

Dear Government Authorities,  
Authorities of the World Bank,  
Directors in Charge of the Management of the Forest of the Congo Basin,  
Honourable Guests and Invitees,

We, the young “Kids For Forests” from Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Switzerland and Germany are gathered here for the CRI (Camp de Reforestation International) in Mbalmayo to deplore the present management of the forest of the Congo Basin. Via this declaration we wish to express our fear as regards the future of this forest. The forest of the Congo Basin is rich, this we know. In areas where tons and tons of wood are being logged everyday, we are facing an ironic situation. The communities around these forests instead of being enriched are becoming poorer and poorer. The extend of this poverty is quite alarming and embarrassing. The schools in these areas have no buildings and no chairs. The biodiversity of this forest is on a decrease and deforestation is on the increase. You know that the lives of many Africans depend directly on the forest and now that it is being destroyed what do they hang on?

We acknowledge the will of our governments to remedy this situation. They express their will through the elaboration of good laws to govern and ensure sustainable forest management, fight against illegal exploitation and the creation of community forests. All this has been done hand in hand with the World Bank. But all these problems continue because these good laws are not being applied on the field. If the actual rate of destruction of the forest is allowed to continue, what will be in 50 years?

We must realise that the forest of the Congo Bassin is our past, present and future. If we are now already feeling the effects of deforestation, how will it be for our kids? We believe we have a role to play in the conservation of the forest and it is not too late to save the forest, but time is fast going. For this reason, we went ahead to plant more than 1000 trees in Melombo which has a community forest. Just as we, the local governments, the World Bank, donors and local communities still have much to do to save this forest. That’s why we cry out to you to:

- Respect the rights of the indigenous peoples and their self determination
- Focus on executing the sustainable management forestry laws by strengthening administrative bodies, capacity building and fighting corruption
- Maintain and respect the moratorium on the attribution of forest concessions in the Democratic Republic of Congo for at least a century until
  - o The elaboration of a national zoning plan based on the principle of prior, free and informed consent of the local communities and indigenous peoples as well as on the methodology of participative mapping
  - o The placing of an effective, legal and transparent system of control and good governance of the forestry sector
- Finish the legal reviews of the forestry sector in the DRC
- The elaboration by the northern governments of a law forbidding European consumers to buy wood from the Congo Bassin which doesn’t accomplish the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards
- support alternatives to industrial logging by founding community forests and by giving financial support to NGOs concerned with supporting micro projects of the peoples living in the forest

Please let us learn from the mistakes made in Cameroon! Do not allow the destruction of the rainforest of the DRC! This forest is our heritage and we have the feeling that this heritage of ours is being battled against. Please, stop this war against the forest! It's a war against humanity.

Signed by:

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