

**Motion**

**tabled by the Members of the Bundestag Dr Christian Ruck, Sibylle Pfeiffer, Hartwig Fischer, Helmut Heiderich, Anette Hübinger, Jürgen Klimke, Dr Annette Schavan, Anita Schäfer, Johannes Selle, Sabine Weiss, Dagmar Wöhrl, Michael Grosse-Brömer, Stefan Müller, Volker Kauder, Gerda Hasselfeldt and the CDU/CSU parliamentary group and the Members of the Bundestag Dr Christiane Ratjen-Damerau, Helga Daub, Michael Kauch, Joachim Günther, Harald Leibrecht, Rainer Brüderle and the FDP parliamentary group**

**Preventing the destruction of Congo's natural heritage**

The Bundestag is requested to adopt the following motion:

I. The German Bundestag notes:

The Congo forest region in Central Africa is one of the poorest regions of the world, yet it has vast mineral resources which could be exploited for the benefit of the indigenous population and the achievement of development goals. It is at the same time a region of unique biological diversity. The countries of the Congo basin, which is home to a quarter of the world's tropical rainforests, also have a key function for forest protection which is vital to the containment of global warming.

So far, however, most of the countries in the region have been unable to generate economic and social benefits from the exploitation of mineral resources for their citizens. Illegal mining, particularly in Eastern Congo, is instead one of the main sources of violence against humans and nature. In the process women and children in particular suffer a horrifying level of sexual violence and exploitation.

The raw materials mined in this way are either swapped directly by rebel groups for arms or are smuggled out of the country. The state Congolese authorities are still unable to act effectively to stop this illegal exploitation of humans and nature.

The Federal Republic of Germany is supporting the transition to the controlled and certified extraction of natural resources in East Congo. For example, it supports the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) in the Congo basin, the aim of which is to effect the disclosure of payment streams. Germany is also targeting support in particular on the efforts of the Congolese government to bring in reforms to ensure that the state, companies and civil society take joint responsibility for the disclosure of

payments received by the state from its natural resources. The focus here is on the sustainable introduction of a certification mechanism for selected resources. This support is intended in particular to enable the people of the Republic of the Congo to hold their government to account for the use of public revenue from the extractive sector.

The catastrophic security situation is also preventing the effective protection of nature. This is clearly illustrated by the example of the Virunga National Park where, in the direct vicinity of the habitat of the mountain gorilla, ongoing violence is preventing the park administration from fulfilling its protection duties.

This already difficult situation for humans and nature is now being exacerbated by Congolese plans for systematic large-scale mining, supported inter alia by foreign interests, for example from the People's Republic of China, and generous financing. The political objective cited is development financing. However, the regulatory and institutional foundations to ensure that mining actually benefits the people rather than just influential individuals and groups and that surrounding nature is not destroyed at the same time are not yet in place. Rather the fear is that the security situation of the people will further worsen and that there will be widespread destruction of the forests and biodiversity, hence robbing the local populations who are reliant on the services and products of the forest of their livelihoods.

It is therefore a matter of great concern that the Democratic Republic of the Congo wants to introduce legislation to allow oil exploration in all the country's national parks, including the Virunga volcano region with its irreplaceable natural treasures, and in UNESCO world natural heritage sites. This could severely jeopardise the immense biodiversity and the rainforests of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It would also severely call into question the results and continuation of the long-standing cooperation between Germany and Congo in the field of biodiversity and forest protection.

Nature is fragile and mining, with the construction of roads and pipelines and associated developments (such as human settlements), generally leads to fragmentation and ultimately to the destruction of biodiversity and forests. If the Democratic Republic of the Congo were to receive permission for oil drilling, doubt would be cast on its ability to meet its own protection goals and its contribution to the implementation of the Strategic Plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The government would furthermore be in breach of international UNESCO commitments to protect the Virunga National Park.

There are also fears that the new law will have a negative impact on the local population, creating heightened conflicts over land use, an increase in migration with the associated effects on the humanitarian and social situation of the people, negative effects on water, soil and air in the event of accidents or the illegal tapping of oil pipelines and a knock-on effect on the servicing and health of the local population.

## II. The German Bundestag calls on the Federal Government

1. to continue resolutely to bring pressure to bear by appropriate means on the countries of Central Africa, particularly acutely on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to ensure that the protection of biodiversity and forests is accorded the highest priority and is not compromised by allowing mining in national parks and protected areas. This should continue to be embedded in a strategy to support the lasting stability and development of Eastern Congo and other areas of conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
2. to continue to call on the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to improve the security situation in the vicinity of the protected areas;
3. to continue to urge the Congolese side to reject the draft legislation currently on the table to legalise drilling for oil in protected areas;
4. to continue to assist the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in line with the decades of engagement of German and European development policy to protect the national parks of Congo, in finding sustainable solutions for pressing development questions which do not jeopardise the future protection of the national parks and protected areas;
5. to enter into dialogue, as planned, with international partners which have resource and trading interests in the region, such as the People's Republic of China, to discuss how supply interests can be reconciled with development and environmental interests and, where appropriate, to implement joint measures in support of this goal, such as compliance with international environmental and social standards with respect to the exploration, exploitation, extraction, processing and use of natural resources within the framework of specific projects;
6. to bring pressure to bear and to support the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, by suitable means as

appropriate, to ensure that decisions on the extraction of natural resources are made on the basis of sustainability criteria which guarantee the protection of nature in line with internationally agreed goals such as the Aichi Targets enshrined in the Strategic Plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);

7. to focus greater attention than hitherto in negotiations with the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on violence against women and children;
8. to continue to bring pressure to bear to ensure that poaching is recognised and pursued as a problem of organised crime and to work closely in this process with allies such as France and the institutions of the European Union;
9. to continue to bring pressure to bear within the UN for more effective and sustainable support for the MONUSCO mission.

Berlin, 4 June 2013

**Volker Kauder, Gerda Hasselfeldt and parliamentary group**  
**Rainer Brüderle and parliamentary group**