



Pre-Launch of the Science Panel for the Congo Basin: 2025 Assessment Report

Belém, Brazil (November 10, 2025) — Spanning 3.46 million square kilometers, the Congo Basin is the “Green Heart” of Africa. Its forests, savannas, swamps, montane ecosystems, and the world’s largest tropical peatland regulate rainfall, water cycles, and climate far beyond the region. Home to more than 10,000 species of plants, 400 mammals, 1,000 birds, and 700 species of fish, the Basin is one of Earth’s richest reservoirs of biodiversity and serves as the largest tropical carbon sink. Its peatlands alone store roughly 30 billion tonnes of carbon, crucial for global climate stability.

For over 650,000 years, humans have managed and shaped these landscapes. However, human activity since colonization has brought industrial logging, mining, oil exploration, and urban expansion. Unsustainable practices, ongoing conflicts, and intensifying climate risks are pushing ecosystems and livelihoods in the Basin towards critical thresholds. Despite decades of progress in forest management and conservation, sustainable development remains precarious. Experts warn that the future resilience of the Congo Basin depends on stronger governance, fair and predictable financing, community-driven stewardship, adequate, long-term investments in science, as well as the global effort to reduce carbon emissions and fight climate change.

The 2025 Congo Basin Assessment Report, ‘*Congo Basin Resilience and Sustainability: From the Past to the Future*,’ brings together leading scientists and regional experts to synthesize what is known and map a sustainable path forward. Across 39 chapters organized into four sections, the Report traces the Basin’s ecological and human history, documents major environmental changes, and champions innovative sustainable development solutions. The Report describes the Basin as Africa’s continental “green engine,” vital for supporting livelihoods, biodiversity, and climate, and proposes pathways to safeguard natural capital while enhancing sustainable development.

While the full report is currently in press and is expected to be launched in early 2026, a comprehensive 48-page Executive Summary was released at COP30, presenting 16 key messages drawn from the Report, which offers the first-ever comprehensive overview of the Basin’s geological, ecological, and socio-economic dynamics. It warns that continued exploitation will further erode one of the world’s most significant tropical ecosystems, undermining regional and even continental stability and global climate goals. At the same time, the SPCB emphasizes the Basin’s potential to drive Africa’s nature-based development strategies, highlighting opportunities for sustainable management and optimization of the use of existing resources. It makes a call to action for dependable finance and equitable investment in sustainable development for the Congo Basin nations, identifying urgent knowledge gaps and research priorities to guide future policy, investment, and conservation efforts.

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About the SPCB

Launched at COP28, the SPCB is the first independent scientific body dedicated to assessing the region's ecosystems, their condition, and the threats they face, to guide policy for sustainable development and conservation. The Panel brings together over 180 scientists and is co-chaired by Bonaventure Sonké (University of Yaoundé, Cameroon), Lydie-Stella Koutika (Centre de Recherche sur la Durabilité et la Productivité des Plantations Industrielles, Republic of Congo), and Corneille Ewango (University of Kisangani, DRC).

Learn more: <https://www.spcongobasin.org/>

About the SDSN

The [UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network](#) (SDSN) works under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General to mobilize universities, think tanks, and research centers to advance the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement. Established in 2012 by former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and economist Jeffrey Sachs, the SDSN promotes evidence-based solutions, policy analysis, education, and global cooperation at the intersection of science, policy, and practice.

Explore the SDSN's COP30 Resource Hub for more information:

<https://www.unsdsn.org/resources/cop-resource-hub/>