

SCIENCES & TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS BULLETIN



NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL



Gilbert KABANDA launches the Pre-forum of Congolese Scientific Genius

**NSC holds its 57th ordinary
session**

**The IAEA CEO Rafael Mariano Grossi
receives Gilbert KABANDA in
Addis-Abeba**

**Mushrooms: from mysteries to
unexpected wonders**

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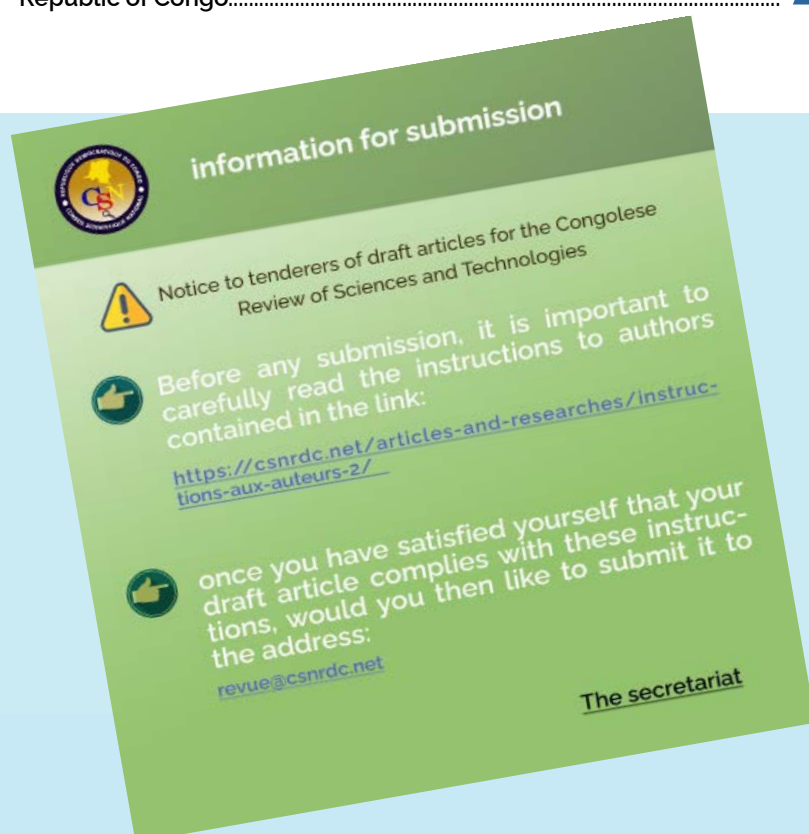
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The tam-tam of genius



Professor Pius MPIANA TSHIMANKINDA
NSC President.

More than just an instrument, the African tam-tam resonated to forge social bonds, announce important events, and mark key moments in community life. On July 14, 2025, a special tam-tam will resonate throughout our country, vibrating to the rhythm of the 3rd Congolese Scientific Genius Forum, initiated by His Excellency the Minister of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation, Dr. Gilbert KABANDA KURHENGHA.

As the pages of this 40th edition of the Science and Technological Innovation Bulletin open, our readers are invited to reflect deeply on the reflection of a period of intense activity, marked by both significant advances and persistent challenges, highlighting the pivotal role of science and innovation in building a better future for our nation. The desire to join the PCT, the Madrid Protocol, and the Hague Treaty, as well as the upcoming organization of the 3rd edition of the Congolese Scientific Genius Forum, are concrete steps toward promoting our innovators and protecting our intellectual heritage.

At the same time, our country's collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Addis Ababa, particularly around the "Rays of Hope" initiative, is progressing rapidly. The favorable reception of our funding application for the Public Center for Multidisciplinary Diagnosis and Radiotherapy, the Radiopharmacy, and the National School of Nuclear Science and Technology is excellent news that promises to drastically improve cancer care in our country. These projects, the foundation stone for which was laid in November 2024, are tangible proof of our determination to harness science for the health of our populations.

At the national level, the 57th ordinary session of the NSC, held on July 4, 2025, was a key moment in structuring and revitalizing our research institutions. The introduction of the new digital portal for

inspecting research institutions by Minister KABANDA, and the commitment to rigorous inspection starting on July 14, 2025, are commendable initiatives to ensure the transparency and efficiency of our structures. We also welcome the efforts to improve the working conditions of the staff of the Ministry of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation, as evidenced by the introduction of the new transport bus for the staff of the National Remote Sensing Center (NRSC). However, this positive momentum should not obscure the crucial challenges facing the Congolese people. Recent health alerts, with cholera outbreaks in Mbandaka and Ngandanjika, highlight the urgent need for massive investment in access to drinking water and sanitation, as well as in strengthening our health infrastructure. Similarly, the worrying situation of the Goma Volcanological Observatory (OVG), threatened by a serious shortage of resources, is a wake-up call. Monitoring our active volcanoes is vital for the safety of millions of our fellow citizens, and urgent solutions must be found to ensure the proper functioning of this essential institution. Environmental issues are also at the heart of our concerns. As the DRC prepares to host COP 30 in November 2025, it is imperative to ensure the effective inclusion of local and indigenous communities, the true guardians of our forests, in the preparations and benefits of climate projects, particularly carbon credits. The reflections of our researchers, such as the exploration of the "unexpected mysteries and wonders" of fungi, remind us of the immense untapped potential of our biodiversity. This local research, whether it focuses on air quality in Kinshasa or the development of our natural resources, is the key to endogenous and sustainable solutions.

In short, this 40th edition is a manifesto: the sound of the Tam-Tam of Congolese Genius will not fade away. It reminds us that the secret of the future lies not only in what already exists, but also in the creative momentum of each moment. This tam-tam will continue to call, to bring together, to guide our country toward a future where

science and innovation are the pillars of a just, healthy, and prosperous society. Let us continue this rhythm, with the firm conviction that every idea, every effort, contributes to the powerful echo of our collective genius. It is therefore necessary that our inventions and innovations, the fruit of Congolese genius, be presented at the 3rd edition of the Congolese Scientific Genius Forum, which opens on July 14, 2025.



Activities of the Ministre of SRTI

Gilbert KABANDA launches the Congolese Scientific Genius Pre-Forum

The Minister of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation, Dr. Gilbert KABANDA KURHENGHA, launched the Pre-Forum of Congolese Scientific Genius on July 14, 2025, in the Banquet Hall of the People's Palace. According to Minister KABANDA, this third edition aims to highlight and support the work of Congolese inventors and innovators, whether they are from within the country (cities, provinces, territories, villages, etc.) or from the diaspora.

The Minister of Research urged Congolese geniuses not to be intimidated by scientists (doctors, PhDs, graduates). He reminded them that creativity and intelligence are not the preserve of a particular social class. The Minister reached out to all geniuses in rural areas who are reluctant to share their "ancestral knowledge," which is often equated with fetishism. "Let's get rid of our inhibitions. Fetishism must leave our villages and enter laboratories to become the science we teach at university," he insisted.

Before concluding, the Minister of SRTI took the opportunity to call on Congolese inventors, whether from Kinshasa or the provinces. "I urge you to come forward with your ancestral creations, whether they come from villages or modern cities. Even without a license, you can be a creator," he insisted. In response to questions from journalists, Minister Gilbert KABANDA promised to capitalize on the Congolese Scientific Genius Incubator (CSGI), which is set to become the Congolese Scientific Genius Promotion Agency. This project will soon be effective after the decree is signed.

The day's moderator, Professor TSHIMPI, revealed that the actual work will continue after August 4. This will allow potential participants to continue registering on the

Ministry's official digital portal. It will also allow those who wish to do so to actively participate in the very first edition of the World Music and Tourism Festival, scheduled for July 16-18.

The President of the NSC, Prof. MPIANA TSHIMANKINDA Plus, reviewed the progress made since the project was launched. From the first edition to the second, he highlighted the progress made and the achievements to be consolidated.

The head of the NSC demonstrated that the Forums have been a truly seminal event. For the first time, scientists, inventors, and innovators from different backgrounds in the DRC have come together to showcase the intellectual potential of the Congolese people. It was also a defining moment

in raising awareness of the strategic role of science in the country's sovereignty.

Finally, he reminded researchers, innovators, and inventors who still have projects in the pipeline to submit them. Registrations will continue throughout the pre-selection period, which will run until August 4, 2025, he emphasized.

MAZONO MPIA Christian/NSC



Statement by the Minister of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation at the 66th session of the General Assembly of the World Intellectual Property Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, on July 8, 2025

In Geneva, during the 66th General Assembly of the World Intellectual Property Organization, the Minister of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation (SRTI), Dr. Gilbert KABANDA KURHENG, reaffirmed in his speech on Tuesday, July 8, 2025, the Democratic Republic of Congo's commitment to cooperating with member states to build a more equitable global intellectual property system. Please find below the full text of his speech :

**Mr. General Director,
Excellencies, Ladies and
Gentlemen, Heads of Delegation,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First of all, on behalf of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo, I would like to thank the World Intellectual Property Organization for its warm welcome and for the successful organization of this 66th General Assembly.

My congratulations also go to the Director General, Mr. DAREN TANG, for his inclusive vision and his strong commitment to putting intellectual property at the service of sustainable development, innovation, and social justice. The DRC

was delighted to welcome the appointment of Ms. LORETTA ASSIEDOU as the new Director for Africa of our Organization. This promotion is well deserved for her attention and tireless support for the cause of intellectual property in African states in general and in my country in particular.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen;

The DRC fully recognizes the strategic role of intellectual property in transforming our economies, promoting research, and enhancing local knowledge. As a country rich in natural resources and human potential, the DRC intends to make intellectual property a real lever for economic diversification, sustainable growth, and industrialization. In this context, our country has launched several initiatives aimed at promoting the work of national innovators, notably the organization of the 3rd edition of the Congolese Scientific Engineering Forum, scheduled for July 14 to August 31, 2025. It is also worth mentioning the government's support for the protection of local innovations, trademarks, geographical indications, and cultural heritage.

In the near future, our organization will observe the DRC's accession to the PCT, the Madrid Protocol, and the Hague Treaty in order to meet international standards and fulfill its international protection obligations.

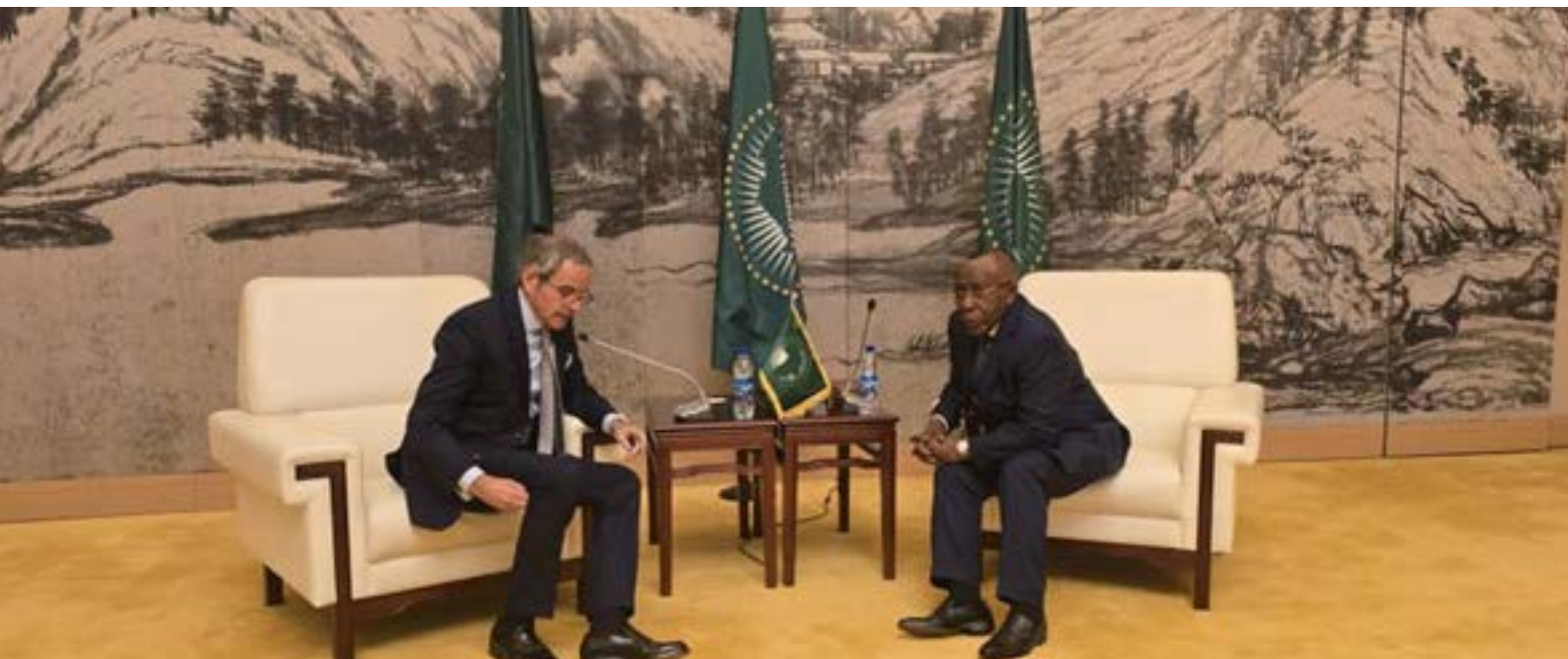
That is why we welcome WIPO's continued support through initiatives such as the Technology and Innovation Support Centers and the WIPO Academy's online training courses. These tools are essential for strengthening the innovation ecosystem in developing countries such as ours. As will be discussed during the working session that the Director General has kindly granted me, my country advocates for an international protection system for Congolese inventions and welcomes WIPO's willingness to provide a consultant for technical support in order to establish a favorable intellectual property framework in my country.

Furthermore, the DRC calls for support in the areas of technology transfer, access to scientific and technical information, and the protection of traditional knowledge. The DRC also supports discussions on issues related to artificial intelligence, genetic resources, and the rights of local communities.

To conclude my address, the DRC reaffirms its commitment to WIPO's objectives and its willingness to actively cooperate with Member States to build a more equitable, effective, and inclusive global intellectual property system.

*Best of luck with our work.
Thank you.*

Dr Gilbert Kabanda Kurhenga



IAEA CEO Rafael Mariano Grossi meets with Gilbert KABANDA in Addis Ababa

The General Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, received in audience the Minister of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation (SRTI), Dr. Gilbert KABANDA KURHENGHA, during the Forum on the "IAEA's Rays of Hope" held in Addis Ababa on June 30, 2025.

During this meeting, Ambassador Rafael Mariano Grossi informed Minister Gilbert KABANDA KURHENGHA that the financing application submitted by the Democratic Republic of Congo had been received. This application seeks funding from the International Development Fund of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) for the construction of the Public Multidisciplinary Diagnostic and Radiotherapy Center, the Radiopharmacy,

and the National Higher School of Nuclear Science and Technology.

He assured him of his commitment to securing a positive response for the DRC in order to relieve Congolese people suffering from cancer.

For his part, Minister Gilbert KABANDA KURHENGHA thanked his host on behalf of the Congolese government and pledged to redouble his efforts to bring this huge project, which is close to the heart of the President of the DRC, His Excellency Félix-Antoine TSHISEKEDI TSHILOMBO, to fruition. The two leaders agreed to organize an inspection visit to Kinshasa as soon as the resources are mobilized.

For the record, the foundation stone for the construction of the Multidisciplinary

and Radiotherapy Center and the National School of Nuclear Science and Technology was laid jointly in Kinshasa by Minister Gilbert KABANDA and the Director General of the IAEA in November 2024. As we can see, Minister Gilbert KABANDA KURHENGHA brings good news for the country. The completion of this vital project is now only a matter of days away.

Communications Unit of the Minister of SRTI



Speech by Dr. Gilbert KABANDA KURHENG, Minister of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation, at the IAEA's "Rays of Hope" Forum held in the African Union conference room in Addis Ababa on June 30, 2025.

*Dear Director General of the IAEA,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Delegates,*

It is with great pleasure and honor that I extend my greetings to the Director-General of our organization, Ambassador Rafaelo Mariano Grossi, for the invitation he has extended to me and for all the arrangements made to ensure the success of this forum.

I would like to thank the sister Republic of Ethiopia for the warm welcome it has extended to me and the delegation accompanying me.

My greetings to all the honorable ministers, ambassadors, and participants. We all know that the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) "Rays of Hope" initiative is a flagship program aimed at improving access to diagnosis and treatment.

We all know that the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) "Rays of Hope" initiative is a flagship program aimed at improving access to cancer diagnosis and treatment in low- and middle-income countries, with a focus on nuclear medicine and radiotherapy.

For us, the value of this initiative vis-à-vis the IAEA is threefold because: The DRC was the first country in Africa to have a

nuclear research reactor, since 1959. The DRC was the first country in Africa to have a nuclear research reactor, since 1959 hope in Africa.

Finally, it is still the Agency that has committed to supporting the DRC and providing it with technical assistance for the acquisition of radiotherapy equipment and the strengthening of human capacities in this field.

Like the States represented here, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is equally concerned by this initiative because of its urgent need to strengthen its capacity to fight cancer. As part of this cooperation, my country is working on the construction of a Public Multidisciplinary Diagnostic and Radiotherapy Center, a Radiopharmacy Center, and a Higher School of Nuclear Science and Technology, projects for which the following achievements are noteworthy :

- 1. The acquisition of land for the construction of these centers, the foundation stone of which was laid jointly with the Director General of the IAEA in November 2023 in Kinshasa ;*
- 2. The completion of construction plans for three buildings, taking into account the specific characteristics and unique nature of these centers ;*
- 3. The completion of environmental and social impact studies by the Government, through its General Commission for Atomic Energy,*

which received a favorable opinion from the Congolese Agency for the Environment ;

- 4. The completion of studies for the installation of civil engineering and sanitation works, the final report of which has been sent to me ;*
- 5. The financing process is currently underway for the land development work and the construction of these three buildings. To achieve this, two components are being implemented: first, internal financing through the Public Treasury and, second, financing from the FID-OPEP, through the intermediation of the IAEA, whose tireless efforts we once again commend, particularly those of our Director General, Rafaelo Mariano Grossi, who has provided us with a consultant to offer technical support for the implementation of projects in line with international standards. I would like to take this opportunity to warmly acknowledge the important role played by Mr. SHAUKAT ABDULRAZAK, Director of the IAEA's Africa Division, in strengthening IAEA-DRC relations and advancing the RAYS OF HOPE project in my country. I thank him warmly for this.*

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, The table as presented aims to achieve the following results :

- Strengthening infrastructure with the installation of a radiotherapy and radiopharmacy center equipped with;*

- Expanded access to nuclear medicine for cancer diagnosis ;
- The development of specialized human resources; and finally, the reduction of preventable cancer mortality through earlier and more effective treatment.

That is why my country is working tirelessly to achieve this ambitious project, which will benefit the

population facing this terrible disease.

In conclusion, I declare that the Democratic Republic of Congo's commitment to the "Rays of Hope" initiative is a strategic step towards strengthening its health system and combating non-communicable diseases. Thanks to the technical support of the IAEA, and in particular its Director General, Rafael Mariano Grossi, and my country's strong political will, this

partnership will greatly improve access to cancer care in the DRC and save thousands of lives.

I thank you.

Dr Gilbert Kabanda Kurhenga

NSC Activities



The NSC President, Prof. Pius MPIANA TSHIMANKINDA, during the 57th ordinary session

The NSC is organizing its 57th regular session.

The National Scientific Council (NSC) held its 57th regular session on Friday, July 4, 2025, in the "Maitre José MPANDA KABANGU" conference room of the Center for Research in the Human Sciences (CRHS), located at 33 Comité Urbain Avenue in the Gombe district of Kinshasa

Ten (10) items were the focus of discussions during this session: the President's statement, adoption of the minutes of the 56th ordinary session of the NSC on March 26, 2025, summary of decisions and recommendations from the ordinary session of the NSC on March 26, 2025, functioning of research institutions during the intersessional period from April to June 2025, report of the commissions created by the NSC, adoption of the organizational frameworks of the Water and Environment Research Center (WERC) and the Goma Volcanological Observatory (GVO/Goma), supervision of junior researchers, allocation of chapters for the book "Scientific Research: From Genesis to the Present Day," review of the files for the appointments and promotions of agents and managers of the Research Centers and Institutes, and miscellaneous matters.

The proceedings of this ordinary session were marked by the arrival of His Excellency

the Minister of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation (SRTI), Dr. Gilbert KABANDA KURHENGHA, who came to attend the presentation of the inspection framework for Research Centers and Institutes. This ceremony was previously announced by the President of the NSC.

Following this presentation, the Minister urged the members of the Research Institution Management Committees and researchers to carefully fill out the required forms, providing all the necessary information on the dedicated digital portal within one week.

He also announced that, thanks to the information provided in this IT tool, it will be possible to carry out inspections in the Research Centers and Institutes.

Speaking after the Minister, the Secretary General for Scientific Research and Technological Innovation, Odon NDAMBU, specified that the Office of the Minister of SRTI, the General Secretariat, and the NSC will work closely together to carry out this imminent inspection mission.

To close the session, a number of decisions were taken and recommendations made for the proper functioning of research



The President of the NSC and the Director of the Office of the Minister of SRTI

institutions. The President of the NSC, Professor Pius MPIANA TSHIMANKINDA, urged members to participate in all NSC sessions and reminded them that the decisions taken there are binding on all research institutions.

It should be noted that the NSC meets four times a year in ordinary sessions. These sessions, which are held in person and online, bring together all the heads of research centers and institutes throughout the DRC and are dedicated to examining issues related to their operations.

MAZONO Christian/NSC

Introductory speech by the President of the NSC, Prof. Pius MPIANA



Professor Pius MPIANA TSHIMANKINDA NSC President.

Your Excellency, Minister of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation,

Ladies and gentlemen, members of the management committees of research institutions,

Members of the press, Distinguished guests, in your respective capacities,

It is with a sense of deep pride and enthusiasm that I take the floor today at the official opening ceremony of the preliminary phase of the third edition of the Congolese Scientific Genius Forum.

This Forum, now part of the national scientific agenda, is much more than an event. It reflects the political will of His Excellency the President of the Republic, Head of State Felix Antoine TSHISEKEDI TSHILOMBO, as embodied by Dr. Gilbert Kabanda Kurhenga, Minister of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation, with the support of the government led by Prime Minister Judith SUMINWA Tuluka:

to bring together intellectuals, promote Congolese scientific potential, and lay the foundations for development based on knowledge, research, and innovation.

First of all, I would like to briefly recall the fruits of the two previous editions:

The first Forum, called the Conclave of Congolese Scientific Genius, was held from August 19 to 29, 2023, at the People's Palace after three weeks of pre-conclave, and was opened and closed by His Excellency the President of the Republic, Felix Antoine TSHISEKEDI TSHILOMBO. This demonstrated to the nation his full support for research and technological innovation, which alone are capable of triggering endogenous development based on the genius of the daughters and sons of our beautiful country.

The main objective of this scientific event was to identify Congolese researchers, inventors, and innovators within the country and among the diaspora who have research results that are useful for the country's development and for improving the socio-economic

conditions of the Congolese people.

Out of a total of two hundred and ninety-seven (297) research results, inventions, and innovations presented, the evaluation team, composed exclusively of university professors, selected one hundred and twenty-seven (127) of the best research results, inventions, and innovations for a second evaluation session. Fifty (50) pre-selected candidates were chosen to receive medals. Ten (10) winners received gold medals, fifteen (15) received silver medals, and twenty-five (25) received bronze medals. The jury also proposed twelve (12) special awards.

This Forum was a truly groundbreaking event. For the first time, our scientists, inventors, and innovators from different backgrounds came together to showcase the intellectual potential of the Congolese people. It was also a defining moment in raising awareness of the strategic role of science in our country's sovereignty.

The advocacy carried out on this occasion enabled the Head of State to increase the budget allocated to the MSRTI from 0.5 to 3 percent of the national budget.

The second edition of the Congolese Scientific Engineering Forum took place from August 13 to 29, 2024, in the banquet hall of the People's Palace.

It was opened by Her Excellency the Prime Minister and closed by the Head of State.

During the 10-day pre-Forum period, the evaluators analyzed, online or in person, more than 400 projects and selected 172 projects that had obtained at least 70% of the points. Participants ranged in age from 10 to 83, while the results, inventions, and innovations covered all fields: health, agri-food, digital and information technology, energy and electrical or electronic technology, defense and security, the environment, etc.

At the end of the final phase, the 50 best results, inventions, or innovations were selected, along with eight jury prizes.

The winners of the first edition received their medals of scientific merit and an envelope each. They were also awarded certificates of registration for their results, inventions, or innovations, as well as their industrial patents.

In addition, they were assisted in drafting their business plans. As such, 64 projects with their business plans indicating the number of jobs each project could create were presented to the government, classified according to the different

areas of the government's action plan.

The 2024 winners also received certificates registering their results, inventions, or innovations and are awaiting the drafting of their business plans and the awarding of medals during this third Forum.

It should be noted that all results, inventions, or innovations, whether they received awards or not, are supported by the scientific engineering incubator with a view to their maturation and orientation toward potential funding.

It is therefore on the strength of the success of these two Congolese knowledge fairs that SEM of the SRTI has seen fit to institutionalize this Forum, which will now bring together Congolese scientific engineering every year during the period from July to August.

Today, by bringing together researchers, innovators, and inventors once again, we confirm that Congolese scientific engineering needs a permanent space for expression, debate, and projection. The Ministry's ambition is to have its own physical space where the works of Congolese scientific engineering can be regularly exhibited, a sort of fair for Congolese scientific engineering.

As Nelson Mandela said:

"Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world."

And I would add: science and innovation are its beating heart. Before concluding my speech, I would like to

remind researchers, innovators, and inventors who still have their projects in the drawer that they have a pressing duty to take them out and present them online or in person, as registrations are still open throughout the pre-selection period, which runs until August 4.

Long live Congolese scientific genius!

Long live research and innovation in the service of national development!

Long live our beloved and beautiful country!

Thank you.



The Deputy CEO and FAD of RSNC aboard the new bus

Echoes of Research Institutions

The RSNC puts its staff transport bus into service

The mobility of agents and managers of the National Remote Sensing Center (NRSC) under the best conditions is now a reality. It was on Saturday, June 14, 2025, that the new bus, donated by the Congolese government, which will transport staff, was put into service.

The launch was led by the Director General of the organization, Professor David NGINDU BUABUA, accompanied by Deputy General Director Mike TSHIMBALANGA and a group of RSNC staff in the municipality of Maluku.

This launch marks the beginning of an ambitious transformation of the urban transport network for Scientific Research and Technological Innovation staff in general and the National Remote Sensing Center in particular.

Speaking at the event, Professor David NGINDU thanked the President of the Republic, Head of State, Félix-Antoine TSHISEKEDI TSHILOMBO, the Prime Minister, Head of Government, Judith SUMINWA TULUKA, and the Minister of Supervision, Dr. Gilbert KABANDA, for their firm commitment to improving urban mobility and providing quality transportation vehicles to the agents and executives of the Ministry of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation.

Professor David NGINDU also stressed the crucial importance of regular maintenance of the new bus to ensure its reliability and durability. "We will take measures to ensure that the bus is maintained in optimal conditions and that its operation complies with the standards that will be adopted by users," he added. He concluded by urging the staff

and executives of the institution, who are users of this bus, to contribute a monthly subscription of US\$20.

The inauguration of this vehicle was greeted with enthusiasm by all the staff of the institution, who said:

"This bus is equipped with comfortable seats and an efficient air conditioning system, making travel a pleasant experience," said one manager.

It should be noted that the inauguration ceremony took place in a festive atmosphere at the EZE Village site in Kimpoko in the municipality of Nsele.

Jeanpy KALOMBO RSNC



Reflections of our researchers

Air quality in the DRC: WASARU ASBL/NGO and its partners offer scientific input for regulation

Faced with a growing atmospheric challenge, the Democratic Republic of Congo is preparing to redefine its environmental framework.

President Félix Antoine TSHISEKEDI TSHILOMBO's strong commitment to establishing clear standards for air, water, and soil during the 43rd session of the Council of Ministers has found significant scientific support from the NGO WASARU ASBL and the team of scientists working with it, including Professor Daniel Westervelt of the prestigious Columbia University (USA) and the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago (EPIC). Through its "Kinshasa Air Quality" (KINAQ) initiative, this organization, coordinated by engineer Paulson Kasereka Isevulambire, has a wealth of concrete information gathered since 2018, which is essential for developing the regulations needed to monitor air quality in the DRC.

The Congolese capital, like other urban centers in the country, is experiencing significant atmospheric degradation. Analyses conducted by the WASARU team and its partners reveal concentrations of air pollutants in Kinshasa that can exceed World Health Organization guidelines by up to eight times. These high levels are directly correlated with serious health conditions affecting the population, including cardiovascular disease and chronic respiratory disorders

such as asthma, as highlighted by Dr. Jean-Luc Balogije Selenge, KINAQ project specialist and partner at WASARU NGO.

The KINAQ program is designed to convert this data into levers for action to improve air quality, in close collaboration with government authorities. Beyond data collection and analysis, WASARU is committed to raising awareness among citizens, particularly young people, equipping them to become agents of change.

The continuous analytical monitoring carried out by WASARU and its partners is an indispensable resource for public authorities seeking to define and implement air quality standards. The NGO actively campaigns for the integration of these concerns into existing national strategies, such as the National Sanitation Policy and the strategic documents of the Ministry of Public Health, Hygiene, and Social Welfare.

With the determination of the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo to address this regulatory deficit and the concrete scientific contribution of organizations such as WASARU NGO, the Democratic Republic of Congo now has a unique opportunity to strengthen its legislative framework for a healthier environment. The convergence of political will and scientific expertise is the



Mr. Paulson Kasereka discussing air quality with the MEDD Sanitation Directorate team in Kinshasa

cornerstone for the DRC to fulfill its role as a "solution country" and ensure its citizens' fundamental right to a quality environment.

For more information or to contact the team:
Email: KinshasaAirQuality.wasaru@gmail.com
and Website: <https://wasaruwash.org/>

Jean-Luc BALOGIJE SELENGE

Mushrooms: from mysteries to unexpected wonders

Recent events in the US have brought to light a remarkable case: the arrest of researchers accused of smuggling in a fungus of the *Fusarium* genus, described as a “potential weapon of agriterrorism.” Although specific to the context of biological security, this news resonates with a deeper and often irrational fear that fungi inspire in humans. For thousands of years, these organisms, neither plants nor animals, have inhabited our forests and soils, bringing both deadly dangers and unexpected benefits. But beyond the instinctive mistrust, justified by the toxicity of certain species, what do we really know about these enigmatic beings? Are they all threats, or do they conceal exceptional potential, particularly in a country with such exuberant biodiversity as the Democratic Republic of Congo?

Poisonous mushrooms: Demystifying them to better prevent poisoning

The image of mushrooms as a source of danger is persistent and based on very real facts. However, of the thousands of fungal species identified around the world, only a small proportion are truly toxic, and a tiny fraction are potentially lethal. This reputation is mainly fueled by the severity of poisoning caused by a few notorious specimens, such as the death cap mushroom, which can cause irreversible damage to vital organs. Toxicity varies greatly, ranging from mild digestive disorders to severe neurological, renal, or hepatic damage. The case of *Fusarium*, although not a mushroom picked for consumption, also illustrates a risk: its ability to produce mycotoxins that are harmful to human and animal health.

Given this diversity, the fundamental message for the general public remains one of absolute caution. Mushroom identification is a skill that cannot be improvised. It is imperative never to consume a mushroom that has not been formally identified by a qualified specialist, such as an experienced mycologist or a trained pharmacist. The golden rule is simple: when in doubt, refrain from eating. Similarly, vigilance is required with regard to harvesting locations; edible mushrooms can accumulate pollutants if they grow in contaminated environments. If poisoning is suspected, the first step is to immediately contact emergency services or a poison control center.

Beyond the plate: unexpected powers

While caution is advised when dealing with poisonous species, it would be simplistic to limit the fungal kingdom to its potential for harm alone. In reality, many fungi are valuable allies, both nutritionally and therapeutically. Beyond commonly consumed varieties such as oyster mushrooms and button mushrooms, which are sources of fiber, vitamins, and essential minerals, certain fungi, often derived from ancestral medicinal traditions, reveal exceptional properties.

These “medicinal mushrooms,” sometimes referred to as adaptogens for their ability to help the body adapt to stress and maintain balance, are increasingly being studied by modern science. Reishi (*Ganoderma lucidum*), for example, is revered in Asia for its potential action on the immune system and its anti-inflammatory properties. Shiitake (*Lentinula edodes*) is recognized for its immunomodulatory role and antiviral properties, sometimes contributing to cholesterol reduction. Lion’s Mane (*Hericium erinaceus*) is attracting attention for its positive influence on cognitive function and its neuroprotective potential. Cordyceps (*Cordyceps sinensis/militaris*) is prized for its effects on endurance, energy, and respiratory support. Finally, Chaga (*Inonotus obliquus*) is distinguished by its high antioxidant content. These benefits are attributed to a complex mix of bioactive compounds, such as polysaccharides, triterpenes, and ergosterols. However, it is crucial to remember that these mushrooms, although promising and used as dietary supplements or in herbal medicine, are by no means a substitute for conventional medical treatment. They should always be used after consulting a healthcare professional.

Untapped potential in the DRC

The question of the presence of this fungal wealth, particularly that with exceptional properties, on Congolese territory is highly relevant. The DRC, with its incredible biodiversity and varied ecosystems—from the immense equatorial forest of the Central Basin to the savannas and forests of the East—is a veritable biological reservoir. However, mycology, the study of fungi, is still relatively under-explored compared to other disciplines.



Thousands of species of fungi thrive in the rich soils and decomposing organic matter of the Congolese forests. Many edible varieties have been traditionally harvested and consumed by local populations for generations, reflecting ancestral vernacular knowledge. It is highly likely that species with characteristics similar to Reishi, Shiitake, or Cordyceps, or even endemic species with unique properties, exist in the unexplored corners of the Congolese forests. However, their scientific identification and the characterization of their bioactive compounds require significant investment in research.

The humid and warm environments, conducive to plant decomposition, offer ideal conditions for remarkable fungal proliferation.

The implications of this exploration are vast for the DRC. In terms of food security, better knowledge and promotion of local edible species could diversify sources of nutrition. In traditional and modern medicine, research on Congolese fungi could lead to the discovery of new molecules of pharmacological interest or the scientific promotion of ancestral remedies. The development of mushroom cultivation at the local level could also stimulate the rural economy, offering new employment and income opportunities. Finally, in-depth exploration is essential for the conservation of these fungal ecosystems and for the DRC, a true “solution country” for biodiversity, to fully understand and protect its natural heritage.

A kingdom to rediscover

From the shadows of potentially lethal mycotoxins to the spotlight of therapeutic and nutritional innovations, fungi embody a biological kingdom of extraordinary diversity

and potential. Far from being mere plants or curiosities of the undergrowth, they are an essential component of our ecosystems, nutrient cycles, and, increasingly, our well-being. The *Fusarium* affair has served as a reminder of the need for vigilance, but it should not obscure the richness and opportunities that these organisms offer.

For a country like the Democratic Republic of Congo, this reality takes on particular significance. With its immense fungal biodiversity, much of which remains unexplored, the DRC holds a potential treasure trove for food security, biomedical research, and local economic development. It is time to move beyond myths and unfounded

fears, invest in mycological research, promote education, and establish responsible management frameworks. By better understanding these fascinating beings, we can not only protect ourselves but also sustainably exploit the incredible resources that fungi invite us to rediscover, thereby transforming ancestral fear into a source of wonder and progress.

*Jean-Luc BALOGIJE SELENGE /RCMD Bunia
and BELESI Consort/NSC*



At the time of Innovation

University-Industry Collaboration: Sibanye Stillwater's Simulacrum at UJ, an Inspiring Model for UNIKIN

Cooperation between universities and industry has become a key driver for the development of innovative solutions to contemporary challenges, particularly in high-risk sectors such as mining.

A prime example in South Africa is Sibanye-Stillwater's Simulacrum, a state-of-the-art technological infrastructure located at the University of Johannesburg (UJ).

This facility, which will be operational in 2022, is a unique platform for simulating emergency incidents, incorporating radiological and chemical scenarios.

Designed in close partnership with the Sibanye Stillwater mining group, the Simulacrum is dedicated to training, evaluating response protocols, and strengthening the resilience of stakeholders in the face of complex industrial risks.

This infrastructure enables inter-agency exer-

cises involving rescue teams, industrial safety managers, and university researchers. Thanks to this collaboration, the platform offers a realistic and secure environment in which crisis management strategies can be tested and optimized, while promoting the development of skills among industry stakeholders.

A source of inspiration for the University of Kinshasa (UNIKIN)

The South African experience has sparked keen interest within the Congolese scientific community, particularly at the University of Kinshasa. Two Congolese researchers, Seke Vangu Max and Kapinga Kabulwe Sharon, recently visited the UJ laboratory, where they were able to observe firsthand the operation and benefits of Simulacrum.

This visit, organized as part of their research stay, led to a fruitful exchange on simulation methodologies, the technologies used (including modeling of radioactive and chemical emissions), and the terms of public-private

partnerships.

Towards a Congolese model for industrial risk management

The feedback from the UJ-Sibanye Stillwater Simulacrum could greatly inspire the establishment of a similar platform in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Although the mining sector is a major economic pillar there, the management of radiological and chemical risks remains poorly structured.

Such a project would contribute significantly to strengthening the training, preparedness, and coordination of stakeholders in the event of industrial accidents, thereby ensuring better public health and safety.

Max SEKE VANGU/ CBRNEC



Read for you

COP30 DRC: Congolese forest guardians sidelined from climate preparations

The Democratic Republic of Congo, Africa's green lung, is it preparing to betray its first environmental defenders? As COP30 DRC looms on the horizon in November 2025, a loud alarm is sounding from the heart of the tropical forests. Local climate communities, those forgotten sentinels who preserve our ecosystems on a daily basis, are systematically excluded from decision-making processes. Honorary Provincial Deputy Prince Kihangi, spokesperson for the "DRC Ecologists," tears away the veil on this glaring injustice in a scathing statement.

"How can the DRC claim to be a climate solution country while marginalizing those whose hands are actually protecting our forests?" he asks, his anger tinged with bitterness. His conclusion is clear: the indigenous peoples of the DRC were not even informed of the resolutions adopted at COP29. This guilty silence is repeating itself today, on the eve of the major international meeting. These populations, who are the real bulwarks against deforestation, remain unaware of the projects that are supposed to concern them most.

A glaring example is the "Kivu-Kinshasa Green Corridor" project, presented as a flagship of the national climate fight.

On the ground, those who live in daily contact with the trees are unaware of its existence. "How can we take ownership of something we don't even know the contours of?" asks Kihangi, denouncing an environmental policy that is out of touch with human realities.

This exclusion is not only a democratic affront; it undermines the very effectiveness of Congolese green initiatives. But the unease runs deeper. The former elected representative of North Kivu points to the stifling opacity surrounding DRC carbon credits. This vital funding, intended to reward the preservation of carbon sinks, seems to evaporate in bureaucratic red tape without ever reaching those who deserve compensation.

"Forest communities are sweating for global climate balance, but they only get crumbs in return," he laments. A green economy that runs on empty when it

ignores its own players.

Faced with this overwhelming picture, Kihangi's appeal sounds like an ultimatum: the Minister of the Environment must absolutely organize inclusive consultations before finalizing the specifications for COP30. "Let's listen to the real voices on the ground!" he implores, emphasizing that any credible climate policy must rest on three inseparable pillars: social justice, effective inclusion, and respect for ancestral rights. Congo's forests will only be saved by those who have inhabited them for generations.

A few months before this decisive summit, the DRC is playing its double gamble: international credibility and national cohesion. Without the forest peoples, the very concept of "solution country" risks being reduced to ashes. The time for fine words is over, but for concerted action. For how can we protect the climate future without those who are its guardians?

Radio okapi and congo quotidien

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