a just state and governance subject to scrutiny, develops the safeguards that make this requirement verifiable.

Stop the war

“Stop the war” is the second point on the list published in May and repeated in October. [1] [4] The objective is straightforward, but its civilian implementation is less so: protect residents, honour humanitarian commitments, allow access for relief efforts and give victims a voice in decisions that affect them.

This policy direction describes neither a military victory nor an armed strategy. It establishes a political obligation to seek a way out of conflict that sacrifices neither civilians nor their rights. It calls for verifiable ceasefires, a justice system capable of addressing crimes and avenues for reparations. Chapter 3 examines these conditions: protection for displaced people, access to legal remedies and dialogue that does not replace the duty to deliver justice.

Restore state authority throughout the territory

Joseph Kabila proposed to “restore state authority throughout the entire national territory”. [1] A state’s authority cannot be reduced to its declared presence. It is evident when a person can obtain a civil status document, enforce a judgment, study, receive healthcare or lodge a complaint without depending on an arbitrary intermediary.

This presence must be lawful and accountable. It entails a trained administration, protected members of the judiciary, funded local services and a clear allocation of responsibilities between levels of government. The state gains legitimacy by responding to citizens and accepting their legal challenges, not through coercion outside the law. Chapters 4, 7, 8 and 9 follow this thread, from local institutions to water, healthcare, education, energy and transport services.

Restore democracy and the rule of law

The fourth point seeks to “restore democracy by returning to the fundamentals of a genuine rule of law”. [1] This is a political formulation attributed to the speaker, not an established finding that those fundamentals had ceased to exist. It nevertheless recalls a measurable question: do the rules apply equally, including when those in power are challenged?

Democracy is not limited to voting. It requires the law to protect the opposition, the administration to explain its decisions, elections to be administered impartially and judges to be able to rule without political instructions. Freedoms and pluralism are conditions of civic agreement, not concessions granted to allies. Chapter 4 proposes linking parliamentary oversight, public information and judicial remedies, without attributing these arrangements to Joseph Kabila.

Restore fundamental freedoms

The fifth heading is “Restore fundamental freedoms”. [1] It must be understood in relation to freedom of expression, assembly, association, information and movement, and the rights of the defence, as well as safeguards against arbitrary arrest. In the October 2026 address, Radio Okapi reports that Joseph Kabila denounced violations of human rights and civil liberties; that denunciation remains his own. [3]

To have an effect in civilian life, a freedom must be accompanied by clear rules: an exceptional restriction must have a basis in law, be necessary, be subject to scrutiny and be open to challenge. Journalists, trade unionists, rights defenders, citizens and public officials must be able to speak, organise and criticise without violence or reprisals. Chapter 4 addresses these protections within a democracy that is not identified with any party.

Reconcile the Congolese people and rebuild national cohesion

The sixth proposal links reconciliation among the Congolese people with rebuilding national cohesion. [1] In October 2026, Joseph Kabila attributed the deterioration of cohesion to the governance he criticised; this causal relationship is his political assessment. [4] The proposal can nevertheless be understood as a requirement for living together: no identity, province or community should be treated as having second-class citizenship.

Reconciliation requires truth, safety for those who speak, reparations and fair handling of disputes, particularly over land. It cannot be an injunction to forget violence. Chapter 3 draws from this conditions for victim protection and dialogue, while Chapter 12 links cohesion to provinces, borders and cooperation that respects residents.

Diaspora development and consideration of refugees are, here, a new proposal in this book, arising from the themes of peace, cohesion and development. They are not points explicitly expressed among the twelve reported proposals.

Revive development through good governance and equitable sharing

The seventh point is detailed: Joseph Kabila proposed reviving development through good economic governance, “orthodox” administrative and financial management and an equitable distribution of national resources. [1] This policy direction provides no figures for any measure and does not, on its own, define a complete economic model.

Its institutional meaning is nevertheless precise: a budget must indicate who decides, who spends, who exercises oversight and which services are actually delivered. Equitable distribution requires public

criteria across territories and populations, without promising that every material inequality will disappear immediately. Chapters 4 and 5 address the traceability of funds and fiscal space; Chapters 6 to 11 call for resources to become food, health, knowledge, energy, work and environmental protection.

Establish sincere and permanent dialogue with neighbouring countries

The eighth proposal calls for "sincere and permanent dialogue with all neighbouring countries" for lasting peace and development in the region. [1] It echoes Joseph Kabila's emphasis, in October 2026, on inclusive national dialogue; the two approaches are not identical, one being regional and the other domestic. [3]

Credible regional dialogue must have a known purpose, authorised participants and recorded commitments. It may concern people's safety, trade, refugees, borders, infrastructure or the exploitation of resources. It does not amount to relinquishing sovereignty: an agreement must respect the Constitution, be open to democratic scrutiny and provide peaceful mechanisms for settling disputes. Chapter 13 develops this law-based cooperation, without confusing diplomacy with submission.

Restore credibility with partners

Joseph Kabila proposed restoring the country's credibility with regional, continental and international partners. [1] Credibility cannot be decreed through a declaration, nor does it depend solely on the person who governs. It is built through consistent commitments, predictable institutions and information that enables actions to be verified.

For citizens, it has a concrete meaning: a public or private partner must know which rule applies; the state must be able to defend its interests through stable legal texts and accurate accounts. This does not require any automatic alignment. Chapters 4, 10 and 12 instead propose transparency in contracts, budgetary accountability and diplomacy subject to lawful debate.

Neutralise armed groups and repatriate foreign groups

The tenth point mentions the “neutralisation” of all national and foreign armed groups, as well as the repatriation of the latter to their countries of origin. [1] The word is taken from the report of the proposal; it does not provide a military method in this book. The October address returns to it among the 2025 policy directions, without detailing the mechanism. [3]

Within a civilian framework, all action must be bound by the law, civilian protection, judicial oversight and international obligations. For people associated with armed groups, the relevant avenues are prevention of recruitment, disarmament and reintegration where the law permits, investigation of crimes and fair individual procedures. Repatriation of foreign nationals may take place only through diplomatic arrangements, with verification of nationality and safeguards against refoulement contrary to fundamental rights. Chapter 3 gives priority to people’s safety rather than any logic of reprisals.

End recourse to and the use of mercenaries

The eleventh point calls for a definitive end to recourse to and the use of mercenaries. [1] It calls for rigorous legal classification of the people, contracts and functions concerned: the label must not be used to circumvent the law or to make accusations without evidence.

The civilian policy direction is to subject any irregular armed presence to the law, the competent authorities and public oversight. Security contracts, their legal bases, their responsibilities and their complaint mechanisms should be open to examination, subject to legally protected information. Any offence is a matter for investigation and the courts, not collective revenge. Chapter 4 provides the accountability framework; Chapter 3 recalls that protecting civilians and witnesses remains the first priority.

Secure the withdrawal of foreign troops

Finally, Joseph Kabila called for an order for “the withdrawal, without delay, of all foreign troops from the national territory”. [1] In October, media coverage retained this point among the twelve measures. [4] In

this book, this proposal is a legal and diplomatic issue, never a military strategy or a call for armed resistance.

A lasting withdrawal requires identifying the presences concerned, any basis they may have, the applicable agreements and each state's responsibilities. It calls for verifiable negotiations, safeguards for civilians, independent observation where the parties agree to it, and international avenues for settling disputes. Chapter 13 examines the conditions for regional cooperation that protects territorial integrity and people's rights, without promising a solution by force.

Connection to the book's programme

These twelve public policy directions organise questions of peace, law, cohesion, governance, resources and regional relations. The following chapters do not present them as Joseph Kabila's personal programme. They take them as issues to be made open to examination: through rights, institutions, budgets, services and remedies. The book's final roadmap then proposes civilian, verifiable and non-violent sequences to turn these issues into public debates and decisions.

CHAPTER 03

Peace, Civilian Protection and Reconciliation



Civil dialogue, a foundation for peace — conceptual illustration

The Essentials

> Civil peace does not begin with a declaration. It begins when a family can sleep without fear, receive healthcare, send its children to school and exercise a right without being humiliated. In the DRC, it requires protecting displaced people, responding to the emergency without trapping them in dependency on aid, delivering justice for victims and creating a dialogue in which no one gives up their dignity in order to be heard.

This chapter sets out proposals from the present manuscript. The approach advocated here is strictly civilian, verifiable and non-violent.

What the Crisis Requires

Conflicts between citizens, including land disputes, must follow an impartial and accessible procedure rather than be settled through power

struggles. Local services, preventive local administration and regular forums for discussion can support this requirement. The current crisis makes it more urgent and more demanding.

A displaced person is not simply someone who has left a village. It is a mother separated from her livelihood, a child whose schooling has been interrupted, a farmer without land, a family taken in by another family that is already vulnerable. OCHA's Humanitarian Response Plan, published in January 2026, estimates that 14.9 million people will need assistance during the year. It targets 7.3 million of the most vulnerable and requires 1.4 billion dollars for the humanitarian response.[7] This amount does not cost a policy proposed by this book. It measures the scale of the humanitarian appeal.

Reference figures must always be dated. The January plan reported nearly 5.3 million internally displaced people, most of them staying with host families. The OCHA dashboard published in May, with data as at 31 March 2026, mentions more than 5.7 million internally displaced people and assistance reaching about 3.6 million people during the first quarter.[7], [8] The regional UNHCR bulletin covering August 2026, published on 17 September, records about 1.3 million Congolese refugees and asylum seekers in neighbouring countries. This last figure does not measure internal displacement.[9]

The abrupt closure of sites in 2025 and returns to sometimes unstable areas, noted by OCHA, show that an administrative return is not necessarily a return home.[7] A dignified return requires a free choice, lasting safety, accessible services and a solution to disputes over housing, land or documents.

Protecting Before Rebuilding

The manuscript's first proposal is a **civilian pact for protection and solutions for displaced people**. It would not create a parallel administration. Following the required approvals, it would bring provincial and territorial authorities, social and justice services, representatives of displaced people, host communities, women's organisations and humanitarian actors together within a single framework. Its principle would be clear: aid follows needs, not political, ethnic or territorial affiliation.

This pact should rest on observable rights. Everyone should be able to request assistance without discrimination, report violence or extor-

tion through a safe channel, replace their essential documents and challenge a decision affecting aid or housing. The data collected should be limited to what is necessary, protected and kept separate from any use for political control. The United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement provide an international reference: they bring together the human rights and humanitarian law guarantees applicable before, during and after displacement.[10]

Before any site closure or relocation, understandable information should be provided in the appropriate languages. Women, older people, people living with disabilities and adolescents must be able to speak without reprisals. A local commission for resolving land disputes, linked to the competent judge rather than replacing them, could document claims and seek fair mediation.

Let us take a hypothetical case. A displaced widow returns to find her plot occupied and her certificate lost. The fair response is neither to force her to leave again without guarantees nor to promise a title that cannot be verified. Her claim must be registered, temporary accommodation and legal aid provided, the parties heard, and the dispute then submitted to the competent authority with the possibility of appeal. Protection becomes a chain of traceable decisions, not a favour granted in an emergency.

A National Dialogue That Protects Civilian Voices

A national dialogue is only as valuable as its rules. The idea of an inclusive national dialogue was again brought into public debate in October 2026, in a position attributed by Radio Okapi to Joseph Kabila.[3] This does not remove the need to define what a legitimate dialogue would be. The present manuscript proposes that such an initiative rest on an explicit institutional basis, a public mandate and the necessary constitutional and political approvals. It cannot belong to any camp, government or opposition.

Displaced people and host communities should have representatives chosen through a transparent procedure. Victims, women, young people, customary authorities, religious denominations, rights organisations, trade unions and provinces must be able to contribute. Inclusion is not about filling a room. It is the ability to influence the agenda, access documents and receive a reasoned response.

The dialogue should publish its mandate, its rules of representation, its funding, declarations of interests by its facilitators and accessible records of proceedings. It should also state what it cannot do: no political discussion must erase victims' right to justice or become a disguised amnesty. Dialogue is not trading truth for silence. It is agreeing on a lawful path to acknowledge wrongs, remedy what can be remedied and prevent their recurrence.

Transitional Justice as a Service to Victims

Transitional justice is not a distant institution. It refers to judicial and non-judicial approaches intended to address the legacies of conflicts, repression and mass violations: truth, prosecutions, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence. OHCHR recalls that it must be adapted to the context, nationally led and centred on victims' needs.[11]

The DRC is not starting from nothing. In 2025, UNDP mentioned the creation of the National Reparations Fund for Victims of War Crimes, FONAREV, as a step forward in recognising victims' rights.[12] Mobile access to justice also shows that distance need not be an insurmountable barrier: between January 2023 and November 2024, support from the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office for 13 investigation teams and 19 mobile courts contributed to 777 convictions. These results do not sum up the whole of Congolese justice, but they demonstrate that bringing access closer to victims can produce results.[13]

The manuscript proposes a pathway with three connected stages. First, protected consultation in the provinces and among the diaspora, to gather victims' expectations. Next, an official roadmap specifying the responsible institutions, avenues of appeal and witness protection. Finally, public monitoring of reparations and reforms. The creation of a new national commission, if that option were adopted, would require a clear legal basis, independent selection of its members and a budget subject to scrutiny. It should not replace the competent courts.

Providing reparations does not mean only paying a sum of money. A reparation may restore a civil status record, enable sustained healthcare or the resumption of a child's interrupted schooling, acknowledge a disappearance, protect a witness or restore access to land. But it must not become the price of silence. Victims retain the choice of whether or not to participate and the right to know how their testimony is used.

Measurable Guarantees

Civil peace becomes credible when it leaves evidence. The pact should publish, for each territory, the number of complaints received, the average response time and the proportion of decisions implemented, without exposing people's identities. The dialogue would be assessed by the actual involvement of displaced people, women and young people in decisions, by the publication of disagreements and by the implementation of approved commitments.

For returns, the test is concrete: six months later, does the family have shelter, realistic access to water, healthcare and schooling, and an avenue of appeal concerning its land or documents? If the answer is no, the return cannot be described as a durable solution. A public policy for civilian protection and justice should be budgeted by the competent authorities following a territorial assessment; its expenditure, contracts, transfers and results should be published regularly. External partners can provide support, but must neither select the victims nor replace the State's responsibility.

Accessible avenues of appeal and spaces for discussion can contribute to social peace. The national renewal proposed by this book does not promise peace in the name of a man or an organisation: it aims to make the protection of people, equality before the law and public accountability observable by all.

CHAPTER 04

A Just State and Governance Open to Scrutiny



Public services close to the people they serve — conceptual illustration

The Essentials

> A just state does not ask citizens to take its word for it. It gives them enforceable rights, a responsive administration, accounts that everyone can read and remedies that work. It accepts scrutiny, even when that scrutiny inconveniences those in power.

National renewal therefore does not mean multiplying legal texts. The Republic has a Constitution, courts and tribunals, a Court of Auditors, assemblies, provinces and decentralised territorial entities. The challenge is to connect them in everyday practice: a reasoned decision, traceable expenditure, an independent judge, an accessible service and a complaint that is followed up. The mechanisms in this chapter are proposals made by the manuscript. They are neither commitments

attributable to any public figure nor the programme of an organisation.

Moving from Intention to Evidence

Accessible remedies, competence-based public recruitment, scrutiny of officials and citizen participation are conditions for institutional impartiality. Local conflicts must be handled by impartial institutions.

Since 2011, the instruments have expanded. The Public Procurement Regulatory Authority, established through the 2010 reform, has a portal listing procurement plans, reports and decisions, among other documents. The Ministry of Budget states that it has published a Citizens' Budget since 2011 to make it easier for the public to understand and monitor the budget. [14], [15]

There are also more recent initiatives in the justice system. UNDP reports that in 2024 four digital tools were introduced into the criminal justice process and that the detainee management system was deployed in **12 cities**. This is a programme result that improves traceability; it is not proof that the entire justice system is digitalised or accessible. [16] The need remains: to make institutions serve the individual regardless of connections, wealth or partisan preferences.

A Constitution Put into Practice, Not Merely Invoked

The Constitution revised in 2011 provides a clear foundation. Article 149 affirms the independence of the judiciary. Articles 150 and 151 make judges the guarantors of freedoms, subject them solely to the authority of the law and prohibit the executive from issuing them instructions, obstructing proceedings or opposing the enforcement of a judgment. The Superior Council of the Judiciary manages the judiciary and prepares its budget before it is incorporated into the general budget. [14]

This independence must become visible. The manuscript proposes publishing judicial vacancies, selection criteria and career decisions each year, in a form that respects privacy. It also proposes an anonymised register of disciplinary sanctions and monitoring of the enforcement of judgments against public administrations. The Superior Council of the Judiciary and existing courts can uphold this discipline. Any measure affecting the status of judges or the confi-

dentiality of investigations should, however, require legislation and constitutional review.

Independence is not a professional privilege. It enables a family, a detained person or a small business to be heard without having to know an intermediary. In the 2024 Enterprise Survey, **60 %** of businesses surveyed in the DRC perceived the courts as independent and impartial in commercial disputes, compared with 70 % in sub-Saharan Africa. This indicator measures neither the views of the population as a whole nor criminal justice. It nevertheless signals that impartiality must be demonstrable, not merely proclaimed. [17]

The proposed first step therefore focuses on peace courts, legal aid and the enforcement of decisions. Mobile court hearings can ease backlogs in a remote area, but they do not replace a lasting presence. Customary or community mediation can ease a land or family dispute if it is freely accepted and never deprives anyone of their right to bring a case before a judge. Any agreement that violates equality, dignity or fundamental rights must be capable of being set aside by a duly constituted court.

Making Every Public Franc Traceable

An approved budget announces an intention. Its execution reveals the actual decision. The DRC Economic Update, published by the World Bank in July 2025, estimates the central government deficit at **2.0 % of GDP in 2024**. This finding does not justify austerity as a matter of principle. It is a reminder that a new priority must be chosen, funded and scrutinised. [18]

Procedure matters as much as the amount. The IMF notes that in the second quarter of 2024 expenditure processed through emergency procedures represented **15.7 % of total expenditure**. These procedures can bypass the ordinary stages of commitment, verification and payment authorisation. The January 2025 programme therefore provided for quarterly publications by procedure and institution. This is a flow figure for one quarter and a reform commitment, not a subsequent assessment. [19]

The manuscript proposes a single public chain: procurement plan, call for tenders, decision, contract, amendments, payments, acceptance of the completed works and scrutiny. Genuinely sensitive information would be protected for a strictly justified period, without

becoming a blanket veil of secrecy. The information would be accessible by phone, downloadable and retained in a stable archive. The ARMP, contracting administrations, oversight bodies, the Court of Auditors and assemblies can play a part in this process. Depending on its content, an obligation to exchange data and publish complete information would require regulatory or parliamentary approval.

This proposal does not assume that nothing exists. The Citizens' Budget and the ARMP portal provide foundations to build on. But separate documents are not enough if citizens cannot connect a project to its final cost, its contractor and its outcome. The IMF's PIMA assessment specifically distinguishes the law from its effective implementation. It reports that a World Bank assessment had found **48 %** of processes compliant with the law in 2020. This is a historical benchmark, not a measure for 2026. [20]

As a hypothetical example, a municipality refurbishing a market would publish the need, the budget allocation, the eligible bids, the contract, the payments and the acceptance of the works. Residents, traders and elected representatives could report a discrepancy. The administration would have to respond within a known timeframe. A report would replace neither an investigation nor the right of all parties to be heard; it would trigger a documented verification.

Decentralising Responsibility with Corresponding Resources

Decentralisation brings decision-making closer to the person who uses a school, health centre, road or court. It must not become a transfer of responsibility without resources. The Constitution provides that **40 %** of nationally generated revenue allocated to the provinces is retained at source. It also tasks the Court of Auditors with auditing the accounts of the state, provinces, decentralised territorial entities and public bodies, with an annual report intended for publication. These are constitutional obligations; they do not, in themselves, prove that transfers or audits take place regularly. [14]

The manuscript proposes a quarterly statement shared by the central government, each province and the entities concerned: calculation basis, amount due, date made available, amount received and planned use. It would be certified by the financial services, discussed at a public hearing of the provincial assembly and open to scrutiny by the Court

of Auditors. In the event of disagreement, administrative conciliation followed by recourse to a judge would replace political pressure.

Human rights, civil and customary rights, and the administration of courts, tribunals and prisons fall within concurrent powers of the central government and the provinces. [14] For each priority service, it is therefore necessary to publish who sets the standard, who pays, who recruits, who delivers and who answers to citizens. Without this allocation, two administrations shift the blame to each other and neither delivers the service.

A Democracy That Exercises Scrutiny without Becoming Identified with a Party

Voting is irreplaceable, but it does not monitor a road, a hospital or a court decision between elections. The democracy open to scrutiny proposed here combines the right to petition and receive a reasoned response, open budget hearings, access to documents, parliamentary committees able to hold hearings and follow up, and citizens' juries selected by lot to assess a local service. Selection by lot limits capture by networks. Parity, territorial representation and declarations of conflicts of interest should govern it. These juries would establish findings, ask questions and publish an opinion; they would replace neither elected representatives, nor courts, nor oversight bodies.

Protecting people is non-negotiable. Whistleblowers must not be exposed. Personal data must be protected. Sessions must be accessible in locally relevant languages and to people with disabilities. Administrative responses must be reasoned and open to challenge. Civilian oversight rejects intimidation and violence: disagreement is addressed through debate, remedies and evidence.

Funding must remain honest. The manuscript does not put figures on imaginary savings. An initial phase can reallocate funds for publication, auditing, training and information systems, following budget approval. Any savings resulting from better competition or fewer exemptions would be reinvested only after they had been established and audited. External technical support can help, provided that the data, rules and oversight authority remain public and Congolese.

Evaluation must be regular and understandable: the share of provincial transfers actually made available, procurement documented at every stage, emergency expenditure, response times for pe-

titions and enforcement of court decisions against the administration. Each year, the Court of Auditors and Parliament would examine these results in public session. Indicators must not humiliate a province; they must show where rights and services are not yet reaching people.

The question remains: how does the state account for its actions and protect people? This manuscript's answer is civilian, verifiable and non-violent. The proposals in this chapter imply no support for violence or for any armed group.

CHAPTER 05

Population, poverty and public finances



Local enterprise and livelihoods — conceptual illustration

The essentials

> The DRC has become more populous and more urban. It remains marked by mass poverty. Its growth does not automatically translate into jobs, income or public services. National renewal must therefore measure honestly, spend usefully and account for its actions.

A country that has changed in scale

The DRC has changed in scale. The World Bank gives a population of 112 832 473 for 2025. This is a mid-year estimate, not the result of a census conducted in 2025. The definition includes residents, regardless of their legal status or nationality. [21], [22]

The urban population accounts for 45.1 % of the total in 2025, compared with 44.7 % in 2024. “Urban” refers to areas defined by national

statistical offices, then harmonised by the UN. It is neither an instantaneous count nor a social boundary. [23], [24]

Rural production and services must be supported, while also responding to the expansion of cities: water, sanitation, schools, health, transport, employment and access to land. All demographic data must be labelled as census data, estimates or projections. A school or a road is judged by the number of people served, the time saved and the quality of the service.

Poverty requires definitions, not slogans

The national threshold corresponds to the cost of a basket of basic needs. An international threshold converts living standards into purchasing power parities, or PPPs, to compare countries. Three dollars at 2021 PPP therefore does not mean three dollars at the current exchange rate.

The latest nationally representative household survey, ECVM 2024, estimates that 69.1 % of Congolese people live below the national poverty line. This is the most relevant current benchmark for poverty as defined nationally. However, it is not sufficient to demonstrate an improvement or deterioration compared with any previous survey. The World Bank specifies that ECVM 2024 used a new consumption module and a per-person cost-of-basic-needs method. This change creates a break in the series. [25]

The latest international estimate actually published in the PIP database comes from the 2020 survey: 85.3 % of the population then lived below the threshold of 3.00 dollars at 2021 PPP per day. The rate of about 80.5 % presented for 2026 is a projection, not an observation. It must neither be presented as the result of a 2026 survey nor turned into a promise. [25]

Poverty figures cannot be compared mechanically when they are based on different thresholds, years, prices, PPPs, questionnaires or methods. A figure above 80 % may refer to an international threshold, another year or a political shorthand whose definition has yet to be established. Placing these figures side by side without specifying how they were produced would create a false diagnosis.

The manuscript proposes that the INS publish, with each survey, the national threshold, results by province, international thresholds, the questionnaire and a note on breaks in the series. Public objectives

could then focus on verifiable results. Statistics must correct action, not dress up a speech.

Growth, inflation and employment: the gap to close

For 2025, a completed year but still subject to statistical revision, the IMF estimates real growth at 5.7 % and average inflation at 7.4 %. Expansion was supported by extractive activities. Their high capital intensity explains why an increase in production or exports does not necessarily create many productive jobs. [26]

As at 26 October 2026, the year is still under way. The October World Economic Outlook forecasts real growth of 5.2 % and average inflation of 4.3 % for 2026. These are projections, not observed data. They will depend in particular on mineral prices, the exchange rate, import costs, security and budget execution. [27]

An open economy, governed by rules in the public interest and supported by public authorities where necessary, must be judged by a simple question: does the value created in Congo become income, employment or a service? A mine can increase revenues without immediately improving the life of a woman farmer or an apprentice. The example is hypothetical, but the mechanism is real.

Rebuilding fiscal space

Fiscal space is the sustainable capacity to finance a priority without jeopardising essential obligations, price stability or debt sustainability. It rests on properly mobilised revenues, well-chosen expenditure, reliable procedures and, where justified, affordable borrowing.

In 2025, the IMF estimates domestic revenues at 11.5 % of GDP, central government expenditure at 13.3 % and the domestic fiscal balance at minus 1.9 % of GDP. The overall balance is estimated at minus 2.9 %. Exceptional security expenditure reaches 3.5 % of GDP, while domestically financed investment excluding SICOMINES is estimated at 1.2 %. These proportions show the opportunity cost: every franc allocated without oversight is unavailable for services to people or productive investment. [26]

Debt requires the same rigour. In the IMF's debt sustainability analysis, the debt stock covered in 2025 is estimated at 20.424 billion dollars: 11.548 billion in external debt and 8.876 billion in domestic debt. Within this coverage, it corresponds to 17.9 % of GDP. A debt

stock is not a sum immediately available. It must be read alongside its currency, repayment schedule, cost and scope of coverage. [26]

The October 2026 WEO uses another aggregate, general government gross debt, which it projects at 23.7 % of GDP in 2026. The two ratios are not automatically competing measures, nor can they be added together. They may differ in coverage, measurement date, exchange rate and GDP revisions. The public question is therefore: who owes what, in which currency, by what deadline, for which project and under what oversight? [27]

The manuscript proposes rebuilding fiscal space before allocating it. All exceptional revenue must be published before it is allocated. All emergency expenditure must be regularised, with its purpose, final beneficiary and result disclosed. Every significant loan should have a public information sheet: total cost, currency, repayment schedule, project financed and an indicator of the service delivered.

This rule can draw on existing institutions: the Directorate-General of the Treasury and Public Accounting, the macroeconomic framework, the Court of Auditors, the Inspectorate-General of Finance, Parliament and provincial administrations. The IMF report documents measures already under way: a Treasury single account, publication of investment payments, oversight of procedures and a fiscal framework distinguishing resource revenues. Their effectiveness will depend on consistent practice, not on the impact of an announcement. [26]

Financing can combine better tax and customs administration, assessment of exemptions, mining transparency, reduced leakage and debt reserved for sound projects. The savings generated must be allocated according to published rules.

National renewal that everyone can verify

The vision of this manuscript is civilian and non-violent: inclusive dialogue, peace founded on the protection of people and the law, an effective rule of law, governance subject to scrutiny, economic sovereignty focused on value created in Congo and measurable public services. It does not ask people to believe in an intention. It organises the evidence.

Every six months, the competent institutions could publish a shared dashboard distinguishing actual results from projections. It would track inflation, revenues collected, emergency expenditure

regularised, debt service, investment and a few territorial results. Monetary poverty would be updated only when a survey makes this possible.

Priority is given to effects experienced in daily life, avenues of redress, resource sharing and public oversight. The proposals in this chapter are valid only insofar as they are duly adopted, transparently financed and have a verifiable effect on the lives of Congolese people.

CHAPTER 06

Agriculture and Food Security



Grow, process, feed — conceptual illustration

The essentials

> The DRC's primary shortage is not land, water or farming know-how. Too often, it lacks the chain that connects a secure field to a healthy plate of food: a defensible land right, appropriate advice, a passable road, storage and a fair market. This is the difference between agricultural potential and genuine food security.

The priority is to protect families' ability to produce, buy and consume a varied diet. Reducing food dependence does not mean closing borders. It means ensuring that imported food no longer becomes the permanent answer to harvests, markets and incomes that the country could have secured.

From potential to available food

Agriculture, livestock farming, fishing and rural development require transport routes, research, producer organisations, secure land tenure

and market outlets. Figures for land area, imports and budgets from the years 2000–2010 do not, by themselves, describe the DRC of 2026.

What has changed is the scale and interconnection of the shocks. The latest IPC analysis published before this update — on 12 May 2026, for January–June 2026 — estimated that about 26.5 million people faced high levels of acute food insecurity, representing 23 % of the population analysed. More than 3.6 million were in phase 4, known as “Emergency”. Phase 3, “Crisis”, means that households have food consumption gaps or meet their needs only through unsustainable strategies; phase 4 corresponds to major gaps and a very high nutritional risk. [28]

Hunger is therefore not simply an absence of calories produced nationally. It is also the inability to access food at the right time and at an affordable price. The IPC links the situation to conflicts, economic and climate shocks, weakened infrastructure and services, gaps in social protection and insufficient aid. [28] When a family loses its field, avoids a dangerous road or cannot sell its harvest, the country’s potential does not feed it.

Nutrition makes the obligation more specific. The IPC analysis of December 2025, valid until June 2026, projected that 4.18 million children aged 6 to 59 months would suffer from acute malnutrition during this period, including more than 1.35 million with severe acute malnutrition. Acute malnutrition is not the same as hunger: disease, inadequate complementary feeding and shortcomings in water, hygiene and care also contribute to it. [29]

The potential remains tangible. In 2026, the FAO describes underused arable and irrigable land, weak infrastructure and a DRC that is a net importer of food. [30] Rather than repeating old land-area figures, it is necessary to know which land is actually cultivated, protected, disputed or inaccessible. The manuscript proposes a public agroecological and land-tenure atlas, developed with provincial services and communities, distinguishing what is possible from what can be put to use without destroying forests, wetlands or the rights of others.

Producing better, without dispossession

Productivity is not simply a matter of tractors or farm size. It is the ability to obtain more food, income and stability from a given amount of work, without exhausting soils or creating debt that cannot be

repaid. It can begin with reliable seed, locally available advice, intercropping, protected storage or access to water. It also requires women and young people to be able to farm land without discrimination.

The Ministry of Agriculture has a foundation to build on: the National Agricultural Development Programme aims to improve productivity and smallholders' access to markets in targeted areas. Its April 2026 monitoring report assesses the results as uneven. Progress is noted in maize and sales by supported farmers; several expected results for cassava, groundnuts and road maintenance remained at zero at the review point. [31] Only what has been evaluated, corrected and adapted to local areas should therefore be expanded.

Land tenure is the first safeguard for this production. Written law, custom, local authorities and family practices sometimes intersect without clear rules. A World Bank study on cassava highlights the cost of access to land, insecure rights, conflicts and difficulties in land development; it notes that documents may not protect against dispossession. [32] The manuscript proposes territorial land offices: public mapping of rights and uses, documented mediation, affordable registration and independent avenues of appeal. A concession should proceed only after public information has been provided, consent obtained under the applicable rules and an effective opportunity to challenge it ensured. This would require legal validation and coordination between land, judicial, customary and provincial authorities.

Cooperatives can give small producers better access to storage, transport, processing or credit. They must not become channels for political favouritism. The manuscript's proposal is to make public support conditional on accessible statutes, verifiable accounts, regular election of officers, publication of prices and a complaints procedure. A useful cooperative confiscates neither its members' land nor their harvests.

Making the rural market an economic service

A rural market is more than a covered building. Without a maintained road, civilian security, price information, reliable scales and preservation facilities, a good harvest can become a loss. Unpredictable levies and harassment also make food more expensive; the World Bank documents them in the cassava chain, alongside the limitations of roads and electricity. [32]

The manuscript proposes territorial rural-market agreements, developed by communes or sectors with producers, women traders and consumers. These would cover access and its maintenance, water and sanitation, safe selling space, storage, price displays and the official schedule of fees. They would not replace the public budget. They would make its use visible and distinguish legal charges from abusive levies. No payment should be demanded without a published basis, a receipt and an avenue of appeal.

Local processing must follow actual food demand. Cassava, maize, pulses, fishery products, milk and horticultural produce do not share the same risks or market outlets. A drying, milling or refrigeration unit makes sense only if supply, energy, maintenance and a buyer are secured. The State can promote quality standards, applied research and transparent public procurement, if the legal and public health framework permits.

Financing, safeguarding, measuring

Food security requires continuity beyond a single agricultural season. Financing must start from public decisions on priorities, not from amounts promised without a basis. The manuscript proposes presenting agricultural, rural, nutritional and maintenance expenditure together in national and provincial budgets. Each budget line would indicate the responsible party, area, timetable and expected result. Private or external contributions can supplement this effort, provided that their commitments, conditions and evaluations are public.

Safeguards protect farmers and public money: no forced displacement in the name of an agricultural project; no credit without intelligible information about its cost and risk; no contract awarded without public disclosure of the criteria; no emergency aid diverted from its purpose. Elected representatives, farmers' organisations, inspectorates and local media must be able to verify these rules without intimidation. A complaint requires a dated response.

Evaluation will need to be simple and regular. It will track harvests sold without excessive loss, the time and cost of reaching markets, the price gap between producer and consumer, women's and young people's access to services, the resolution of land disputes and the nutritional quality of available food. These data will be cross-checked against IPC alerts and health services, without confusing a temporary

fall in prices with the disappearance of malnutrition. Results must be public, broken down by area and discussed with those who produce and buy.

The question is direct: how can agricultural potential become shared prosperity? This roadmap's answer is civilian and verifiable: ensure the safety of people and their rights, make markets accessible and functional, produce with communities rather than in their place, and measure what actually reaches the plate. This is how economic sovereignty can become value created in Congo and a better-protected life, rather than a slogan.

CHAPTER 07

Health, water and social protection



Care with competence and dignity — conceptual illustration

The essentials

> National renewal is judged by what it protects at the time of a birth, an illness, a loss of income or a water shortage. The DRC has made progress since the early 2010s, but a national average does not guarantee everyone a continuous, affordable and dignified service. This chapter proposes a single public contract for health, water, sanitation, nutrition and social protection: concrete rights, identifiable responsibilities and verifiable results.

This is neither individual medical advice nor a promise attributed to any person. It is a proposal put forward by this manuscript, grounded in civil and non-violent national renewal in which the state submits to scrutiny through the results it delivers.

Since 2011: progress, but rights remain unequal

Difficulties in accessing healthcare, water and the funding for them call for frontline services, public hygiene, regulation and solidarity mechanisms. These needs must be treated as service obligations, with verifiable resources and avenues for redress.

International data series show improvement, without warranting complacency. Life expectancy at birth is estimated at 62.1 years in 2024. It indicates the average number of years a newborn would live if that year's mortality rates remained unchanged. It is neither a personal forecast nor the age at which everyone will die. [33]

The decline in child mortality must be read precisely. In 2024, infant mortality is estimated at 56.4 deaths before the age of one per 1 000 live births. Under-five mortality is 89.7 per 1 000. The latter includes the first year and the years that follow: confusing the two would distort the assessment. The UNICEF fact sheet traces a decline in the under-five rate, from 180 in 1990 to 89.7 in 2024. [34]

The maternal mortality ratio is estimated at 427 deaths per 100 000 live births in 2023. It relates deaths associated with pregnancy, childbirth or their consequences within 42 days to live births. This is an international estimate, with a wide margin of uncertainty, not an exact administrative count. Progress in healthcare must therefore be accompanied by better recording of health events. [35]

The essential health services coverage index reaches 41 out of 100 in 2023. It does not mean that 41 % of the population is insured. WHO constructs it using fourteen tracer indicators, ranging from maternal and child health to infectious diseases, hospital capacity and staffing. It measures service coverage, not merely the existence of services on an organisational chart. [36], [37]

Water and sanitation are part of the same assessment. The JMP estimates published in 2025 for 2024 indicate that 36 % of the population use at least a basic drinking water service and 16 % at least a basic sanitation service. Only 12 % are estimated to use safely managed drinking water: an improved source, available on the premises and when needed, free from contamination. [38], [34]

Nutrition connects these services. In 2023, 44.7 % of children under five were affected by stunting in the available JME series. This means being too short for their age according to the WHO reference, a sign of accumulated deprivation. [39] Social protection reaches few households:

the ILO reported in March 2026 that about 5 % of the population benefited from a scheme, in an economy where informal activity overwhelmingly predominates. [40]

Moving beyond silos

The first mechanism of national renewal is territorial. A health zone should not be a mere administrative boundary, but the scale at which a family can identify a frontline service, a referral facility, staff who are present, traceable supplies, and functioning water and hygiene provision. The role of the ministry, provinces, health zones, local authorities and accredited facilities must be defined through a service contract.

The manuscript proposes a core package of priority services, to be defined following legal, budgetary and professional validation. It would bring together frontline care, maternal and neonatal health, vaccinations provided for in the national schedule, care for common illnesses and referral to an appropriate facility. Rules on quality, opening hours, the availability of supplies and avenues for redress are essential. Announcing free provision without reliable funding often shifts the cost onto households or healthcare workers.

Water, sanitation and hygiene must be included in the same contract. The entire chain must be monitored: water abstraction or connection, quality control, energy or maintenance, continuity, and the collection and treatment of waste and sludge. In a hypothetical neighbourhood, a standpipe without organised repairs, local governance or quality control becomes a fragile promise. A public, community or private operator can be useful if it is accredited, monitored and required to publish its service level. The state remains responsible for standards, oversight and equity.

Nutrition cannot be reduced to occasional distribution. It connects household food provision, safe water, sanitation, maternal health, early childhood and frontline services. Alerts must trigger a coordinated response with social and agricultural services. The priority is to prevent a food, health or security shock from causing lasting damage to people's capacity to grow, learn and work.

Social protection that reaches people

Social protection is the set of public measures that protect individuals and families against economic and social distress. It includes social assistance, social insurance and employment-related programmes. [41] Limiting this protection to formal employment would leave out the majority of workers, older people without pensions, people with disabilities, children and households affected by a shock.

The manuscript proposes gradually linking contributory schemes, for those who pay contributions, with non-contributory support based on public criteria for those who do not have access to them. The joint project launched in March 2026 by the government, the ILO, UNICEF and the World Bank shows that this institutional alignment is already a recognised area of work. It does not replace national debate on rights, priorities and resources. [40]

A social registry can reduce duplication and speed up the response to a crisis. It must never become an opaque tool for surveillance or exclusion. Offline registration, data protection, correction of records, independent avenues for redress and auditable payments are the minimum safeguards. Identification must open access to a right, not arbitrarily make dignity conditional.

Funding without promising the impossible, oversight without humiliation

Funding cannot rest on fictitious costings. The proposal is for realistic multi-year planning, approved by vote and published, separating investment — water networks, equipment, rehabilitation — from recurrent expenditure: staff, maintenance, essential products and social support. Public revenues, including those derived from value created in Congo, must be traceable through to service delivery. External partners can supplement the effort, but should align with a published national plan rather than fragment health zones into competing programmes.

The decisive guarantee is traceability. Each territory should periodically publish actual service availability, water repair times, stockouts, expenditure incurred and complaints resolved. Personal data remain protected; aggregate data are a common good. Patient and women's organisations, local authorities, professionals and the media can ex-

amine them. Independent inspection and proportionate sanctions are necessary when money or supplies disappear.

Evaluation must not be limited to inauguration ceremonies. It must track life expectancy, infant and under-five mortality, the maternal mortality ratio, service coverage, water, sanitation, stunting and social protection separately. Results must be disaggregated, where possible, by province, place of residence, sex, disability and income. Administrative records, household surveys and independent verification must serve to correct one another.

The enduring question is how to turn common goods into real services. The answer proposed here rests on evidence, data safeguards and avenues for redress: civil, verifiable and non-violent national renewal, in which peace and the rule of law are evident in available water, the care a mother receives, a child's survival and the absence of abandonment after a shock.

CHAPTER 08

Education, knowledge and cultural life



Learn, share knowledge, create — conceptual illustration

The essentials

> National renewal begins when every child can go to school, remain there safely and genuinely learn to read, write, reason and cooperate. It continues when adolescents can choose a worthwhile technical education, when students can investigate a concrete problem, and when culture and sport become accessible places of learning.

The challenge is therefore not simply the number of schools or qualifications. UNESCO reported in 2024 that nearly 80 % of children aged 6 to 11 attended school, but that about one in three did not complete primary education. The same source reported that 73 % of pupils did not reach the recommended minimum level in reading and 82 % in mathematics. These indicators describe inadequate learning; they

say nothing about any supposed inability among children, families or teachers. [42]

This chapter proposes a civilian, non-violent and verifiable response. Its criterion is the service delivered to real pupils in real schools.

Access remains a priority, learning becomes urgent

Developing and sharing knowledge requires links between education, employment, research, teachers' professional development and the learning of local languages. Culture and sport can also be places of personal development and solidarity. The book therefore asks: what evidence shows today that knowledge is becoming a shared capability?

Since then, the law and available tools have evolved, while needs have become more pressing. The framework law of 2014 provides for free public primary education, inclusion, physical education and national or local languages. It also defines a foundation of reading, numeracy, expression, problem-solving, practical skills and civic awareness. [44] Yet a place in a classroom does not guarantee learning.

Continuity of schooling is a matter of protection. UNICEF reports that, as at 31 August 2025, threats and direct attacks by armed actors had closed over 5 200 schools and deprived nearly 1.9 million children of access to learning. This statistic concerns crisis-related closures, not the entire national out-of-school population. Schools must remain a civilian service to be protected. [43]

A school that enables learning

The manuscript's first proposal is a public learning contract for primary and early secondary education. Ministries would define concise national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Provinces and school networks would adapt examples and materials to their local context. The unit of work would be the school and its network, not an abstract promise or a humiliating ranking.

Teachers come first. Every teacher should benefit from practice with peers, useful teaching support visits and tried-and-tested teaching sequences. The UNESCO–AFD project launched in 2024 planned to support over 13 000 teachers, 1 500 headteachers and 600 inspectors in reading, writing and mathematics. [42] This is not an achieved result,

but a foundation to be evaluated and then, if results are established, expanded.

Free education is assessed from the pupil's perspective: a safe journey, accessible supplies, water and latrines. Local plans would bring together school leadership, parents, pupils according to their age, health services and territorial authorities; they would publish the obstacles identified and the corrective measures undertaken.

French, national languages and local languages: building capabilities together

French is the language of instruction under the framework law. The same law permits national and local languages as media of teaching and learning, and as subjects; it leaves the arrangements for their use to regulations. [44] This is not about choosing between a language that provides access to further study, administration and an international sphere, and the languages through which children first understand, tell stories and learn.

The proposal is gradual. Initially, teachers would have validated materials in the language spoken in the school's catchment area, with a bridge towards spoken and written French. Subsequently, French would consolidate subject knowledge and national languages would consolidate reading and expression skills. English or other languages would be added if teachers, materials and local needs allow. Language use must be mapped, training provided and textbooks tested, with decisions then based on evidence.

Skills, technical education and useful research

Technical education is not a default pathway for pupils deemed "weak". It is a pathway to excellence in which theory, workshop practice and work placements reinforce one another. Electricians, laboratory technicians, mechanics, agricultural processors and digital specialists need numeracy, communication, safety, rights at work and certified practical experience.

Institutions already exist, notably the Institut national de préparation professionnelle and technical schools. UNESCO-UNEVOC reported no formally implemented national qualifications framework in 2026, but a certification process had been launched in 2025. [45] The manu-

script proposes completing it with ministries, provinces, employers, trade unions and centres. Certifications must state what a person can do, recognise experience and come under independent assessment panels.

Partnerships with businesses can provide equipment and work placements without reducing schools to recruitment channels for a single project. In March 2026, the World Bank announced a ministerial programme including equipment, training of trainers and apprenticeships. [46] Written contracts, protection against exploitation and access for young women as well as people with disabilities should be attached to it. The results remain to be verified.

Research must start from Congolese problems: water, agriculture, health, materials, energy, biodiversity, cities and languages. Universities and public institutes could receive competitive calls for proposals assessed by peers and users in the field. Each project would publish its protocol, expenditure and non-sensitive data, with a usable result: a process, dataset, manual or tested recommendation.

Heritage, creativity and sport: educational services

Cultural life is not decoration added after the “serious” subjects. It teaches listening, creating, documenting and debating. The DRC has five properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, all natural, and Congolese rumba has featured on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage since 2021. [47], [48] For UNESCO, living heritage can anchor learning in cultural experience and promote both diversity and mutual understanding. [49]

Each school or network could work with artists, libraries, museums, heritage custodians and community radio stations to produce local narratives, sound archives or environmental investigations. Consent, fair remuneration and protection of sensitive knowledge are essential: heritage must neither be reduced to folklore nor exploited without payment.

School sport follows the same logic. Quality physical education is recognised by its regularity, diversity, inclusion and values, not solely by the identification of elite athletes. [50] Adapted activities can foster health, observance of rules, cooperation and peaceful conflict resolution. Values education through sport complements cognitive learning with responsibility, respect, fairness and participation. [51]

Fund, guarantee, measure

The manuscript does not set an amount without a needs assessment or a budget law. It proposes tracking resources all the way to schools and verifying the service delivered there. Regular pay, materials, water, safety, training and maintenance must take precedence over prestige buildings. Budgets, procurement contracts, deliveries and works would be published in a reusable and verifiable format.

Evaluation must measure the service, never label children. Each term, a school could report enrolment and attendance, continuity of lessons, teachers in post, textbooks, water and latrines, as well as anonymised incidents. Twice a year, short common reading and mathematics exercises would monitor progress, without a national competition. For technical education: completion, a safe work placement, certification and entry into employment six or twelve months later, using a sample and with consent.

Data would be disaggregated by sex, age, disability, territory and displacement status where safe, in order to identify exclusion. No public dashboard should name a child, expose a family or automatically punish a school in crisis. Strengthened inspection, a simple avenue of appeal for parents and pupils, and an annual independent audit protect the public interest better than rhetoric about success.

Scientific knowledge, practical skills and collective experiences must be treated as common goods, as must culture and sport. The manuscript's response consists of civilian commitments subject to law, evidence and public scrutiny.

CHAPTER 09

Energy, transport and connectivity



Maintain useful and safe energy systems — conceptual illustration

The essentials

> Emergence is not measured by the potential of a river, the inauguration of a road or the length of a fibre-optic cable. It is measured by a service that holds up: a light in a maternity ward, a road that remains passable after rain, a telephone that makes it possible to contact a market or a public administration. The DRC must pursue both large-scale systems and solutions close to residents. Above all, it must fund and oversee their maintenance. The choice is a civilian one: make services visible, contracts verifiable and decisions reversible when they fail.

Progress, but still an immense gap

Since 2011, the country has made progress without closing the gap. The World Bank defines access to electricity as the share of the population

with access to it. It puts this at 13.7 % in 2011 and 22.5 % in 2024, the latest year of observed data published as of 26 October 2026; the 2025 value has not yet been reported. This progress matters. It also means that more than three out of four Congolese people still lacked measured access in 2024. The indicator says nothing about the hours of electricity supply, its quality or the cost borne by a family. [52]

Digital access has also advanced: the share of "individuals using the Internet" rises from 1.2 % in 2011 to 19.7 % in 2024, the latest year available. This indicator measures neither coverage, speed nor affordability. The divide between occasional connectivity and reliable access remains. [53]

The electricity paradox is even more striking. A World Bank note published in 2025 estimates the country's installed capacity at about 2 700 MW, of which 95 % is hydroelectric. It puts national potential at around 100 000 MW, with about 42 000 MW at the Inga site alone. Installed capacity refers to equipment that is in place, sometimes undergoing rehabilitation; it is neither energy actually delivered nor a right to connection. Potential is a possibility, not a power station or a guarantee of service. [54]

Moving beyond the false choice between Inga and the village

Congo must reconcile national ambition with territorial equity. A major infrastructure project does not replace distribution; small installations do not remove the need for a national strategy. The Inga I and II dams have a combined installed capacity of 1 775 MW. Depending on its design, Inga 3 could produce between 3 000 and 11 000 MW. But the IDA credit of 250 million dollars approved in June 2025 primarily funds studies, preparation, institutions and local development. It proves neither that the power station has been built, nor that it is fully financed, nor that it is already producing electricity. [55]

The manuscript proposes a rule: a major project advances to the next stage only after publication of its studies, technical choices, social and environmental risks, conditions for any resettlement and commitments to local service provision. Independent expertise, documented consultations and accessible avenues for redress must precede any irreversible commitment. Benefits must include networks and skills useful to households, schools, healthcare and small-scale activities,

rather than being confined to exports or large consumers. These are proposals made by the manuscript, not commitments attributed to a person or an organisation.

The other half of the strategy is local. In densely populated centres, rehabilitating substations, lines, meters and connections can deliver more than new generation alone. Far from the grid, hydroelectric, solar or hybrid mini-grids are often sustainable; in dispersed settlements, stand-alone solar power meets essential needs. Priority will go to services that create a local economy: pumping, cold chains, workshops, schools, healthcare and telecommunications. ANSER, ARE and SNEL already exist; their mandates and resources must be clarified project by project. Any change to a tariff or concession requires approval from the competent regulatory and budgetary authorities.

The national energy plan presented in 2025 targets 62 % access in 2030 and a mix of grid, mini-grid and stand-alone solutions. Its additional 3 067 MW and its kilometres of lines are planning and mobilisation targets, not completed achievements. [56]

Repairing the country as well as connecting it

Transport is not just about cutting a ribbon in front of a new road. The World Bank's detailed snapshot, dated 2022, records 152 400 km of roads, including 5 065 km of paved roads, or 3 %. It describes the absence of a reliable overland link between the major east–west and north–south corridors. More than 97 % of the network was then gravel, with almost no drainage. In a country of heavy rainfall and long distances, a culvert, a maintained ditch, a safe ferry or river navigation markers can be worth more than an impressive stretch of road left without maintenance. [57]

The manuscript proposes treating each corridor as a passage service. Before rehabilitation, the responsible authority would publish the initial condition, the drainage structures, the maintenance cost over its lifetime and the expected uses: serving agricultural areas, access to healthcare, river links, rail or urban connections. Contracts should pay for passability, safety and preservation of the asset, not merely the volume of works. FONER, the Office des Routes and OVD can provide a starting point, with publication of audits, contracts, payments and corrective measures. Prevention of predatory practices and protection of civilians must be incorporated.

This precaution has practical grounds. A study reported by the World Bank in 2025 observes, among 192 rehabilitation projects since 2003, an initial decline of 5 to 10 % in violence around improved roads, followed by the disappearance of this effect within three years without maintenance. It also notes that access to certain gold-producing areas can be accompanied by increased violence. Infrastructure therefore does not automatically create peace. It contributes to peace only if it is maintained, subject to the rule of law and designed for people rather than extraction alone. [58]

Railways, ports, ferries and waterways follow the same logic. The aim is not to renovate the entire territory simultaneously, but to restore continuous connections where river, road and rail complement one another, then to fund operations, dredging or navigation marking sustainably. For example, a pilot linking a production area, a market and a landing stage would be selected only after a local study and publication of its maintenance arrangements.

Connectivity that serves residents

Fibre and antennas must follow actual uses, not merely prestige maps. The Digital Transformation Project, under the auspices of the competent ministry, aims to expand broadband, connect public institutions and strengthen skills. Its announced results — 30 million beneficiaries, 650 communities and 1 000 institutions — are expected results, not a record of achievements. [59]

The manuscript proposes that relevant road, electricity or urban works jointly examine cable ducts, power supply to sites and the sharing of passive infrastructure. This avoids reopening a road to lay fibre shortly afterwards. Open access to publicly owned capacity, fair competition and verifiable coverage obligations can reduce last-mile costs. Schools, health centres, local administrations and markets become anchor points if electricity, maintenance and skills are planned together.

Water is mentioned here only in relation to this coordination. A pump, water treatment or a maternity ward needs reliable energy; metering and digital payment can improve monitoring. The AGREE project of 2022 specifically linked access to electricity and water, the performance of SNEL and REGIDESO, regulation and provincial infra-

structure units. It provides a basis for coordination, without replacing a fully fledged water policy. [60]

Financing, overseeing, learning

Financing does not mean announcing an unverifiable overall amount. Each project portfolio should distinguish studies, investment, maintenance, replacement and targeted assistance to vulnerable users. Tax resources, collected service revenues, concessional loans and private capital must be published separately. Regular payment of public-sector bills and lower losses matter as much as a power station: the World Bank estimated in 2025 that about 46 % of the electricity produced by SNEL was then neither delivered, billed nor paid for. [54]

Evaluation will track access and actual hours of electricity supply, days of passability, journey times and costs, as well as Internet use, price and quality. Territorial data, contracts, payments, incidents and resolved complaints must be accessible. Independent audits and user feedback will make it possible to correct or halt a failing project.

Equipment maintenance, connections to production areas, coordination between waterways, roads and rail, and local energy solutions that complement hydroelectricity are conditions for useful connectivity. This chapter requires every promise to become verifiable, local access not to be sacrificed to prestige, and infrastructure to serve peace through the rule of law and the protection of people.

CHAPTER 10

Minerals, Industry and Productive Work



Process resources and create value — conceptual illustration

Key Points

> Copper and cobalt place the DRC at the centre of global industrial supply chains. Yet this position guarantees neither plentiful jobs, nor public services, nor economic justice. A mineral is a source of national wealth only if the rules governing it are public, if more of its value is created in Congo and if the people who work with it can advance safely.

Economic sovereignty is not hostility towards a community, a foreign investor or a partner country. It is the capacity to establish and enforce the same rules for everyone: identify the true owners, measure what is produced and exported, collect what is owed, protect workers and neighbouring communities, and then account for how revenues are used. It is built through law and institutions subject to scrutiny, never by identifying enemies or through violence.

Since 2011, a Mining Power That Has Become More Decisive

Mineral processing, production monitoring, the organisation of artisanal activity and support for small and medium-sized enterprises must ensure that resources better benefit the country and its people. This orientation is not evidence of implementation or of a current promise.

What has changed is the global scale of Congolese copper and cobalt. The USGS estimates the DRC's mine production of copper at 3.2 million tonnes in 2025, against a rounded global total of 23 million tonnes: about 14 %. These volumes are expressed as contained copper; they measure neither export revenues nor the value created within the country. The USGS also estimates Congolese refinery production at 2.8 million tonnes in 2025. An initial stage of processing therefore already exists. But producing refined copper does not yet amount to manufacturing cables, electrical equipment or industrial components in Congo. [61]

For cobalt, the stakes are even more concentrated. The USGS estimates Congolese mine production in 2025 at 230 000 tonnes of contained cobalt and puts the DRC's share at about 73 % of the global total. The same source notes the temporary export ban imposed in February 2025, subsequently replaced by quotas. An export decision can alter the market; on its own, it does not turn resource rents into jobs, schools or lasting income. [62]

The World Bank describes this gap precisely: growth in 2025 was mainly driven by mining and copper exports, but it remains concentrated in capital-intensive sectors, with limited formal job creation. The question is therefore not simply how to produce more. It is how to organise more links between mining, local businesses, skills, infrastructure and public revenues. [63]

Building Processing Capacity Without Slogans

Saying "let us process locally" is right, but insufficient. Processing encompasses several stages. There is concentrate, refined metal, and then copper products such as bars, wires and cables. For cobalt, a battery precursor already represents an important technical stage; a complete battery factory requires further inputs, engineers, rigorous

standards and markets. The World Bank stresses that precursor production can be a realistic first step, whereas the full battery value chain requires a regional effort and much more complex capabilities. [64]

The manuscript therefore proposes verifiable progress rather than a blanket export ban. In each mining basin, a public industrial roadmap could identify what can be manufactured in the short term: maintenance parts, cables, safety equipment, pump repairs and analytical laboratories. It would then specify the activities to prepare for: refining, semi-finished products and, where conditions permit, precursor chemistry.

This roadmap must be linked to practical conditions. A processing facility cannot survive with an unpredictable electricity supply, costly roads, opaque procedures and a workforce without practical training. It therefore requires energy, infrastructure, technical training and enforceable environmental rules. Skills-transfer obligations must be verifiable: apprentices trained, posts entrusted, skills certified and equipment retained in the country. The aim is not to exclude foreign capital, but to negotiate its observable contribution to Congolese capacity.

From Mining Revenue to a Network of Businesses

A large mine creates direct jobs, but its most lasting effect may come from the contracts it awards to surrounding businesses. A Congolese SME that repairs an engine, produces a cable meeting the required standards, analyses water or provides transport in accordance with the rules can hire, train and pay taxes locally. The aim is not to reserve all contracts artificially for nationals, but to enable competent Congolese businesses to compete on the basis of public criteria.

The manuscript proposes gradual local procurement programmes. Mining companies and the public enterprises concerned would publish their procurement categories, technical standards and qualification deadlines. Audited service points would help SMEs obtain a tax number, simple accounting arrangements, certification and, where their order books justify it, a credit guarantee. Major contracts would remain open to competition.

Informal work must not be treated as a collective wrongdoing. According to the ILO, it can involve employees or the self-employed and is defined above all by the absence of registration, regulation or

effective protection; it therefore does not automatically mean illegal activity or work without value. [65] In this chapter, a productive job sustainably increases the usefulness of what is produced, skills and income security. A woman selling goods, a mechanic, a woman welder, a transport operator or an artisanal miner can perform such work while remaining exposed to instability, arbitrary levies or accidents.

Formalisation must therefore be a gateway, not a punishment. A simplified framework, first tested in a few territories with legal and budgetary validation, could offer very small businesses low-cost registration, a single payment receipt, access to transparent markets and progressive social protection. In return, the business declares its activity, complies with safety rules and ceases to be subject to arbitrary administrative harassment. For artisanal mining, this requires authorised sites where conditions permit, freely chosen cooperatives, workable traceability, traceable payments and an effective prohibition on child labour. People's safety and access to remedies must take precedence over any logic of repression.

Oversight, Sharing and Evaluation

Sovereignty is measured by the quality of the rules. The relevant ministry, tax and customs administrations, provincial services and oversight bodies already have roles that must be made coherent. Following legal verification of their powers, they could contribute to a single public register of titles, contracts, known beneficial owners, declared volumes, exports, payments, and social and environmental obligations. Commercially sensitive data may be protected for a defined period, but the exception must not become the rule. Independent oversight, selected through a public procedure, and a complaints mechanism accessible to workers and communities alike are essential.

Sharing must not be limited to a handover ceremony. A share of revenues and local obligations must be traceable through to results announced in advance: water, health, technical schools, roads useful for economic activity or site rehabilitation. The amounts committed, contracts, progress and beneficiaries must be published. Funding may come from better collection of existing revenues, reduced leakage and private or concessional partnerships whose risks and guarantees are made public. No funding figure should be promised before revenues, contracts and infrastructure costs have been audited.

Every six months, a simple dashboard would make it possible to assess progress: the gap between declared production and exports, the share of products processed according to precise categories, contracts secured by qualified SMEs, certified apprentices, workplace accidents, verified public payments and completed community projects. These indicators do not replace democratic debate. They do, however, prevent a promise of sovereignty from becoming a word without scrutiny.

Open economic activity, governed by collective rules and supported where necessary by public authorities, must convert resources into skills and productive capacity. This chapter draws from this a civilian and verifiable proposal: make mining a foundation for industry, SMEs and decent work, under equal rules for all.

CHAPTER 11

Employment and Enterprise: Giving Young People a Future



Learn, build a business, reach markets — conceptual illustration

The essentials

> Giving young people a future means neither issuing them a slogan nor promising them an online account, credit or a job that does not yet exist. It is a comprehensive public policy: enabling everyone who can to learn, work under fair conditions, create a viable activity or have their skills recognised.

Employment is broader than artificial intelligence, or **AI**, and concerns small and medium-sized enterprises (**SMEs**) in particular. An economy that creates lasting work needs schools, security, electricity, Internet access, roads, healthcare, commercial justice, labour rules and customers who can pay. AI can assist with a task; it replaces neither learning, human responsibility, product quality nor the customer's right to redress.

The proposed break with past practices means moving away from training with no prospects, assistance distributed without criteria, opaque administrative barriers and promises of automatic benefits. National renewal means connecting training institutions, employers, craftspeople, oversight services and markets. Emergence is measured in lasting activities, lawful earnings from work, rights effectively exercised and remedies that work, not in the number of registrations for a programme.

This chapter distinguishes existing initiatives from the manuscript's new proposals. It constitutes neither a promise of employment, an offer of a seller account nor a partnership between the State and a private platform.

A realistic starting point: learning, producing and being protected

The challenge does not begin with an application. In 2024, 19.7 % of the DRC's population used the Internet and 22.5 % had access to electricity, according to the latest available data years. These national averages describe neither continuity of electricity supply nor the price, speed or quality of a connection. They rule out building policy on the assumption that every learner owns a computer and has a stable connection. [53], [52]

Training and activity centres must therefore provide offline materials, schedules compatible with family life and work, shared equipment, backup power where appropriate and arrangements accessible to people with disabilities. Civilian security, schooling, health, energy, transport and a workable civil registration system remain prerequisites.

The information document prepared by the World Bank in June 2025 for a skills project noted that about a third of young people were neither in employment, education nor training. It also highlighted the gap between the modules taught, economic needs, internships and work-linked training. This project diagnosis justifies connecting training more closely with real activity; it does not justify promising a number of jobs. [105]

The informal economy must be addressed precisely. The International Labour Organization, or **ILO**, includes within it employees and self-employed people whose activity or employment is not sufficiently

registered, regulated or protected; it does not automatically equate it with illegality. The DRC's statistical profile also notes the limitations of the available data, including a household survey listed in 2020 and estimates based on older statistical standards. It would be misleading to brandish a recent rate that is not comparable. [106], [107]

Decent work is the common test. It means work undertaken freely, with clear and traceable remuneration, without discrimination or forced labour, and with understandable rules on health, safety, working time and complaints. Depending on status and applicable law, it also entails social protections and the ability to organise. Self-employment can move towards this standard; a poorly paid, dangerous employment contract or one without recourse does not automatically meet it.

Existing initiatives, followed by the proposed programme

The DRC is not starting from scratch. Chapter 8 noted the existence of technical schools, the Institut national de préparation professionnelle, certification initiatives and a skills programme announced in 2026. [45], [46] The 2025 document cited above provides another foundation. This book neither claims them as its own nor renames them.

The manuscript's new proposal is a public programme of pathways into work and enterprise. It would bring together the ministries responsible for labour, vocational training, education, digital affairs, SMEs, trade and finance, the provinces, municipalities, professional chambers, employers, trade unions, craftspeople's organisations and training institutions.

The programme would force no one to become an entrepreneur. Skilled paid employment and self-employment are two complementary paths. A business that hires under a clear contract, pays wages and provides safe conditions is a social success. A craftswoman or SME that sells a useful product, meets its obligations and maintains an income after costs is also a success.

Three levels of skills, with a limited but useful place for AI

The first level is **foundational**. It combines reading, writing, applied numeracy, oral and written expression, basic use of a telephone or computer, online safety, information searching and understanding a quotation, invoice or contract. It includes critical AI literacy: checking an answer, identifying an error or a synthetic image, not sharing sensitive data, and citing or requesting permission when a work is used. UNESCO's competency framework calls, in particular, for teaching about personal data, copyright, AI-generated content and the prevention of disinformation. [108]

The second level is **vocational**. It leads to a trade or family of trades through practice: repairs, construction, energy, agriculture and processing, maintenance, sewing, authorised healthcare support, accounting, logistics, reception, creative work or digital services. Training is based on a simulated or real order, a qualified workshop or a business, practical assessment, safety rules and, where possible, a certificate describing what the person can do. An internship must be documented in writing, supervised and subject to a reporting mechanism; it must not become unpaid labour without learning.

The third level is **advanced**. It is intended for people expected to work in data, software development, cybersecurity, specialised maintenance, digital creation, applied research or the management of complex operations. It requires a portfolio, mentoring, a supervised internship, appropriate confidentiality and assessment based on the work produced. Technical proficiency exempts no one from either the law or ethics: all collection or use of personal data must be justified, limited, protected and open to challenge. Public debate on digital rights in the DRC offers a reference point in this regard, to be explored further in the applicable texts. [111]

Generative AI — a tool that produces text, an image, code or other content from an instruction — can support these three levels, never replace them. It can help prepare a catalogue draft, sort information, suggest an initial translation or formulate a response to a customer. The trained person retains responsibility for checking facts, prices, language, usage rights, confidentiality and cultural appropriateness. The ILO stresses that AI can support productivity and risk prevention,

but can also intensify work, increase surveillance or worsen tasks such as data annotation. [110]

From workshop to customer: first produce and sell on a verifiable scale

The manuscript proposes local **produce-and-sell** workshops. They should open only after a local assessment: potential customers, security, energy, equipment, raw materials, transport, supervision and remedies. Training becomes useful when it enables someone to manufacture, repair or provide a service for identifiable demand; issuing a certificate alone does not validate it.

Each workshop should teach participants to prepare a quotation, calculate the full cost and distinguish the costs of materials, labour, packaging, energy, transport, taxes, any commission, returns and after-sales service. A **viability margin** is not a promise of profit: it is the necessary difference between the selling price and the full cost to cover unforeseen events, remunerate work and allow continuity. If that difference does not exist after an honest test, the right decision may be to adjust the offering or not to finance its expansion.

Quality comes before advertising. Workshops would test a small batch, gather customer feedback without manipulating it, improve the product and keep records of defects, delays and refunds. Applicable standards, labelling, safety, origin, customs classification and environmental rules must be checked product by product. Dangerous, counterfeit or prohibited goods do not become lawful because they are made by an SME or presented as handcrafted.

Marketing must inform rather than harass. A clear listing states the product or service, price, timescales, delivery terms, return policy, contact details and limits of the offer. An AI-assisted catalogue remains subject to human review: a real image or one identified as illustrative, verified characteristics, an understandable translation and no false promises. It must neither send mass unsolicited messages, buy fake reviews nor use other people's identities, photographs or creations without the right to do so. UNCTAD notes that skills, infrastructure, financing, the regulatory framework, privacy, fraud prevention and dispute resolution are prerequisites for genuine digital inclusion. [109]

An information desk — not a substitute legal practice — could provide simple templates for quotations, invoices, service contracts,

limited licences, assignments of rights, confidentiality clauses, consent to the use of images and fraud reports. It should also explain where to obtain advice when the product, customer or country imposes a particular rule. Consumers must be able to retain proof of payment, seek redress and report fraud without being penalised for their social status or location.

Two hypothetical examples illustrate the logic, without promising returns. In the first, a cooperative of seamstresses tests a limited batch of school uniforms locally. It checks sizing, durability, fabric costs, delivery times and the school's purchasing rules, then seeks a wider customer base only after correcting defects. In the second, a small team remotely offers a human-reviewed translation and catalogue layout for a foreign business. It sends the work only after written agreement on the assignment, price, rights, data, deadline and lawful method of payment. In both cases, a first lawful sale is a learning experience, not proof of a sustainable business.

International trade: a possibility to verify, not a shortcut

Exporting and platforms can expand a market, but they add obligations: accurate identity, a genuinely established business where required, verifiable ownership and origin, **KYC** (*Know Your Customer*, verification of identity and, as applicable, of the business and its beneficial owners), lawful and traceable payment, standards, intellectual property rights, taxation, customs, transport, delivery and returns. A public programme must never recommend a false address, false residence, nominee, borrowed identity or the circumvention of a check.

To sell physical goods, it is also necessary to determine who is legally the exporter, who imports, who advances duties and taxes, which carrier actually serves the location, where a customer can return the item and who bears the cost of a defect. Remote services also require contracts, confidentiality, intellectual property, invoicing and lawful payment; they are not automatically permitted in every platform's categories.

Amazon. The indexed official documentation distinguishes “Democratic Republic of the Congo” from “Republic of the Congo” among the countries associated with seller registration. This is an indication to verify through the official process, not guaranteed admission for

every applicant or every bank. Amazon requires accurate data on the country of operation, identity, address, beneficial owners where applicable, tax information, a card and a bank account in the appropriate name. The detailed disbursement and Seller Wallet terms consulted require login; no programme must therefore promise acceptance of a Congolese account, a currency or specified fees. [112], [114], [115], [113]

An Amazon seller can ship goods independently and manage service and returns, or send stock under the platform's rules. Shipping to a foreign centre involves the legal exporter and importer, duties and taxes; a parcel that is incorrectly declared or whose charges remain unpaid is not a business strategy. Amazon Business can offer B2B mechanisms, meaning business-to-business sales, to approved business accounts; it removes neither KYC, compliance nor logistics requirements. Fees vary by plan, category and services: they must be checked for the target market before any selling price is set. The platform's AI tools can help after admission, without creating a right of access. [116], [117], [118], [119]

AliExpress. Its portal describes a process of registration, review, listing and fulfilment for B2C commerce, meaning sales to a consumer. But the public sources provided do not confirm that the DRC is among the countries eligible for registration; the choice of country in the form is presented as irreversible. Nor do they allow guarantees concerning KYC, disbursement, bank accounts, currencies, transport or returns from the DRC. The public rules indicate obligations relating to products, transactions, logistics, sanctions and returns; they do not replace written verification on a case-by-case basis. [120], [121], [122]

Alibaba.com. This marketplace is documented as B2B: catalogues, requests for quotations and relationships with professional buyers. The public pages consulted describe business verification, regional paid offerings, Trade Assurance, logistics options and AI tools for listings. They do not, however, prove that the DRC is an accepted country of seller registration, that a DRC account or wallet will receive a disbursement, or that a return and transport route is available for a given product. Prices, advertising, safety standards, extended producer responsibility and intellectual property must be checked according to the market, offering and goods. [123], [124], [125], [126], [127], [128], [129]

eBay. eBay.com explicitly lists the DRC, separately from the Republic of the Congo, among the countries from which a person or business can register to sell with a verified address. This establishes eligibility

in principle, not automatic account opening or guaranteed disbursement. eBay verifies identity, the disbursement method and, for a business, its legal name, address and the people who control it. The public documents do not confirm which banks, cards, currencies or disbursement arrangements are accepted for a DRC address. [130], [131]

A seller in the DRC would need to arrange international shipping with a carrier that actually serves the country. The eBay International Shipping and International Standard Delivery programmes cited in the documentation are not general solutions for shipments originating in the DRC. Declarations of contents, value, origin and classification, prohibitions, taxes, international fees and the risk of returns still need to be checked. An offer of remote services must also be checked by category: eBay prohibits certain advisory or traffic-generation services in particular. Announcements about the platform's AI constitute neither a guarantee of tools for Congolese sellers nor an exemption from KYC. [132], [133], [134], [135], [136], [137], [138], [139]

An export partnership can be lawful if the producer, owner of the goods, exporter, selling entity, beneficiaries, payments, origin and responsibilities for returns are accurately declared. It is not lawful if it serves to conceal DRC origin, rent an address or circumvent a platform. Before directing anyone towards Amazon, AliExpress, Alibaba.com or eBay, an information desk must request actual confirmation of the eligibility of the person, business, product, country of disbursement and logistics route. Refusal or uncertainty must never lead to advice to commit fraud.

Finance prudently and oversee with evidence

Financing cannot be a blind distribution of equipment, credit or advertising. For each pilot, a proportionate study should establish demand, skills, full cost, energy, maintenance, materials, logistics, foreign exchange, workers' rights, data, the environment and conflicts of interest. Private capital remains exposed to the risk of loss; no programme must promise a loan, a return, a market outlet, account opening or a volume of jobs.

Each pilot budget must include a **spending ceiling** approved by vote before commitments are made, a limited number of sites, public selection criteria and a separate budget line for equipment, supervision, accessibility, data protection, audit and remedies. Any overrun would

require a reasoned, published and legally authorised decision. Operating and maintenance funds must be distinguished from the initial investment; a printer, workshop or website without repairs, electricity or support is not an employment policy.

Oversight would involve financial services, the labour inspectorate, training, trade and customs administrations according to their roles, provinces, workers' and employers' organisations, and an independent audit. Contracts, beneficial owners, amounts committed, amounts paid, aggregate results and resolved complaints would be published without exposing personal data. A woman, a displaced person, a person with a disability or a resident of a remote area must be able to request information and remedies under the same rules as any other applicant.

A timetable to test, not a promise of automatic jobs

In the **first hundred days**, the competent authorities would establish a baseline: existing training and information desks, occupations in local demand, locations with sufficient energy and security, costs, equipment, certification frameworks, employers' needs and administrative barriers. They would publish the charter for non-discriminatory access, the internship or apprenticeship template, the rules on data and complaints, and the method for calculating the full cost and budget ceiling of each pilot. The export desk would publish a verification checklist, without recommending any platform before actual admission.

At **two years**, only evaluated pilots could be continued or expanded. Centres would test the three levels, apprenticeships documented in writing with employers or craftspeople, produce-and-sell workshops and remote services where energy, contracts and payment allow. Evaluations would examine skills actually acquired, activities still viable after costs, verified first lawful sales — never a promised sales volume — decent employment contracts, remedies, accidents, administrative delays and non-discriminatory access.

At **five years**, Parliament, provincial assemblies, training institutions, oversight services and social partners would examine an independent evaluation. It would distinguish activity, outcomes and rights: number of training courses actually delivered; demonstrated skills; entry into paid employment or sustained self-employment; declared

income where possible; working conditions; complaints and remedies; access by territory, gender and disability. The public decision should be clear: embed useful arrangements in ordinary budgets, substantially revise them or end them. Emergence will be credible only when work, enterprise and innovation become real possibilities, protected by law and measured without illusion.

CHAPTER 12

Forests, Climate and Sustainable Prosperity



Protect natural capital — conceptual illustration

The essentials

> The Congolese forest is neither a reserve of credits to be sold in advance nor an empty expanse available for decisions taken far from those who live there. It is a living environment, a reservoir of biodiversity and a basis for economic activities. Sustainable prosperity begins with respect for rights and verifiable public accounts.

The ambition is twofold: to conserve what makes life possible and to generate real income through agroforestry, legal timber, less destructive energy and food supplies for cities. Carbon can contribute, but only after measurement, verification and equitable sharing. It replaces neither taxation, nor public investment, nor the law.

What forest measurements mean, and what has changed since 2011

Headline forest figures cannot be compared without a definition. For the FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025, a forest is land of more than 0.5 hectare with trees taller than five metres and canopy cover of more than 10 %, or trees capable of reaching these thresholds on that site. Predominantly agricultural or urban uses are excluded. This definition includes some temporarily deforested areas if they are expected to regenerate, but it does not turn a tree-lined city or a field into a forest. [66]

The World Bank series, supplied by the FAO, reports **61.5 % of the DRC's land area covered by forest in 2024**; 2025 has not yet been entered. This is the latest published year available at the time this chapter was updated. [67] This statistical category alone provides no information about ecosystem quality or the security of land rights.

Since 2011, international measurement has distinguished changes in use more explicitly. The FAO differentiates deforestation, the conversion of forest to another use, from net change in area, which combines losses and gains. A net balance can therefore conceal conversion and regrowth elsewhere. [68]

Safeguarding environments requires choices that respect environmental limits. This chapter addresses this question using recent data, without inferring organisational continuity from it.

A stock is not a flow

A carbon stock is the quantity accumulated in an ecosystem at a given date. A flow is a change over a period: removal, emissions linked to conversion, or avoided loss. FAOSTAT series publish these separately: forest stock change, deforestation emissions, and emissions or removals from forest land. [69]

Caution is necessary with national inventories. The UNFCCC analysis notes that the DRC reported removals of **–537.86 MtCO2e in 2018** for the broad "land" category of the agriculture, forestry and other land use sector. This is neither the stock of forests alone nor available income. The review notes gaps in disaggregation and activity data. [70]

The priority is therefore to strengthen national forest monitoring, land-use mapping and the publication of methods before any eco-

nomic announcement. Satellite images are useful, but they reveal neither who holds a right nor whether a community has consented to a project. Field checks and local knowledge remain essential.

Biodiversity and rights: the same territory, the same demand for justice

Biodiversity is not scenery surrounding carbon. It encompasses species, habitats, seeds, waterways and interactions that provide food, medicines, pollination and soil protection. The DRC is recognised as one of the countries with very high biodiversity, but inventories and monitoring remain inadequate. [71]

Law No. 22/030 of 15 July 2022 protects and promotes the rights of indigenous Pygmy peoples. According to FAOLEX, it covers, among other matters, land rights, access to justice, traditional uses and knowledge, and traditional forms of environmental management. [72] In 2024, UN-REDD reported more than 166 local community forest concessions, while stressing that effective sharing of REDD+ benefits remained a challenge. [73]

Drawing a boundary on a map is not enough. Any decision affecting a village must provide for accessible information, deliberation, the possibility of refusing or making corrections, and independent recourse. Women, young people, indigenous peoples and people dependent on the forest must be able to participate without their involvement being reduced to a signature after the event. These guarantees are conditions for lasting conservation and peace founded on the rule of law.

Adapting agriculture, including in cities

Adaptation means making families less exposed to irregular rainfall, floods, heat and rising food prices. For agriculture, the DRC's national adaptation plan identifies the integration of climate risk into planning, research, innovation and early warning systems. It also calls for analysis of urban resilience options. [74]

Urban and peri-urban agriculture can form part of this response. The FAO includes production, processing, distribution and recycling in cities and their surroundings within this concept; it can strengthen

urban food resilience if it is integrated into urban planning and food policy. [75]

The manuscript proposes that each willing city develop, with the province and producers, a **local climate-responsive food plan**. It would identify cultivable spaces, monitored water supplies, drainage, safe composting, suitable seeds and short supply chains to markets, schools and hospitals. It would require legal, land-tenure and budgetary validation; it cannot be imposed on owners or communities.

For example, a flood-prone municipality could set aside a market-gardening area outside the flood corridor, install rainwater collection and publish soil and water test results before vegetables are sold. This is an illustration, not a single model. Urban agriculture will not replace rural agriculture, but it can reduce some neighbourhoods' dependence on food from far away without exposing growers and consumers to polluted water or evictions.

Financing without selling the future

A carbon payment is real only when a reduction is measured, reported, verified and paid for under a known contract. A precedent exists: on 6 June 2025, the DRC received **19.48 million dollars** for the verified reduction of **3.89 million tonnes** of emissions during 2019–2020, under the Mai-Ndombe jurisdictional REDD+ programme. [76] This fact justifies neither a forecast of annual revenue, nor a permanent carbon price, nor the distribution of money that has not yet arrived.

The manuscript proposes a rule: no essential budget — health, schooling, salaries or civil protection — should depend on carbon revenue that has not been received. When a payment is received, the gross amount, fees, sharing formula, projects and disbursements must be public and audited. The allocation formula requires documented consultation and legal oversight.

A verifiable proposal for forest prosperity

This manuscript's new proposal is a **Local Forest–Climate–Prosperity Pact**, to be piloted in willing territories rather than promised to the entire country. Its starting point would be an assessment open to scrutiny and challenge: uses, rights, the state of the forest, food needs and climate risks. The forest administration, land services, provinces,

municipalities, community representatives, women's organisations and researchers would have defined roles and report publicly.

The pact would fund a project only after three checks: the free and informed agreement of affected people, the absence of displaced degradation, and an observable local benefit beyond carbon. It would provide for complaints free of charge, response deadlines and the suspension of an operator in the event of a documented violation. Private and public projects would have the same transparency obligations.

Its annual evaluation would be understandable to everyone. It would compare forest area, conversions and restoration, security of rights and resolution of complaints, access to food, water quality in market-gardening areas, and carbon amounts received and then spent. An assessment based solely on accounting would not constitute success if it were accompanied by evictions, conflicts or more expensive food.

Understood in this way, the forest becomes a common good, not a slogan. Environmental issues must be examined in terms of their consequences for everyday life. The book proposes civic, verifiable and non-violent national renewal, in which resources create value in Congo and the state can be held to account.

CHAPTER 13

Diplomacy, Provinces and Regional Cooperation



Cooperate with neighbouring communities — conceptual illustration

The essentials

> Useful diplomacy is not confined to summits or communiqués. It can be recognised at a border where small-scale legal trade is possible, in an agreement that anyone can consult and in a province capable of arranging for infrastructure to be inspected.

Sovereignty does not mean turning inwards. It means that the Republic knows its interests, publishes its commitments and accounts for their costs as well as their results. Regional cooperation then becomes a means of protecting people, the law and trade, not a reason to abandon public responsibility.

This chapter translates a vision of civilian, non-violent and verifiable national renewal into practical terms. Its proposals belong to the manuscript and must be examined in light of the law, resources and results.

Responsibilities closer to people

Everyday peace, trade with neighbouring countries and regional frameworks are connected. Cooperation that benefits the various parties must be based on the law, identifiable responsibilities and oversight by the residents concerned.

Since 2011, the scale of responsibility has changed. The Constitution organises the Republic around twenty-five provinces and the city of Kinshasa; it entrusts the Provincial Assembly with oversight of the provincial government and local public services. [77] The transition from eleven to twenty-six provinces brought decision-making closer in law. It did not automatically provide administrative capacity, regular transfers or effective oversight. The World Bank still considered decentralisation incomplete in 2018. [78]

The province must therefore be neither a mere branch office nor a state within the state. It is the level that makes needs visible, organises local services and accounts for results. The national level retains international negotiations, customs, currency and guarantees of equality between territories. This division protects both national unity and local initiative.

The border as a service governed by law

A border is a line of sovereignty, but also a place where people live. In the Great Lakes region, trade in agricultural products and essential goods connects families, markets and neighbouring territories every day. A World Bank study on the DRC, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda notes that much of this small-scale trade is informal and carried out by individual traders, often women of modest means. Its clarification is crucial: informality and illegality are not synonymous; many crossings take place through official border posts. [79]

This distinction does not trivialise fraud, smuggling or prohibited goods. It requires the administration to exercise discernment. A woman trading smoked fish or a bean seller who uses a legal border post must not be treated like a criminal network. The rules must be known, fees displayed, receipts issued and avenues of appeal available. Without this, the survival economy becomes vulnerable to extortion.

The manuscript proposes **border service pacts**, to be piloted only where security allows a continuous civilian presence. They would bring together the competent state services, provincial authorities in their local role, market representatives and women traders' organisations. Their counterparts across the border would be involved where the bilateral framework allows. The aim is neither to create a parallel police force nor to transfer customs powers. Each post would publish a simple notice: permitted products, required documents, official fees, opening hours, complaints procedure and response time.

Caution remains necessary. The 7 August 2025 report of the Great Lakes Trade Facilitation and Integration Project indicates that activities in the DRC were continuing in stable areas and had been suspended in high-risk locations. Overall progress was then "moderately unsatisfactory", notably because of delays in technical studies. [80] A border cannot be transformed by decree: security, accessible documents, officials' integrity and coordination all matter together.

The review would measure crossing times, official costs, the issuing of receipts and the handling of complaints. The same project recorded an average of 37.28 minutes at the targeted posts as at 31 August 2024, with no improvement in this series. This benchmark concerns the project, not all Congolese borders. [80]

Cooperating without relinquishing authority

Congolese law gives the publication of agreements practical significance. Treaties and agreements duly concluded acquire authority superior to that of legislation only upon publication, subject to reciprocity. Peace or trade agreements, and those concerning international organisations, public finances or territory, require legislative authorisation. Any cession, exchange or addition of territory requires a referendum. [77]

Publication is therefore a condition of sovereignty exercised jointly. A citizen, a provincial assembly member, an entrepreneur or a researcher must be able to know the accepted text, its duration, its financial commitments, its dispute settlement mechanisms and its timetable.

The manuscript proposes a **public register of external commitments**, in the Official Gazette and online. It would bring together the authentic text, annexes, the authorising law where required and an

annual statement of reciprocal obligations. This register would replace neither Parliament nor constitutional procedures. It would make their oversight practicable. For a corridor, a port or a border market, the provinces concerned could also publish a note on the expected effects. This is not a provincial veto over national diplomacy, but information useful to negotiations.

Successful cooperation would then be judged by shared results: greater availability of food, safer routes, predictable waiting times and traceable public revenue. A secret annex, unbudgeted expenditure or an unclear territorial commitment weakens the country, even when justified by urgency.

Local projects: accounting before celebrating

Accountability begins before inauguration. The PDL-145T provides for stronger local governance and a georeferenced monitoring information system; the UNDP review of 14 May 2025 presents progress as at 31 March 2025. [81] The lesson is simple: a local project must have an address, a person responsible, a documented cost and an observable use.

The manuscript proposes a public information sheet before any provincial or territorial construction project. It would specify the need, the location, the contracting authority, the lawful source of funding, the contract awarded, the timetable and the service expected. On completion, it would indicate technical acceptance, the final cost, deviations and planned maintenance. It would remain accessible if the project were delayed or failed.

The Provincial Assembly would exercise its constitutional oversight. Local organisations could observe use and collect complaints, without replacing the engineer, auditor or judge. Contributions from partners or the diaspora would follow the same rules, with no off-budget account. This discipline is realistic: in 2021, the World Bank noted the need for a formal transfer mechanism and provincial public financial management systems. [82]

Linking with external contributions

A border governed by law, a published agreement and a provincial project subject to oversight form a single chain of trust. Chapter 14

applies this requirement to contributions from the diaspora: expertise, investment and voluntary settlement remain choices governed by law, prepared with the receiving institutions and subject to the same guarantees of transparency. Regional cooperation that serves the population thus does not confuse openness, dependence or privilege.

CHAPTER 14

The Diaspora, a Partner in Reconstruction



Share the diaspora's skills — conceptual illustration

The essentials

> The diaspora must be neither a presumed source of readily available money, nor a reserve of votes, nor a population ordered to return. It consists of free individuals with their own life paths, professions, networks and family responsibilities. The Republic can create conditions that allow those who wish to do so to contribute to reconstruction. It cannot turn that choice into a duty of allegiance.

This chapter proposes a general public policy. It does not mobilise support for any person, party or organisation. Its central rule is simple: remote contributions, temporary assignments and voluntary long-term settlement have equal dignity. Return is neither the pinnacle nor the proof of attachment to the country.

There are precedents. From 2001, the Migration for Development in Africa programme in the Great Lakes region, run by the International Organization for Migration, IOM, enabled support from health professionals in the Congolese diaspora, training with Congolese universities and distance learning. It combined physical, virtual and financial transfers without reducing contribution to permanent presence. [87] In 2013 and then in 2015, IOM also supported a round table, staff training and a mapping of diaspora resources and skills in the DRC. [88]

These experiences do not justify any promise of automatic results. They encourage an approach that starts with a local need, prepares the host institution, hands over an outcome to its teams and reports on the work. IOM organises its approach around engagement, enabling conditions and diaspora empowerment. [89], [86]

Peace, personal safety and legal certainty are prerequisites. A researcher, surgeon, entrepreneur or engineer cannot build anything lasting where their physical integrity, contract, property or freedom of movement are not reasonably protected. The programme would therefore open in a province or territory only if a public assessment confirms a minimum level of civilian security, administrative continuity and effective remedies. Where these conditions are lacking, remote contributions would remain possible provided they put no one in danger; assignments or settlement would be deferred, never required.

Do not confuse family remittances with a public fund

The World Bank recorded 3.318 billion current dollars in personal remittances received by the DRC in 2025, equivalent to 3.645 % of gross domestic product. [83], [84] The indicator adds together current transfers between resident and non-resident households and the compensation of cross-border, seasonal or short-term workers. [85] It measures neither the number of Congolese living outside the country, nor their remittances alone, nor an investment portfolio, nor skills that can be mobilised.

These amounts often pay for rent, healthcare, education, food or a family emergency. They are not a reserve that the State, a bank or an association could allocate as it sees fit. The proposed policy takes nothing from private transfers and does not recast them as a promise of collective funding. Schools, hospitals, courts and water networks remain public responsibilities, funded and overseen as such.

The size of the diaspora must not be invented: without a robust source, that number would be misleading. Instead, the programme would measure skills offered, needs met, assignments completed, jobs created by a monitored project and knowledge adopted locally.

A public gateway, not token representation

Original proposal: the Three Contributions Framework. A law, or failing that a regulatory decision taken within its legal limits, would define three equivalent pathways.

The first pathway is **remote contribution**. This may take the form of teaching jointly delivered with a Congolese faculty, technical advice for a public service, a review of a hospital protocol, mentoring for entrepreneurs or participation in a research network. It must not replace a vacant position or impose technology on beneficiaries that they cannot maintain. Each activity should be requested by a host institution, provide for a local contact person and accessible tools, and conclude with a reusable handover.

The second is the **temporary assignment**. A professional may come to train trainers, install and then document equipment, develop a teaching module, conduct an audit with a local team or support an SME at a specific stage. The university, hospital, technical institute, professional chamber or partner SME sets out the need before the call for expertise. The terms of reference specify duration, responsibilities, safety rules, justified costs, ownership of the work, protected data and the deliverable. An assignment does not count as a success simply because it took place; it is evaluated three and twelve months later on the basis of sustained use of what was passed on.

The third is **voluntary long-term settlement**. It is intended for anyone who chooses to work, teach, start a business or live in Congo over the long term. It confers no entitlement to a public-sector job, land, an exemption or free housing. It must, however, provide access, as for any service user, to clear information, a predictable procedure and a remedy. Return remains a reversible choice in accordance with the law; no one should lose their rights, dignity or access to neutral information because they have decided not to settle.

Settlement calls for support for families, not merely administrative assistance. Where security permits, an guidance service could provide a verifiable list of housing and service providers, offer information on

schools, health, transport and civil registration procedures, and flag land or rental risks. It would not distribute property, but would make the rules visible, particularly for leases and titles examined by the competent authorities. Everyone must receive the same information without an influential intermediary.

Listen to the diaspora without turning it into a political clientele

The DRC already has a Directorate for Congolese Abroad within the ministry responsible for foreign affairs. IOM's 2023 profile assigns it responsibility for identifying Congolese living abroad, defending their interests and facilitating certain procedures related to return or a project, in liaison with the competent authorities. [90] This directorate could serve as the administrative entry point, but it should not decide health, education, industrial or investment priorities on its own.

Original proposal: open administrative consultations with the diaspora. During the first hundred days, this directorate would organise consultations accessible remotely and in person in the main places of residence, without selecting contributors according to their political connections, association or financial capacity. The call would be public, translated where necessary, with a version adapted for people with disabilities. Anonymised contributions, questions received, the sorting method and the administration's response would be published.

This consultation would not create an external parliament. It would lead to a **pluralistic skills council**, advisory in nature and renewed periodically. Its seats would be distributed across health, education and research, engineering and digital technology, agriculture and the environment, culture and creative work, law and administration, SMEs and responsible finance, as well as technical trades. Public criteria would require diversity of gender, age, country of residence, declared province of origin where the person wishes to mention it, and practical field experience. No sector, host country, political tendency or association network could take ownership of representation. Declarations of interests, minutes and minority opinions would be public.

Consultation must also protect data. A skills register would be voluntary, limited to useful information and kept separate from electoral, police, tax or commercial lists. It would publish neither personal addresses nor migration status. Each registered person could correct

or withdraw their data. Contributions cannot grow out of trust if the form becomes a means of surveillance.

Recognised skills, respected rights, prepared reception

The mobility of knowledge requires proper recognition, not automatic equivalence. The DRC has been a member of the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education, CAMES, since 2011; its recognition and equivalence system covers qualifications from accredited institutions in its member States. [90] This does not resolve the case of every foreign qualification, still less authorisation to practise a regulated profession.

Original proposal: a clear recognition pathway. For each profession or trade, a coordination desk would indicate the competent authority, required documents, indicative timeframe, legal cost, possibility of supplementary training and avenue of appeal. Universities would verify academic qualifications; the competent professional bodies, ministries or regulators would examine professions requiring authorisation. Incomplete applications would receive a reasoned decision and an opportunity to make corrections, rather than silently disappearing. The same rules must apply to applicants residing in Kinshasa, Goma, Lubumbashi or abroad.

Institutional partners remain key. A hospital does not simply request a surgical assignment: it appoints a team, sets aside training time, plans maintenance and ensures that protocols comply with national rules. A university pairs a local lecturer with every remotely taught course and retains the teaching materials. An SME receiving management support agrees to separate accounts, a timetable and an evaluation, without disclosing its trade secrets. External input then becomes a multiplier of Congolese capacities, rather than a lasting substitute.

The World Bank notes that commercial dispute resolution in the DRC relies in particular on OHADA law, but that procedures often remain manual, fragmented and vulnerable to informal payments. [17] This finding does not condemn entrepreneurship; it requires legal certainty to be taken seriously. A diaspora programme must not announce impossible deadlines or invite people to commit their savings without explaining the risks.

Invest without promises, co-invest without favouritism

Original proposal: a non-discriminatory desk for contribution projects. It would receive, in one place, projects proposed by a member of the diaspora, a resident, an association, an SME or a partnership between them. The criterion is not the project initiator's address, political identity or personal connection to an authority. The criteria are demonstrated usefulness, feasibility, technical capacity, decent employment, social and environmental effects, tax compliance and transparency about beneficial owners.

Before any public, semi-public or partner-supported co-investment, a preliminary study proportionate to the risk would be required: real need, business model, full cost, maintenance, exchange-rate and market risks, availability of energy or logistics, social and environmental impacts, governance and conflicts of interest. Private funds remain exposed to loss; no administration would promise returns, buybacks, exchange-rate guarantees or tax advantages. The 2025 supplementary finance law also stipulates that new exemptions must be based on a legal instrument and prohibits combining certain incentive schemes.[18]

Co-investment, if legally authorised and budgeted for, would proceed through a published decision: each party's contribution, risks borne, procurement rules, disbursement stages, audit, beneficial owners and exit mechanism. Contracts, amendments and non-confidential results would be available for consultation. An SME that was not selected or an applicant challenging a decision would have access to a written response, an administrative review by a separate service, and then remedies under ordinary law. Preventing corruption does not mean suspecting every project initiator; it means that no one depends on a favour to obtain a decision.

Obligations do not disappear because a project is presented as patriotic. Every business must comply with registration requirements, applicable tax and customs declarations, labour law, competition, environmental and anti-money-laundering rules, as well as licences specific to its sector. The administration must state clearly what falls under existing law, what awaits a decree and what would require

legislation. Uncertainty or insecurity must lead to a project being deferred, not concealed beneath enthusiastic rhetoric.

A conditional timetable subject to oversight

In the **first hundred days**, the competent institutions would publish the launch instrument, the allocation of responsibilities and the minimum security conditions. The Directorate for Congolese Abroad would lead administrative reception; sectoral ministries would assess needs; the ministries responsible for Planning and Finance would verify budget provision; the regulatory authority and oversight services would monitor procurement and co-investments. Participating provinces would appoint a service focal point, without creating a parallel administration. Open consultations, an inventory of existing service desks and an initial catalogue of institutional needs would be published.

At the end of **two years**, only pilots that had passed an independent review would be expanded. The first partnerships between universities, hospitals, technical institutes and SMEs should demonstrate local adoption of knowledge. The skills recognition desk should publish its processing times, refusals and appeals in anonymised form. The project desk would make decisions, contracts and oversight findings public. A report to Parliament, the provincial assemblies concerned and the public would distinguish implementation, expenditure committed, expenditure paid and observed results.

At **five years**, an independent evaluation would ask whether the programme had genuinely increased local capacities, rather than registration numbers. It would publicly decide between three outcomes: consolidation, far-reaching correction or discontinuation of an ineffective component. The State must not maintain a mechanism because it is symbolically appealing. Technical partners may provide expertise and support, but public authority, essential data, oversight rules and remedies must remain Congolese.

Costs must be calculated before any wider rollout and included in an enacted finance law. The budget will separate consultations, data protection, coordination of service desks, skills recognition, assignments, audits, remedies and digital maintenance. It will distinguish recurrent public expenditure, partner contributions and private capital at risk. No overall figure must be announced without a workload study, a lifecycle cost and an identified source of funding.

Indicators will be verifiable without confusing activity with success: the proportion of institutional needs that received a usable response; the proportion of assignments whose deliverable is still in use after twelve months; the median processing time and review rate for skills recognition; the proportion of projects whose study, decision, contract and audit are published; the time taken to handle complaints; jobs declared and maintained where the project provides for them; and separate satisfaction rates for host institutions, participants and service users. They will be broken down by sector, province and mode of contribution, without exposing personal data. Remote contribution will never be counted as an inferior form.

The diaspora can become a partner in reconstruction when the Republic offers it not a gesture of loyalty, but a relationship grounded in law. That relationship begins with peace and an administration that responds. It continues through respect for the choice to remain, to come for a time or to settle. Finally, it proves itself in a classroom where a module remains available, a hospital where a team has mastered a protocol, an SME whose contract is protected, and a family that can choose its future without its freedom becoming the price of its commitment.

CHAPTER 15

Returning to One's Country: Voluntary Return, Protection and Reintegration



Return to a home, voluntarily and with dignity — conceptual illustration

The Essentials

> Returning to one's country can be a profound hope. It is never a collective order. For Congolese refugees, return must remain a free, informed, safe and dignified decision. The right to return to the DRC removes neither the right to seek asylum, nor protection against forced return, nor other legal solutions. This chapter proposes a civilian programme, with no imposed numerical target and no attribution to any individual, State or organisation.

A Right to Return, Not an Obligation to Come Back

A legal misunderstanding must first be corrected. The Charter of the United Nations provides for international cooperation, peace and

respect for human rights; it does not establish a general obligation for refugees to return to their country. [91] The relevant right is of a different nature. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises everyone's right to leave any country, including their own, and to **return to their country**. [92] The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights specifies that no one may be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter their own country. [93]

These texts protect the possibility of returning; they do not order a person to return. The decision depends on actual safety, family unity, health, housing, land, schooling and the availability of a remedy.

The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees provides a decisive guarantee: **non-refoulement**. Its Article 33 prohibits returning a refugee to a territory where their life or freedom would be threatened on the grounds set out in the Convention. [94] The 1969 Convention of the Organisation of African Unity, or **OAU**, strengthens this rule in Africa. In particular, it prohibits rejection at the frontier, return and expulsion that would expose a person to a risk to their life, physical integrity or freedom. Above all, its Article V requires that the essentially voluntary nature of repatriation be respected in all cases and that no refugee be repatriated against their will. [95]

The country of origin must welcome its nationals who choose to return, refrain from penalising them for having fled and facilitate their resettlement. This does not turn the individual into the object of an administrative decision. Protection in the country of asylum remains an obligation as long as a free and safe return has not been established for that person.

It is essential not to confuse the categories. A **refugee** has crossed a border and seeks or receives international protection. An **asylum seeker** is awaiting a decision. An **internally displaced person** has fled without leaving the DRC. The **diaspora** is a population living outside the country for various reasons; it is not, by definition, a refugee population. These terms entail different protections and responsibilities.

For internally displaced people, the African Union's Kampala Convention is a useful reference. It obliges States to promote voluntary return, local integration or resettlement in safety and dignity, following a free and informed choice. It also provides for mechanisms suited to property disputes. [96] But this Convention must not be used to

erase the distinct status of Congolese refugees in Uganda, Rwanda or elsewhere.

A Regional Situation That Must Not Be Oversimplified

The same reference snapshot must guide the debate. In its update covering **August 2026**, published on 17 September 2026, the UN Refugee Agency, or **UNHCR**, states that around **1.3 million Congolese refugees and asylum seekers** were hosted in neighbouring countries at the end of the month. This regional figure includes neither internally displaced people in the DRC nor the entire Congolese diaspora. [9]

The regional framework includes the nine States bordering the DRC: Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Congolese people are also hosted further afield in Africa and around the world. They retain the same individual rights and must not disappear from a protection policy.

Uganda and Rwanda require particular attention, without treating them as two isolated cases. UNHCR's August bulletin indicates that Burundi and Uganda host the majority of Congolese refugees in this regional area. It also reports that, on 19 August 2026, Uganda reinstated *prima facie* refugee status for asylum seekers from the DRC, South Sudan and Sudan. This measure concerns access to protection; it is not a return programme. [9]

Rwanda is both a country of asylum and a partner in a return framework with the DRC and UNHCR. Some people may wish to return; others may wish to remain protected, legally join their families or seek another solution. No movement of people or communiqué replaces an individual assessment of consent and risks.

Four Legal Pathways That Must Remain Open

Voluntary repatriation is a durable solution when a person freely decides to return and can rebuild their life. UNHCR nevertheless distinguishes three complementary solutions: voluntary return, local integration in the host country and resettlement in a safe third country. [97] Alongside these solutions, before any decision, there is the right to seek and receive asylum protection in accordance with applicable law.

The right to remain protected in the host country is not a favour conditional on a promise to leave. Host States must maintain access

to asylum, prevent refoulement, protect against threats and allow access to documents, schooling, healthcare and justice. Protection also applies to those who do not wish to return now or who need time to decide.

Local integration can provide access to long-term residence, work and services, and even to permanent residence or nationality. Resettlement is legal admission to a safe third country, subject to limited criteria and places. It matters when safety cannot be guaranteed in the host country or through a return in the near future. [97]

Congolese people hosted outside the Great Lakes region or Southern Africa are not a separate case. The same non-refoulement, the same freedom of decision and the same three solutions apply to them. A return mechanism must never reduce their protection, assistance or access to asylum procedures.

Useful Agreements Are Frameworks, Not Summonses

A tripartite agreement generally brings together the country of origin, the host country and UNHCR. It can define the responsibilities, guarantees and arrangements for voluntary return. It never replaces the person's choice. The UNHCR Executive Committee's conclusion on legal safety in repatriation recalls that such an agreement can be useful, but is not a necessary condition for every voluntary return. Above all, it requires complete, accurate and objective information, as well as UNHCR access to returnees to monitor compliance with the guarantees. [98]

Between the DRC, Rwanda and UNHCR, the process is based on the tripartite agreements of 2010. The meetings of 2025 and 2026 confirmed that returns must be voluntary, safe and dignified. This is a reaffirmed operational framework, not an order to return or a commitment created by this book. [99] [100]

The August 2026 bulletin also describes an eighth DRC–Tanzania–UNHCR commission. It adopted a cautious, phased roadmap solely for people who had independently expressed an interest in returning, with verification, counselling, documents, protection assessments, safe routes, reception capacity and reintegration support. The majority of those verified were not ready to return. The same bulletin reports tripartite frameworks and facilitated voluntary returns from Zambia. [9]

Older agreements exist with Angola in 2019, Burundi in 2009, the Central African Republic in 2004 and Sudan in 2006. [101] [102] [103] [104] They attest to cooperation, not to the current operation of a mechanism in each country. The 2006 document concerns Sudan before South Sudan's independence. For Uganda, this chapter presumes no tripartite return agreement: asylum protection does not depend on one.

A Proposed Return Programme, Only If the Conditions Are Met

This manuscript proposes a **civilian programme for choice, return and reintegration**. This is a new proposal. It is neither a signed agreement, nor a personal commitment by Joseph Kabila, nor a mandate given to a government or to UNHCR.

The first condition would be an independent, regular and accessible assessment of physical, legal and material safety in each area of return. Physical safety means the absence of threats, persecution, arbitrary detention, sexual violence or exploitation. Legal safety requires recognised documents, a functioning civil registration system, access to justice and the absence of discrimination or penalties linked to flight. Material safety requires viable shelter, water, healthcare, schooling and an opportunity to earn an income. [97]

No campaign should begin without impartial information in languages people understand. It would explain the risks, services and the right to remain protected. Consultations would involve women, men, adolescents, older people, people with disabilities, refugees outside camps and host communities. Consent would be individual, free, documented and revocable before departure. No quota, deadline, reduction in assistance or site closure should push people to return.

The country of origin would ensure civilian reception, documents, remedies and equal treatment. Host countries would preserve asylum, organise neutral information and protect against pressure. UNHCR would exercise its protection mandate: support for registration, counselling, oversight, coordination and monitoring. It would replace neither administrations, nor courts, nor the refugee's choice. Local authorities in areas of return, women's organisations, associations of people with disabilities, schools, health centres and legal aid providers would participate in the mechanism.

Before departure, each family could have identity, civil status records, schooling records and documents relating to occupancy verified or reconstructed. A separate register would handle reunification. No unaccompanied or separated child would leave without family tracing, an assessment of their best interests and appropriate reception arrangements. Data would be limited to what is necessary, secured, accessible to the person and prohibited from use for political or commercial purposes or for unjustified monitoring.

Transport would be strictly civilian, voluntary and safe. It would include legal assistance, an independent information point, arrangements accessible to people with disabilities, medical care where necessary and continuity of assistance through to the reception location. It would be neither a military operation nor an imposed collective movement.

On arrival, the priority would not be to count a return, but to make life possible: transitional accommodation, uninterrupted school enrolment, healthcare, mental health support and income support through a chosen activity, training, recognition of skills or a small-scale activity. Women and girls would have safe channels for reporting violence and obtaining help. Children, people with disabilities and survivors would receive appropriate support, without disclosure of their identity.

Housing, land and property require a procedure, not a promise. Every claim would be registered, the parties heard, mediation freely accepted and the competent court accessible. Where restitution is impossible, accommodation, temporary occupancy or legally grounded compensation would be considered on a case-by-case basis. Reintegration cannot create newly displaced people.

Independent monitoring would take place after return, notably at three, six and twelve months, with confidential visits, a toll-free complaints number and channels accessible offline. UNHCR must be able to access returnees to monitor their treatment; this international guarantee must inform the proposed mechanism. [98] A documented rise in violence, discrimination, evictions, family separation, refusals to issue documents or inability to access services would trigger the immediate suspension of departures to the area concerned and a public reassessment.

Funding must be realistic. Before any launch, the competent institutions would publish a budget for each area: civil registration, legal

advice, civilian transport, shelter, schooling, health, disputes, training, monitoring and data. Expenditure and procurement contracts would be published, audited and accompanied by a complaints mechanism. The State, local authorities and partners would contribute according to their mandates, without external aid erasing public responsibility. No assumed donation or return target would be taken for granted.

Indicators would track rights rather than a pace of departures: the proportion of people who have received information presenting different perspectives and understood it; documents issued or restored; families reunified; the time taken to process land disputes; effective access to schooling, healthcare, safe housing and an income; complaints received and resolved; and the results of independent monitoring after six and twelve months. Data would be published in anonymised form. A return would be considered durable only if these elements are sustained and the person does not have to flee again.

Returning to one's country is a right that deserves to be made practicable. Respecting it requires recognition of another right, just as concrete: the right not to return while the choice is not free or while safety, dignity and the means to live are not assured. A Republic that wishes to welcome its children does not order them to return; it creates the conditions in which each person can decide without fear.

Democratic Roadmap

This roadmap translates the manuscript's editorial guiding thread — **a break with the past, national renewal, emergence** — into stages that can be debated and monitored. A break with the past is verified by the abandonment of illegal or arbitrary practices; national renewal, by institutions and ethical benchmarks that honour their commitments; emergence, by measurable human, economic and civic results. The deadlines are **proposed**: they bind no person, organisation, government or administration. Every measure must respect constitutional powers, budget laws, public procurement rules and fundamental rights.

The first 100 days: establishing evidence and guarantees

The first priority would be to publish a shared baseline. The competent institutions could take stock of the budgets, contracts, transfers, priority services, complaints and territorial data already available, distinguishing what is observed, estimated or projected. They could establish a minimum public information sheet for every priority project: responsible party, legal basis, timetable, full cost, funding, expected result, non-sensitive data and avenue of appeal.

At the same time, guarantees must precede trials. A protocol for data protection, non-discriminatory access, safe complaints and reasoned responses should be made public. For displaced people, victims, women, young people, people with disabilities and communities affected by a land or forestry project, accessible information, participation without reprisals and recourse to the competent court remain prerequisites, not subsequent compensation.

An inclusive dialogue, if institutionally approved, would begin with its mandate, rules of representation, funding, declarations of interests and limits. It could not erase victims' right to justice or replace the courts. The first evidence of seriousness would therefore be less a ceremony than a published procedure.

For the **diaspora framework**, the Directorate for Congolese Abroad would publish, together with the sectoral ministries, participating provinces, Planning and Finance, a map of responsibilities, institutional needs and existing service desks. An open consultation, accessi-

ble remotely, would gather priorities without a political register or any obligation to register. Data protection, non-discriminatory access criteria, the procedure for recognising skills and the complaints process would be made public before any assignment, supported settlement or co-investment decision. The costs of consultation, coordination, appeals and audit would be separated from private capital at risk and could be committed only after proper budgetary provision.

For the **choice, return and reintegration programme**, the ministry responsible for refugees and civil registration, the local authorities in areas of return, health, education, justice and land services, the countries of asylum concerned and UNHCR would exercise their respective mandates. Before providing any information about return, they would publish the method for independently assessing physical, legal and material safety by area, non-refoulement guarantees, complaint mechanisms and the suspension rule. Refugees, women, young people, people with disabilities, host communities and people outside camps would be consulted without quotas or reductions in assistance. Budget preparation would distinguish documents, legal advice, civilian transport, shelter, schooling, healthcare, disputes, monitoring and data protection; it would presume neither any donation nor any volume of returns.

For the **employment, enterprise and digital skills programme**, the ministries responsible for labour, training, education, SMEs, digital affairs, trade and finance, together with participating provinces and the social partners, would map training provision, occupations in demand, equipment and constraints relating to energy, connectivity, safety and transport. Before any pilot, they would publish non-discriminatory access criteria, the decent work charter, the internship model, the complaints channel, data protection provisions, the full cost, the budget ceiling and those responsible. An export information desk would distribute only a checklist covering eligibility, KYC, quality, payments, customs, logistics and returns; it would promise neither a seller account nor admission to a platform.

Two years: testing, correcting and making services trackable

Following legal and budgetary approval, the competent authorities could launch mechanisms on a manageable scale in participating territories: local law and service centres; land service desks with documented mediation and avenues of appeal; health-water-sanitation contracts; apprenticeship contracts; territorial rural market contracts; border service pacts in areas where a continuous civilian presence is possible; and local forest-climate-prosperity pacts.

Trials should not be confused with a general rollout. Each site should publish its initial assessment, access criteria, expenditure committed, complaints received, decisions issued and an independent evaluation. A measure that increases exclusion, hidden costs, risks to people or arbitrary levies should be corrected, suspended or abandoned.

The same period could consolidate shared accountability instruments: a public procurement chain, a statement of transfers to provinces, information sheets on borrowing and exceptional revenue, a register of external commitments, gradual publication of mining obligations and monitoring of infrastructure maintenance. The aim is not to add an isolated platform, but to make it possible to connect a decision, a payment and a service result.

For the diaspora, only pilots satisfying the conditions of peace, civilian safety, law and an approved budget could be opened. Host institutions would formulate needs; the competent authorities would rule on qualifications and regulated professions; oversight services would check procurement and legally authorised co-investments. The criteria would be identical for a resident and a person living abroad. Each pilot would publish its preliminary study, decision, contract where one exists, public costs, conflicts of interest and an avenue for review. Indicators would distinguish remote contributions, temporary assignments and voluntary settlement: a usable response to a need, a deliverable still in place after twelve months, the median recognition time, complaints handled and, where a project provides for them, registered jobs sustained. They would measure neither loyalty nor promises of returns.

For refugees, no area could host a return arrangement without a favourable independent assessment, information presenting differing

perspectives and revocable individual consent. The country of origin would organise civilian reception, documents and avenues of appeal; countries of asylum would maintain protection; UNHCR would monitor guarantees falling within its mandate; local services would provide schooling, healthcare, transitional accommodation, legal assistance and the handling of land or property disputes. Departures to an area would be suspended as soon as credible monitoring established an increase in violence, discrimination, family separation, denial of documents or a serious failure of access to services. Indicators would track information understood, documents restored, land-related appeals, access to schooling, healthcare and safe housing, as well as independent visits at three, six and twelve months — never a numerical departure target.

For **employment and enterprise**, participating territories could, following legal and budgetary approval, test the three levels of training, supervised apprenticeship contracts, production-and-sales workshops and remote services only where technical, contractual and payment conditions are met. Pilots would publish training actually delivered, skills assessed, full costs, viable activities, verified first legal sales, decent salaried jobs planned and sustained where they exist, access by territory, gender and disability, complaints and responses. They would promise neither sales volumes, nor returns, nor automatic employment. Any deterioration involving safety, fraud, indebtedness or exclusion would trigger correction, suspension or termination.

Five years: embedding evaluation in institutions

At five years, a credible reform would be recognised not by the number of announcements but by its ability to survive changes in leadership. Useful mechanisms could be embedded in legislation and ordinary budgets, following public evaluation. Assemblies, the Court of Auditors, courts, inspectorates, regulatory authorities, provinces and civil society organisations would exercise their respective roles without one replacing another.

The two programmes would each undergo a separate independent evaluation. For the diaspora, it would verify lasting usefulness for host institutions, equal access, the integrity of decisions and the proportion between public costs and capacities actually taken over. For return and reintegration, it would verify continuing safety, the absence of forced

return, access to rights and services, the resolution of disputes and the absence of secondary displacement. The authorities should publish the method, aggregated results, reasoned disagreements and their decision: limited consolidation, substantial correction, suspension or termination. No continuation would result from a mere symbol, political pressure or unsecured funding.

The horizon is one of more predictable services: local access to the law; reasoned administrative decisions; schools that measure learning without exposing children to risk; health centres, water and sanitation monitored until genuine continuity is achieved; maintained roads and energy systems; markets and borders where the rules are known; mining, forestry and territorial projects whose revenues and obligations become verifiable. Progress would remain broken down by territory and by the groups concerned where this can be done without endangering people.

For **employment, enterprise and AI**, the five-year evaluation would separately verify the reality of training provision, demonstrated skills, the viability of activities after costs, the quality of salaried jobs, labour rights, accessibility, avenues of appeal and the human use of digital tools. The programme would be consolidated only if results and costs justified keeping it within ordinary budgets; otherwise, the competent authorities would publicly decide on its correction or termination.

Three realistic funding priorities

The book sets no undocumented amount. It proposes an order for decision-making rather than a promise of expenditure. **First**, fund the basic functions that require little equipment but are essential to oversight: publication, audit, registers, complaints, access to information, local training and maintenance assessments. This expenditure must be entered in budgets, approved and monitored.

Second, secure recurrent expenditure before announcing new assets: staff, essential medicines and supplies, water and road maintenance, data, inspections, legal support and social protection. Infrastructure without an operating budget does not constitute a sustainable service. For the diaspora and voluntary return, budget lines for coordination, documents, legal support, data protection, oversight, appeals and monitoring must be costed separately by the competent

institutions before any expansion; they cannot be covered by family savings, a promise of return or an assumed private contribution.

Third, select major investments — energy, transport, digital infrastructure, health or productive transformation — only after a feasibility study, life-cycle costing, social and environmental assessment, a competitive procedure where applicable, publication of the contract and a maintenance plan. Exceptional revenues, possible savings, borrowing, private partnerships and external support must be distinguished, subject to legal conditions and made public. No essential service should depend on carbon or mining revenue not yet received.

Rights guarantees and accountability

The manuscript's proposals rest on the same guarantees: equal access without discrimination; limited and protected personal data; understandable information in relevant languages; free participation; protection for whistleblowers, witnesses and complainants; reasoned decisions; administrative and judicial remedies; independent oversight; publication of aggregated data; and documented correction of errors. A custom, mediation process, citizens' jury or consultation can never remove the right to bring a case before a duly constituted court.

Indicators are not automatic sanctions. They serve to make a decision open to debate. The shared dashboard could track, at published intervals: the share of provincial transfers actually made available; complete procurement documentation; the regularisation of emergency expenditure; response times for petitions and the enforcement of judgments; complaint processing times; continuity of healthcare, water, schooling, electricity and roads; market access; the share of value added and local purchasing measured within sectors; and territorial results in protection, reparation and participation. For the two added programmes, it would explicitly distinguish diaspora, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people: institutional needs met and deliverables sustained for the diaspora; safety, consent, documents, access to services, remedies and post-return monitoring for refugees. Poverty, health, nutrition, education and displacement indicators would always retain their source, method and reference year.

Hypothetical example. A province could publish that a rural market must be maintained for twelve months, with a responsible party, approved cost, timetable, planned water and sanitation provision,

official receipts and a complaints procedure. At the end of the period, it would not merely declare the works “completed”: it would publish the number of days open, the state of access after the rains, maintenance costs, complaints and corrective measures. This approach to review applies to every sector in the book.

Glossary

Independent audit: methodical examination conducted by a body or individuals with no direct interest in the subject under review, using a publicly disclosed methodology.

B2B / B2C trade: B2B (*business to business*) trade sells to a business; B2C (*business to consumer*) trade sells directly to the consumer. Obligations relating to quality, contracts, payment and customer protection may differ depending on the channel.

Decent employment: freely chosen work performed under conditions of remuneration, safety, non-discrimination, rights and access to remedies that comply with applicable law; it may be salaried or self-employed.

Generative AI: computer system capable of producing, among other things, text, an image, code or sound from an instruction; its output requires human verification, respect for data and compliance with copyright.

KYC: abbreviation of *Know Your Customer*, a procedure through which an institution verifies a customer's identity and, where applicable, that of their business and its beneficial owners.

Citizens' budget: accessible presentation of a public budget, intended to enable residents to understand its priorities, revenue and expenditure.

Free and informed consent: participation obtained without coercion, on the basis of understandable information provided sufficiently early to allow a decision or an effective remedy.

Decentralisation: allocation of responsibilities between the central government, provinces and territorial entities, with identifiable powers, resources and oversight.

Emergency expenditure: expenditure incurred under an exceptional procedure; its purpose, regularisation and oversight must remain verifiable.

Asylum seeker: person who seeks international protection and whose application has not yet received a final decision.

Internally displaced person: person forced to leave their place of residence without crossing a recognised international border. Their status is distinct from that of a refugee.

Diaspora: people living outside their country of origin or nationality for various reasons; this social and demographic term does not, in itself, indicate whether a person is a refugee.

Inclusive dialogue: deliberative process whose mandate, participants, rules, funding and outcomes are public and which protects the right to disagree.

Informal economy: activities or jobs that are insufficiently registered, regulated or protected; it is not automatically synonymous with illegality.

Fiscal space: capacity to finance a priority without compromising essential obligations, stability or debt sustainability.

Indicator: measure defined in advance to monitor a situation or outcome; it must specify its source, methodology, scope and reference year or period.

Acute food insecurity: severe difficulty, over a given period, in accessing sufficient and appropriate food; its phases must always be defined and dated.

IPC: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, a method that classifies and communicates the severity levels of a food security or nutrition situation.

Transitional justice: set of judicial and non-judicial approaches intended to address the legacies of conflicts or serious violations, particularly through truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence.

Reference year or period: year or period to which a data item relates. It may differ from the year in which the source was published.

Purchasing power parity (PPP): conversion method used to compare living standards or prices between countries; it does not correspond to the current exchange rate.

Reparation: measure intended to acknowledge and remedy harm suffered by a victim; it may be financial, administrative, social, symbolic or judicial.

Accountability: obligation of an institution or an official to explain their decisions, publish their outcomes and accept oversight and recourse.

Non-refoulement: prohibition on returning a person to a territory where they would risk, in particular, persecution, torture or other serious harm under applicable law.

Voluntary repatriation: return to the country of origin freely decided by the refugee on an informed basis, in conditions of safety and dignity; it does not create a general obligation to return.

Refugee: person who is outside their country and needs international protection under the applicable legal definition. This category is distinct from that of internally displaced people and the diaspora understood in its social sense.

Reintegration: process through which a person who has returned regains, without discrimination, security, rights, services, housing and sustainable livelihoods.

Tripartite: cooperation framework usually involving the country of origin, the host country and UNHCR to specify the guarantees and responsibilities associated with voluntary return; it does not replace individual consent.

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN Refugee Agency responsible for protecting refugees and seeking durable solutions.

Economic sovereignty: capacity of a country to define and enforce rules in the public interest governing its resources, contracts, revenue and services, without implying isolation or hostility towards others.

Traceability: ability to track and verify the stages of a decision, contract, payment, good or service through to its outcome.

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