



When all voices are heard, communities work together

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As the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) recovers from its war-torn past, IUCN is strengthening local voices to conserve the nation's forests, which not only suffered during wartime but are still threatened in a time of peace.

With little awareness or implementation of the new forest code introduced in 2002, local people who depend heavily on forests were unaware of their rights, had no means of expressing those rights even if known, and so had no interest in creating opportunities to use their forest resources sustainably and improve their livelihoods. As a result their forests were continuing to disappear.

IUCN's European-Union-funded project Strengthening Voices For Better Choices (SVBC) works in the Bikoro region of DRC to address these problems. Since 2006 the project has helped break down ancient cultural and community divides by supporting the creation of a regional committee bringing together representatives of local government, village members and their chiefs, and

