



COP30 FOREST PAVILION:

A Shared Commitment to Our Planet

2025 UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP30) 10-21 November 2025, Belém, Brazil

The Congo Basin 2025 Assessment Report: From Past to Future: Resilience and Sustainable Development

November 13, 2025 - 12:30-13:45

In-Person Only

Concept Note

I. Background

Established in 2023 by, with and for scientists in the region, the Science Panel for the Congo Basin (SPCB) is announcing the first-ever Congo Basin Assessment Report. This report, entitled *Resilience and Sustainability in the Congo Basin: Retracing the Past, Looking to the Future*, will be presented to the international community at COP30 in Belém. The report synthesizes scientific knowledge about this unique region, examines critical questions on the Congo Basin's ecosystems, current and future threats that arise from local, regional, and global human activity. Importantly, it also outlines the opportunities, solutions, and pathways for sustainable development to benefit people, nature, and climate.

Prepared by more than 175 scientists from the Congo Basin and their partners around the world, the Report provides an authoritative, comprehensive, and multidisciplinary synthesis of existing scientific knowledge on the region, its ecosystems, and the challenges they face. It serves as a foundation for dialogue and accelerated action by policymakers in the region and at the international level.

The event will bring together the co-chairs of the Panel and high-level speakers to present the Panel's work and key findings; to outline the Congo Basin's critical contributions to Africa's development and the world's climate; identify its acute and future threats and extend a call to action to address the most urgent challenges and seize on the opportunities for sustainable development. Most importantly, the event will underline the need for more political attention and investment for this unique and important region, informed by science and solutions.

The event will also make connections with the Assessment reports of the Science Panel for the Amazon, and the Science Panel for Borneo - all in partnership on the basis of the same commitments and recognition of the importance of the role of science and locally-generated knowledge and solutions to conserve and advance sustainable development in the Congo Basin.

II. Objectives

- Present the key findings and recommendations of the Science Panel for the Congo Basin 2025 Assessment Report
- Explore opportunities for the report to stimulate discussions, inform dialogue and catalyse efforts of government leaders, policymakers, international partners, the private sector, and civil society.
- Increase awareness of the importance of the Congo Basin in global climate, development and biodiversity fora, particularly in relation to existing commitments under the Rio Conventions and the SDGs
- Position the Science Panel for the Congo Basin as a leading provider of scientific knowledge to facilitate dialogue on solutions and policy-driven action, and inform national, regional and global decision-making.

III. Programme/Schedules of Events/Speakers

1. Welcome (5 minutes)

Emma Torres, SPCB Strategic Coordinator

2. Opening Remarks: An important moment for the Congo Basin (5 minutes)

Prof. Joseph Longunza Malassi, (Incoming) CBFP Co-facilitator for the DRC (TBC)

Including references to the new Political Declaration on the Congo Basin

3. Keynote Intervention (5 minutes)

Prof. Lee White, Special Envoy of the SPCB

4. The 2025 Congo Assessment Report: From Past to Future (15 minutes)

Overview of the 2025 Assessment Report: Process, relevance, and context

Moderator: Prof. Lee White

Presentation of key messages and findings

- Assessment Report: Section 1 and 2 - History and current state of the Congo Basin
 - Dr. Bonaventure Sonké, Co-Chair of the SPCB
- Assessment Report: Section 3 and 4 - Current, future, and alternative pathways
 - Dr. Lydie-Stella Koutika, Co-Chair of the SPCB

5. Moderated Discussion with Panel Co-Chairs (25 minutes)

Key Questions:

- *What is the relevance of the Panel's work and report at this time?*
- *How can the work of the Panel and its recommendations be taken forward and applied?*

Invited Speakers

- Moderator: Prof. Lee White
- Panelists: Dr. Joseph Itwonga, Dr. Raphael Tshimanga, Dr. Yadvinder Mahli

6. Keynote remarks on behalf of the COP30 Presidency (10 minutes)

Carlos Lopes, COP30 Special Envoy for Africa

7. Remarks from key partners (5 minutes)

Berta Pesti, Head of the CAFI Secretariat

8. Closing Remarks and appreciation (5 minutes)

Moving forward on the Science Panel's Key Takeaways and Recommendations

Chouaïbou Nchoutpouen, Deputy Executive Secretary of COMIFAC (TBC)

IV. Expected main messages

Expected Outcomes:

- Enhanced global awareness of the threats but also opportunities in the Congo Basin
- Recognition of the direct relevance of science-based regional and global policy action in and for the Congo Basin, in the context of the broader tropical forest agenda
- Effective visibility for the Panel, its 2025 report and its key recommendations
- Identification of entry points for direct engagement with governments and stakeholders in the region
- Expanded attention and interest in strengthening local, regional and inter-regional science collaboration
- alliances to advance the implementation of science-based solutions

V. Focal Point/Contact

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