

Moderator

Michelle Sonkoue

Francophone Africa Program Facilitator, Rights and Resources Initiative
Cameroon

Michelle is an agro-socioeconomic engineer with a master's degree in Integrated Rural Development. Prior to joining RRI, she worked for the Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) on identifying opportunities for promoting community conservation initiatives and for the National Land Coalition-Cameroon at the Centre for Environment and Development on issues of land governance, sustainable agriculture, forest biodiversity conservation, and multi-stakeholder platform development. Her day-to-day work is guided by the values of justice for the most vulnerable and marginalized social groups.

Panelists

Patrick Kipalu

Africa Program Director, Rights and Resources Initiative
The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Patrick is the Director of the Africa Program at Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI). He coordinates and leads RRI's engagements in Africa. He has a strong background in natural resources management and human rights with experience supporting civil society organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa, including on human rights, natural resources exploitation (lands, forests and mines), and climate change. Prior to joining RRI, Patrick worked for 7 years as Country Director for Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Before that, he worked for the Africa Program at Bank Information Center (BIC) and for the Equity and Governance Program (EGP) at World Resources Institute (WRI). Patrick has a master's degree in Global Environmental Policy from the American University (AU) in Washington DC, and a bachelor's degree in Environmental Sciences and Natural Resources Management from the University of Kinshasa in the DRC.

Samuel Nguiffo

Director, Center for Environment and Development
Cameroon

Samuel Nguiffo is a Cameroonian environmental lawyer. He is manager of the Center for Environment and Development (CED) in Yaoundé. He was awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize in 1999, for his efforts in protecting the tropical rainforests of Central Africa.

Joseph Itongwa

Coordinator, Network of Indigenous and local populations for the sustainable management of forest ecosystems in Central Africa

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Joseph is an Indigenous Walikale from the North Kivu province in the DRC. He graduated in Rural Development and is currently the coordinator of a Member group of the ICCA Consortium: the Network of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities for the Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems (REPAREF), in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Since March 2012, he has also been a member of the technical committee of a similar network that covers the whole of Central Africa (REPAREAC). In addition to creating his own organization, Shirika La BAMBUTI, whose work he coordinates in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, and Maniema, Joseph has been director or coordinator of several local and provincial organizations defending human and Indigenous Peoples' rights. As such, he has represented indigenous peoples in international meetings of the UN, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the World Bank.