

Democratic republic of the congo environmental sustainability

While the country's land and forests are still a carbon sink overall, human-caused land use changes release large volumes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and make the DRC the world's 12th biggest greenhouse gas emitter, as of 2018.

On the world stage, the government has styled the DRC as a "solution country" for climate change, due to its carbon-dense forests and wealth of minerals required for clean technologies. At the same time, the nation's leaders are also pushing logging and oil exploration as much-needed sources of investment.

The DRC is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world when it comes to the impacts of climate change, and its preparedness is hampered by the lack of historical or current weather measurements.

The environment has not traditionally been a key political issue in the DRC and overtly "green" parties are not major players. However, in recent years leaders have increasingly made the links between tackling poverty and addressing climate change.

Around 99 million people from over 200 different ethnic groups live in the DRC, placing it among the most populous and culturally diverse countries in the world. It is also the largest country in sub-Saharan Africa, occupying an area greater than western Europe.

Despite its wealth of natural resources, the country remains one of the poorest in the world, with among the lowest rates of electricity access. It has the 13th-lowest GDP per capita of any country and is classified by the UN as a "least developed country".

Following colonisation in the 19th century, the region was brutally run by King Leopold II of Belgium as his private property before being taken over as an official Belgian colony. This period was marked by the violent exploitation of the nation's resources.

The nation gained its independence in 1960, but the DRC's first democratically elected prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, was opposed by the US and Belgium. He was ultimately murdered following a western-backed military coup led by his military aide Joseph Mobutu (later known as Mobutu Sese Seko).

This, and the Second Congo War that lasted until 2003, drew in nations across the continent, displacing millions of people and causing more deaths than any conflict since the Second World War. These wars have also been linked to widespread destruction of nature and forest loss across an area at least the size of Belgium.

The DRC is a semi-presidential republic, with a lower house called the National Assembly and an upper house

called the Senate, similar to the model used in France. The president serves as head of state, but they pick a prime minister to act as head of government.

Tshisekedi, who leads the nation's oldest and largest political party, the Union for Democracy and Social Progress, came to power in 2018 amid reports of a "backroom deal" with his controversial predecessor, Joseph Kabila. (Transparency International ranks the DRC as among the most corrupt nations in the world.)

Among them is deputy prime minister ?ve Bazaiba, from the nationalist Movement for the Liberation of Congo, who also serves as environment and sustainable development minister and has vocally represented the DRC at international climate events.

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Web: <https://sumthingtasty.co.za/contact-us/>

Email: energystorage2000@gmail.com

WhatsApp: 8613816583346

