



# USIPEACE BRIEFING

---

## **WHAT NEXT FOR THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO? Recommendations from a Trans-Atlantic Diaspora Dialogue**

### **AUTHORS**

Dorina Bekoe and Michelle Swearingen

December 2009

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE  
1200 17th Street NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036-3011  
[www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org)

USIPeace Briefing: *What Next for the Democratic Republic of Congo?*  
*Recommendations from a Trans-Atlantic Diaspora Dialogue*

**SUMMARY**

- Diaspora communities are a double-edged sword. They have promoted peace as often as they have spurred conflict. There are many opportunities to harness the Congolese diaspora to support peace and reconstruction in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).
- War and civil unrest have swelled the ranks of the DRC diaspora. These individuals can play a role in strategizing for sustainable solutions – particularly in the mining sector and the fight against corruption.
- Trans-Atlantic participants in the USIP diaspora dialogue called for tighter regulation, effective transparency, integration of the informal economy, greater investment flows and support for Congolese solutions to Congolese problems.
- Proposed solutions will be neither effective nor sustainable unless the war is ended and governance improves. This would involve effective regional support for peacekeeping, international efforts to deter spoilers and domestic initiatives to make governance more effective.
- The DRC diaspora are committed to be a source of advocacy, technical assistance, investment and accountability.

**ABOUT THIS PAPER**

The U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) hosted a daylong Trans-Atlantic DRC Diaspora Dialogue on Friday, October 16, 2009. Dialogue participants divided into three sub-groups to address: de-linking mining from the war economy; strengthening the private sector; and zero tolerance for corruption. In order to capture a wider group of participants, these breakout sessions included feedback from off-site individuals via real-time webcasting, in both French and English. The rich online discussion, which included contributions from participants on three continents, supplemented the live conversation. Recommendations from each breakout session were deliberated during an afternoon plenary session and streamed live on the USIP Web site to include off-site dialogue participants.

USIPeace Briefing: *What Next for the Democratic Republic of Congo?*  
*Recommendations from a Trans-Atlantic Diaspora Dialogue*

Participants in the dialogue made up a balanced representative body, mirroring the Congo's ethnic, regional, linguistic, political, and ideological diversity. They included representatives of nonprofit organizations, entrepreneurs, professionals in the field of social and economic development, and scholars. This diverse group was able to set aside political and ideological differences regarding the current political crisis and draw upon their professional, academic, and personal experience to offer recommendations.

**DIASPORA COMMUNITIES AS A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD**

Diasporas are increasingly influential in their host and home countries. Their influence is as broad and varied as their numbers. They could be a force for stability or unrest. There is some evidence of diaspora communities funding insurgency groups in the home countries; championing advocacy efforts for peacebuilding in conflict-torn countries; being a source of political leverage, through their involvement in homeland politics; and acting as providers of public and private funding through their remittances.

Even as some in the diaspora support conflict, others contribute positively to peace processes. The support of the Irish-American community and its lobbying of the U.S. government for the peace processes in Northern Ireland helped sustain the peace process.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, in the case of the Tamil diaspora, after September 11, when contributions become more scrutinized, the diaspora pressured the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to partake in mediation discussions and reduced contributions.<sup>2</sup> In Africa, the Acholi diaspora of Northern Uganda has, in the past, supported forums to bring together opposing sides of the conflict, in a bid to bring peace to the region.<sup>3</sup> Thus through a combination of advocacy, pressure, and financial support, diaspora groups can attempt to positively impact peacebuilding efforts.

Over the years, some diaspora groups have played destructive roles in conflict, often providing support for warring factions. In some cases, there is less support for the peace process among diasporas that are generated by conflict, as their grievances and reasons for leaving are

---

<sup>1</sup> Feargal Cochrane, "Civil Society Beyond the State: The Impact of Diaspora Communities on Peace Building" *The Global Media Journal: Mediterranean Edition* vol. 2, no. 2 (Fall 2007), p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> C. Christine Fair, "Diaspora Involvement in Insurgencies: Insight from the Khalistan and Tamil Eelam Movements" *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, vol. 11 (2005), p. 145.

<sup>3</sup> Joanna Spear, "The Potential of Diaspora Groups to Contribute to Peace Building: A Scoping Paper," The UK Economic and Social Research Council funded project Res. 223.250071, "Transformation of War Economies", n.d. (<http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/twe/publications>), p. 7.

USIPeace Briefing: *What Next for the Democratic Republic of Congo?*  
*Recommendations from a Trans-Atlantic Diaspora Dialogue*

ossified.<sup>4</sup> For example, the Tamil Tigers were notable for their organized and coordinated work with the diaspora who contribute to the LTTE (both coercively and voluntarily) through their network of operations in 40 countries.<sup>5</sup> The Irish-American diaspora also contributed actively to the funding of militant groups during the course of the conflict.<sup>6</sup>

Diaspora groups also affect politics in their home countries. In addition to the use of new technologies and forms of communications, such as text messaging and blogs,<sup>7</sup> some African countries have institutionalized the link between the home country and its diaspora. For example, in South Africa, they are able to vote in national elections in specific voting locations abroad; in Mali, they have their own representative in parliament; and in Benin, there is a designated ministry for the diaspora.<sup>8</sup> In the DRC, Hon Colette Tshomba is the deputy minister for diaspora affairs. Not surprisingly, many national political campaigns in the home country are supported by activities and fundraisers in the diasporas' host country – tying the strength and fate of national politicians to events in the diaspora community.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, the diaspora contribute financially to individuals and communities in their home countries. In 2007, the year of the most recent data, remittances to Africa amounted to \$19 billion – representing 7 percent of all remittances worldwide and 2.5 percent of Africa's gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>10</sup> Diaspora groups also send money home to fund philanthropic ventures. For example, many in the Sierra Leonean community funded and founded organizations to deal with children affected by the war or to promote the reconstruction of the country.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Yossi Shain and Aharon Barth, "Diaspora and International Relations Theory," *International Organization*, vol. 57 (Summer 2003), p. 450; Yossi Shain, "The Role of Diasporas in Conflict Perpetuation or Resolution," *SAIS Review* vol. 22, n. 2 (Summer-Fall 2002); Feargal Cochrane, "Civil Society Beyond the State: The Impact of Diaspora Communities on Peace Building," *The Global Media Journal: Mediterranean Edition* vol. 2, no. 2 (Fall 2007), p. 21; Terry Lyons and Peter Mandaville, "Global Migration and Transnational Politics: A Conceptual Framework," Working Paper no.1, Project on Global Migration and Transnational Politics, Center for Global Studies, George Mason University (March 2008), p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> C. Christine Fair, "Diaspora Involvement in Insurgencies: Insight from the Khalistan and Tamil Eelam Movements" *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, vol. 11 (2005), p.140.

<sup>6</sup> Cochrane, p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> Lyons and Mandaville, p. 6

<sup>8</sup> Dovelyn Rannveig Agunias, "Committed to the Diaspora: More Developing Countries Setting Up Diaspora Institutions," *Migration Policy Institute*, November 2009 (<http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=748>).

<sup>9</sup> Lyons and Mandaville, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> IRIN, "Africa: Remittances Set to Fall in 2009," November 11, 2008 (<http://allafrica.com/stories/200811111001.html>).

<sup>11</sup> Spear, p. 7.

## USIPeace Briefing: *What Next for the Democratic Republic of Congo?* *Recommendations from a Trans-Atlantic Diaspora Dialogue*

Thus, diaspora communities have varied roles and exhibit some heterogeneity. Their impact on national politics is felt in many places and home governments are beginning to take their points of view seriously. Diaspora communities offer fora to bring together the various political leaders; advocate in the host country, on behalf of the home country; and provide funding for peacebuilding initiatives. In recognition of the power of the diaspora, USIP has hosted townhall-type meetings for the diaspora including one with Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in 2006 and most recently, the Trans-Atlantic DRC Diaspora Dialogue.<sup>12</sup>

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE CONGOLESE DIASPORA

In the United States, Africans are among the smallest of all diaspora communities. Of the 33.5 million foreign born people, the African diaspora numbers 1.4 million. Of that group, the largest population comes from West Africa (35 percent) and the smallest from Central Africa numbering just less than 55,000 – approximately 4 percent of the African diaspora in the U.S.<sup>13</sup>

While the exact number of Congolese in the U.S. is not known, available data suggests a figure of 571,600 in 2005. The most common destinations for DRC emigrants are Republic of

#### Phases of Congolese Emigration

Following independence from Belgium in 1960 until the 1980s, Congolese migrated abroad to pursue academic and business opportunities, for leisure, or for diplomatic reasons. However, the economic and political crisis of the 1990s brought about change in the dynamics and patterns of migration to the West as conditions in the Congo began to deteriorate. In Belgium for example, the temporary colony of Congolese students and diplomats increased with the arrival of permanently residing illegal migrants, asylum seekers and labor migrants.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the conflict that has ensued since the late 1990s has added another group of Congolese diaspora communities in the Great Lakes region and around the world. This group is made up of individuals scarred by the violence perpetuated against civilians in the eastern provinces of the Congo. In 2001, the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) noted that approximately 1 million Congolese fled their homes during the year, and there were significant numbers of refugees from DRC in at least ten neighboring countries with about 8,000 citizens of DRC origin having had applied for asylum in Europe during the

Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, Belgium, France, Germany, Central African Republic, Canada, and the United Kingdom.<sup>14</sup> The Congolese communities in these countries are active participants in host societies and also remain involved with the political and socioeconomic

<sup>12</sup> USIP, "Liberia's President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf," *Town Hall Meeting*, March 21, 2006.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Selected Population Profile of the United States (Africa), American Community Survey, American FactFinder: 2006-2008 American Community Survey Three-Year Estimates ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)).

<sup>14</sup> World Bank, "Migration and Remittances Factbook 2008 (March 2008)," Available online: <http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTDECPROSPECTS/0,,contentMDK:21352016~pagePK:64165401~piPK:64165026~theSitePK:476883~isCURL:Y,00.html>.

USIPeace Briefing: *What Next for the Democratic Republic of Congo?*  
*Recommendations from a Trans-Atlantic Diaspora Dialogue*

development of the Congo because of enduring family, economic, political and sociocultural networks.<sup>15</sup>

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TRANS-ATLANTIC DRC DIASPORA DIALOGUE**

The Trans-Atlantic DRC Diaspora Dialogue hosted by USIP focused on: de-linking mining from the war economy; strengthening the private sector; and zero tolerance for corruption. The summaries and recommendations follow.

### ***De-linking Mining from the War Economy***

The vast resources of the DRC have unfortunately served as a curse rather than a blessing for the vast majority of citizens in the DRC where illicit mining has fuelled the decades-long conflict. Consistent with research on the role of natural resources in conflict, resources from the mining sector have provided a source of violent competition as well as income for combatants in eastern DRC.<sup>16</sup> This has changed incentive structures to challenge peace efforts and has weakened the already frail social, political and economic infrastructure of the country.<sup>17</sup>

The actors and stakeholders in the mining industry and in eastern DRC include: the predominantly Hutu and Rwandan militia with varying levels of support from the DRC government, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR); the largely Congolese Tutsi group which has often benefitted from the support of the Rwandan government, the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP); the official Congolese national army which is splintered in its allegiance between the FLDR and the CNDP, the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC), United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) which interacts with all regional players, and a vast array of regional and international traders. In addition to these armed groups, there are also several neighboring countries that hold a stake in Congolese mines – most notably Rwanda and

---

<sup>15</sup> Evan Swyngedouwa and Erik Swyngedouwa “The Congolese diaspora in Brussels and hybrid identity formation: multi-scalarity and diasporic citizenship”, *Urban Research & Practice* vol. 2, no. 1 (March 2009), p. 68–90.

<sup>16</sup> Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, “*Greed and Grievance in Civil War*, Volume 1.” World Bank (May 31, 2000).

<sup>17</sup> Raymond Gilpin, Catherine Morris and Go Funai, “Beyond Emergency Responses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” U.S. Institute of Peace (August 2009).

USIPeace Briefing: *What Next for the Democratic Republic of Congo?*  
*Recommendations from a Trans-Atlantic Diaspora Dialogue*

Uganda.<sup>18</sup> According to a recent report from Global Witness, two of the largest players and supposed enemies, the FDLR and the FARDC, have actually coordinated efforts in the lucrative illicit mining business to maximize their gains. They have peacefully divided territories and spoils. According to estimates from the Enough Project, armed groups in eastern Congo made \$180 million from the mineral trade in 2008.<sup>19</sup> While every armed group seems to be benefiting from this trade, for some groups, including the FDLR and the FARDC's 85<sup>th</sup> brigade, this is the primary source of income.<sup>20</sup>

Participants believe the government in Kinshasa, weakened by corruption, does not have the capacity or political will to put a stop to this looting. The government's weakness is best demonstrated by its inability to control the frequently unpaid army, which acts with impunity in eastern DRC. According to dialogue participants, it is unlikely that the government would intervene in the mining industry even if it could, as government officials are said to be receiving kickbacks from foreign companies desperate to maintain access to lucrative mines. Over the last decade, demand for minerals such as cassiterite (a tin ore and necessary component of many electronics, including cell phones and video games) has only increased.<sup>21</sup>

Participants opined that there are two approaches to ending the trade in conflict minerals in eastern DRC. One supports, "mineral boycotts, targeted sanctions, or developing assurance systems designed to verify the origin of minerals."<sup>22</sup> The other, fearful of damaging the primary source of income of up to one million Congolese, emphasizes the importance of formalizing the mineral trade and reforming the security sector and governance structures.<sup>23</sup> While the dialogue participants did not reach consensus on which approach was best, they agreed that now, on the heels of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's recent visit to the country, the

---

<sup>18</sup> DRC Diaspora Dialogue participants, "Trans-Atlantic DRC Diaspora Dialogue," Washington, DC. USIP (October 16, 2009); Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Report: Democratic Republic of Congo (September 2009).

<sup>19</sup> John Prendergast and Sasha Lezhnev, "From Mine to Mobile Phone: The Conflict Minerals Supply Chain." The Enough Project, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> Nicholas Garrett and Harrison Mitchell, "Trading Conflict for Development: Utilising the Trade in Minerals from Eastern DR Congo for Development," Resource Consulting Services (April 2009), p. 6.

<sup>21</sup> The DRC contains one-third of the world's reserves of cassiterite. David Barouski. *Southern Times*. "Blood minerals' in DRC's Kivu," October 12, 2009.

<http://www.southerntimesafrica.com/article.php?title=%E2%80%98Blood%20minerals%E2%80%99%20in%20DRC%E2%80%99s%20Kivu&id=552>

<sup>22</sup> Nicholas Garrett and Harrison Mitchell, "Trading Conflict for Development: Utilising the Trade in Minerals from Eastern DR Congo for Development," Resource Consulting Services (April 2009), p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> Harrison Mitchell and Nicholas Garrett, "Beyond Conflict: Reconfiguring approaches to the regional trade in minerals from Eastern DRC," Resource Consulting Services (September 1, 2009), p. 7.

## USIPeace Briefing: *What Next for the Democratic Republic of Congo?* *Recommendations from a Trans-Atlantic Diaspora Dialogue*

Congolese community must capitalize on this administration's goodwill to develop and implement a workable solution.

### *Recommendations for Policymakers*

- *Enforce laws and guidelines governing the conduct of Multinational Companies (MNCs) in the mining industry:* Specifically, focus on the following:
  - Identify the origin of all minerals traded.
  - Develop clear and defined contracts, not to exceed 20 years in length.
  - Train and equip Congolese employees, fostering sustainable development.
  - Enforce fines or penalties on the illicit mining sector. Proceeds could be paid into a trust fund to finance humanitarian programs in the DRC (administered by an independent agency not affiliated with the Congolese government).
- *Restore Congolese sovereignty by expelling external combatants:* The conflict in the DRC has been referred to as Africa's World War,<sup>24</sup> not only due to the enormous amount of casualties, but also because as many as nine African nations have been involved at one time or another - often motivated by the possibility of appropriating Congolese natural resources.<sup>25</sup> While most have departed, some remain involved, notably Rwanda and Uganda. In Rwanda's case, it collaborated with the Congolese army under the auspices of Kimia II, to remove elements of the FDLR.<sup>26</sup> In the case of Uganda, the Lord's Resistance Army has established bases in eastern DRC, prompting the Ugandan army to fight it inside DRC.<sup>27</sup> Removing these external players (and likely spoilers) will help to de-link the mining industry from the war economy and reduce the insecurity that presently inhibits the development of the private sector.

---

<sup>24</sup> Gerard Prunier, "Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe," Oxford University Press (December 2008).

<sup>25</sup> The nine countries involved included: Zimbabwe, Angola, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Eritrea, Namibia, Chad, and Sudan (see: Mwesiga Baregu, "Congo in the Great Lakes Conflict," in Gilbert Khadiagala, ed. *Security Dynamics in Africa's Great Lakes Region*, (Lynne Rienner Publishers: Boulder, CO, 2006), p. 61-63. Global Security, "Congo Civil War." <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/congo.htm>

<sup>26</sup> IRIN News "DRC: Monuc Sticks to its guns – analysis," June 22, 2009 (<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=84943>).

<sup>27</sup> Xan Rice, "Lord's Resistance Army terrorises Congo after Ugandan crackdown," The Guardian, September 14, 2009 (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/sep/14/lords-resistance-army-terrorises-congo>).



USIPeace Briefing: *What Next for the Democratic Republic of Congo?*  
*Recommendations from a Trans-Atlantic Diaspora Dialogue*

- *Integrate the illicit mining industry into the formal economy:* As mining activity has increased, government revenue from mining has made up less and less of government tax revenues and GDP.<sup>28</sup> Formalizing the sizable illicit mining industry will increase opportunities for regulation and the enforcement of standards protecting miners and civilians, while also decreasing opportunities for armed groups to profit from the illegal exploitation of the DRC's natural resources.
- *Leverage international pressure to ensure countries and companies benefiting from the exploitation of minerals in eastern Congo comply with all laws and human rights standards:* In a recent report from the Enough Project documenting the process whereby conflict minerals become anonymous components of luxury items, they encourage consumers to demand that companies trace the origin of all minerals, submit to audits to verify the legality of their mineral supply chain, and engage in a process similar to that of the Kimberly Process to certify their products as conflict-free.<sup>29</sup>
- *Diversify the economy:* Although the exploitation of minerals in the DRC is a lucrative business, in order to foster sustainable development, the scope of investment must be broadened.
- *Amend Congolese laws and policies that complicate land and property rights:* Dating back to the Bakajika Law of 1966, the DRC has had a series of laws stripping away land and property rights from Congolese citizens and bestowing exclusive ownership to the government. Amending these laws to afford citizens with clear rights to own and register land and property, would reduce land disputes, enable citizens to use land as collateral for loans, and incentivize capital investment in land, increasing productivity.<sup>30</sup>
- *(Re) Establish a regional economic body to regulate mining and the trade in minerals:* A lack of efficient and coordinated policies and standards creates hardships and costs for both legitimate businesses and governments. It also further encourages damaging behavior, such as rent-seeking and smuggling.<sup>31</sup> Success will require political support

---

<sup>28</sup> While tax receipts from mining constituted 25 percent of both tax revenue and GDP in the 1980s, it only accounted for 2.4 percent of fiscal receipts and a meager .24 percent of GDP in 2005. Rachel Goodermote, Janak Upadhyay and Dev Kar Ramil Mammadov "Capital Flight from the Democratic Republic of the Congo," Center for International Policy, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> John Prendergast and Sasha Lezhnev, "From Mine to Mobile Phone: The Conflict Minerals Supply Chain." The Enough Project, p. 7-8.

<sup>30</sup> Johan Pottier, "Emergency in Ituri, DRC: Political complexity, land and other challenges in restoring food security." FAO International Workshop on "Food Security in Complex Emergencies: building policy frameworks to address longer-term programming challenges." Tivoli, (23-25 September 2003).

<sup>31</sup> Nicholas Garrett and Harrison Mitchell. "Trading Conflict for Development: Utilising the Trade in Minerals from Eastern DR Congo for Development," Resource Consulting Services (April 2009).

USIPeace Briefing: *What Next for the Democratic Republic of Congo?  
Recommendations from a Trans-Atlantic Diaspora Dialogue*

as well as complementary political solutions. The political aspect was neglected in the creation of a similar organization, the now defunct, Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL).<sup>32</sup>

***Strengthening the Private Sector***

Participants concluded that the business climate in the DRC poses many challenges. They identified the following three challenges as being particularly important: cumbersome taxes and processes, lack of infrastructure and the absence of a middle class.

The DRC was rated 182 out of 183 countries in the World Bank's 2010 Doing Business Report.<sup>33</sup> Investment flows to the DRC are reportedly constrained by cumbersome regulations, excessive taxation and corruption. On average, a business owner will be required to make 32 different tax payments per year, costing them up to 322 percent of their profit.<sup>34</sup> This costly and convoluted process has led to a fragmentation of the private sector into many segments, including thriving illicit and informal markets.

Infrastructure is also problematic. Out of a meager 153,497 km of roads for the entire 2,344,858 sq km country, only 2,794 km of them are paved.<sup>35</sup> Perhaps more importantly, businesses in the DRC face an extreme lack of reliability in their supply of electricity, facing an average of 150 power outages each year - one of the worst records in Africa.<sup>36</sup> In addition to the physical infrastructure, there is a gap in financial infrastructure. There is virtually no access to formal credit. The Credit Information Index measures the scope, access and quality of credit information available through public registries or private bureaus on a scale from 0-6. Once

---

<sup>32</sup> The CEPGL was created in 1976 to bring economic integration between Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC. The agreements established under this organization were suspended following the genocide in Rwanda, the subsequent instability in the DRC and eventual overthrow of Mobutu. There have recently been talks about reviving the CEPGL. Fred Ndoli, "CEPGL Parliamentary Chiefs Meet in Burundi." AllAfrica.com (September 29, 2009). <http://allafrica.com/stories/200909300091.html>

<sup>33</sup> The World Bank Group, "Rankings – Doing Business – The World Bank Group," 2009. <http://www.doingbusiness.org/EconomyRankings/> (accessed November 1, 2009).

<sup>34</sup> The World Bank Group, "Doing Business in Congo, Dem. Rep. – Doing Business – The World Bank Group," 2009. <http://www.doingbusiness.org/ExploreEconomies/?economyid=48> (accessed November 1, 2009).

<sup>35</sup> CIA World Fact Book, "Congo, Democratic Republic of the," <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cg.html> (accessed November 1, 2009).

<sup>36</sup> Vijaya Ramachandran, Alan Gelb, and Manju Kedia Shah, "Africa's Private Sector: What's Wrong with the Business Environment and What to Do About It," Center for Global Development. (2009), p. 25.

USIPeace Briefing: *What Next for the Democratic Republic of Congo?*  
*Recommendations from a Trans-Atlantic Diaspora Dialogue*

again, the DRC was rated in the very bottom with a score of zero.<sup>37</sup> In the past, the DRC has seen success with the Societe Financiere de Developpment (SOFIDE), a development bank that finances medium and long-term projects for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). SOFIDE now has a negative net worth and has been replaced by other lenders – namely the Chinese.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, the absence of a middle class in Congo has diminished the vibrancy of the private sector. Strong business communities, which often make up the middle class, put pressure on the government to provide business services as well as business-friendly, reliable policies. Without this community, advocacy for these services and policies is weak and as a result there is no reason for the government to provide them. Additionally, as government is unresponsive and ineffective, advocacy will decline.<sup>39</sup>

*Recommendations for Policymakers*

- *Reform government business regulations:* The process for establishing and maintaining a business must be simplified and made publicly available. This should include topics such as taxes and property rights.
- *Integrate small informal businesses into the formal economy:* DRC policy must account for the large informal sector and make an effort not only to formalize these small scale businesses, but advocate for them through the creation of a government ministry of small entrepreneurial business.
- *Increase access to formal credit:* There needs to be a better link between entrepreneurs and the banking system. Wider access to formal credit will bring down the cost of credit and also make it more broadly available. Financial intermediation for medium- to large-scale enterprises could also be improved through the creation of a viable stock market.
- *Create an attractive environment for large-scale investment:* In order to overcome some of the infrastructure needs, the DRC must become a more attractive place for investment from both the private sector and donor institutions. Investments should complement

---

<sup>37</sup> The World Bank Group, “Doing Business in Congo, Dem. Rep. – Doing Business – The World Bank Group,” 2009. <http://www.doingbusiness.org/ExploreEconomies/?economyid=48> (accessed November 1, 2009).

<sup>38</sup> Dev Kar, Ramil Mammadov, Rachel Goodermote, and Janak Upadhyay, “Capital Flight from the Democratic Republic of Congo” Center for International Policy, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> Vijaya Ramachandran, Alan Gelb, and Manju Kedia Shah, “Africa’s Private Sector: What’s Wrong with the Business Environment and What to Do About It” Center for Global Development (2009), p. 4-5.

USIPeace Briefing: *What Next for the Democratic Republic of Congo?*  
*Recommendations from a Trans-Atlantic Diaspora Dialogue*

(rather than replace) the work already underway and should consider regional as well as national projects (i.e. trans-African highway).

***Enforcement of Anti-Corruption Measures***

In 2008, Transparency International rated the DRC 171 out of 180 countries for perceived levels of corruption.<sup>40</sup> As participants noted, in a country largely lacking the basic infrastructure to collect taxes efficiently, “taxes” in the form of bribes are collected at every turn. This endemic petty corruption stems from low wages, the lack of a minimum wage, the need for survival and a culture of impunity.<sup>41</sup> Grand corruption, also common in the DRC, is fostered and even encouraged by the institutionalized system of patronage politics, along with a lack of transparency or job security for high government positions and impunity from prosecution. This pervasive corruption exacts a heavy toll on the DRC by undermining already weak governance worsening the security situation and stalling economic growth.

According to participants, the prevalence of corruption with impunity has distorted the incentives for public service in Congo. Political institutions in Congo today are seen as a source of wealth accumulation, rather than a public service, leading politicians to support policies based on their own self-interest. Even good policies often have bad outcomes as funds are diverted during the implementation process. Due to corrupt practices, the Congolese army is frequently unpaid. Without payment, soldiers often look to the civilian population in their care as a source of income, stealing and pillaging at will.

Finally, as outlined in the section on the private sector, pervasive grand and petty corruption increases the cost of doing business in the DRC, and deters needed investment. With increased costs and decreased investment, economic growth is weakened.

***Recommendations for Policymakers***

- *Recognize that change must come from within Congo:* The international community and civil society must support Congolese solutions to Congolese problems, including those offered by the diaspora community.

---

<sup>40</sup> Transparency International, “2008 – Corruptions Perception Indices – Policy and Research,” [http://www.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/cpi/2008](http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2008) (accessed November 1, 2009).

<sup>41</sup> DRC Diaspora Dialogue participants, “Trans-Atlantic DRC Diaspora Dialogue,” Washington, D.C., USIP (October 16, 2009).

USIPeace Briefing: *What Next for the Democratic Republic of Congo?*  
*Recommendations from a Trans-Atlantic Diaspora Dialogue*

- *Combat corruption at all levels of government:* There are many ways to fight corruption effectively. It is important that the effort is government-wide and not confined to specific agencies or parts of government. A widespread culture of accountability must be established.
- *Increase institutional impartiality and accountability:* Start by implementing recommendations from the many existing corruption reports. The ultimate achievement of this goal will be the implementation of free and fair elections, a necessary next step for the DRC. Such reforms and actions might require assistance from the international community.

**DIASPORA COMMITMENTS**

- *Raise awareness:* Continue the dialogue with advocacy groups on the issue of conflict mining. Increased international awareness will help to resolve the conflict.
- *Fight corruption everywhere:* The corruption that affects the DRC is not confined by its borders. The diaspora must demand accountability from host countries with their dealings in the DRC. Call for strict enforcement of all relevant anti-corruption measures, including provisions established under the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and the principles outlined in the U.N. Convention against Corruption.
- *Offer balanced feedback to the government in Kinshasa:* Often the diaspora is seen as the opposition to the government in power. The community needs to foster an image of being a civil society. In order to gain credibility, the diaspora needs to acknowledge both the good and the bad in the government.
- *Provide technical assistance for Congolese programs:* Members of the diaspora can serve as a valuable source of technical assistance as donor agencies work in Congo.
- *Invest in Congo:* This may be difficult as there are many allegations that the current government is hostile to the diaspora community and does not make it easy for them to be involved in Congolese affairs. However, the Congolese community has invested in the diaspora. Now the diaspora must do all it can to provide investment capital to Congolese initiatives and reconstruction efforts. The diaspora must be positive and proactive.
- *Increase efficiency of remittances through investment:* All Congolese in the diaspora send remittances home. Diaspora communities need to be more proactive in seeking

USIPeace Briefing: *What Next for the Democratic Republic of Congo?*  
*Recommendations from a Trans-Atlantic Diaspora Dialogue*

assistance to reduce costs and institutionalize financial transfers so that they become a more meaningful tool for investment in the DRC.

- *Inform donor organizations and others of opportunities in DRC:* Participate in/organize a symposium/practical workshop for interested donor organizations, and potential investors, to discuss investment opportunities in Congo and where to find the resources for that investment.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

USIPeace Briefing: *What Next for the Democratic Republic of Congo?*  
*Recommendations from a Trans-Atlantic Diaspora Dialogue*

This *USIPeace Briefing* was written by Dorina Bekoe, a senior program officer with the Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention, and Michelle Swearingen, a program assistant with the Center for Sustainable Economies. Thank you to Margot Bokanga, a research assistant with the Center for Sustainable Economies, for research support. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of USIP, which does not advocate specific policies.

## **ABOUT THE CENTER FOR CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND PREVENTION**

The Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention designs and manages the Institute's efforts to forestall the outbreak of violent conflict. The Center also conducts timely, policy-relevant analysis of countries and regions where the threat to peace is particularly acute. In addition, the Center conducts research, identifies best practices, develops new tools for preventing violent conflict, and supports related training and education efforts.

## **ABOUT THE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIES CENTER OF INNOVATION**

The Sustainable Economies Center of Innovation at the U.S. Institute of Peace develops strategies to integrate economics into conflict management and peacebuilding, while providing guidance for practitioners. The Center's work builds on sound practice by bilateral agencies, multilateral institutions, non-governmental organizations and private sector firms working in conflict-affected areas. Its work is predicated on the premise that economic activities and actors can be transformative building blocks for sustainable peace.

## **ABOUT THE UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE**

The United States Institute of Peace is an independent nonpartisan institution established and funded by Congress. Its goals are to help prevent and resolve violent conflicts, promote post-conflict stability and development, and increase peacebuilding capacity and tools. The Institute does this by empowering others with knowledge, skills, and resources, as well as by directly engaging in conflict management efforts around the globe.