

THE MARCH TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT

Together, let's go further.

SOCIETAL VISION OF
DENIS SASSOU-N'GUESSO
FOR THE CONGO FROM 2016 TO 2021



2016-2021

Societal Vision for the Congo

The march towards development.

FOREWORD

My political declaration of faith has never wavered since I first assumed governmental responsibilities: I shall work tirelessly towards empowering my country to remain on the path of development as far as that path may take us. I have dedicated the greater part of my life to this goal. I cannot envision the Congo as anything other than a developed country.

I have learned to recognize each of the obstacles to development that arise along the way. I have also gained a strong sense of the remaining obstacles to be lifted between development and us. I am working committedly towards this end and am achieving results that everyone can appreciate.

For more than a year now, the global economy has been in a downturn. The dramatic drop in the price of oil is yet another troubling sign of weakening in the global economy. Some analysts are even predicting the arrival of an international economic and financial crisis.

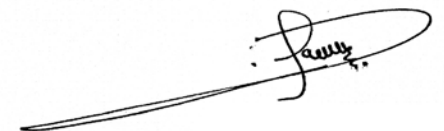
As an oil-producing country, the Congo has been severely hit by the collapse in the price of oil. And yet it is fighting back. It is fighting back hard, probably because it is governed with assurance.

During these difficult times, there is no place for amateurs, experimentation or desire for revenge. The only thing that warrants the people's attention is diligent work that produces results for them.

I possess boundless time and energy to give to my country and my people.

It is as a man of conviction and experience that I propose to you to continue doing everything we can to further Congo on its path to development.

Together, let's go further.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Denis', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the left.

Denis Sassou-N'Guesso

INTRODUCTION

As long as peace, unity, security and stability reign, the hard work of developing our country can continue with audacity.

Our goal: do everything we can to aid the Congo in its march towards development.

The action items proposed in this program are designed to answer the following question: What are the best solutions available for opening the doors to development for our country?

A number of answers to this question have been offered as part of the “Path to the Future” social project we initiated and fostered in 2009. These involve the modernization and industrialization of our country.

By modernization we mean:

- promoting values favorable to development;
- modernizing our national education system;
- modernizing public administration;
- modernizing the criminal justice system;
- modernizing the policy and security forces;
- modernizing national political life;
- modernizing other basics of societal interaction;
- modernizing public economic governance;
- modernizing basic infrastructure;
- modernizing our tools of national diplomacy

By industrialization we mean:

- consolidating, diversifying and increasing existing industrial capacities;
- industrializing through agriculture;
- industrializing nationally through the local exploitation of natural resources;

- industrializing nationally through the local production of manufactured goods;
- industrializing nationally through a better developed local tourism industry;
- industrializing through a more robust services sector;
- creating specialized economic zones;
- fostering the conditions for the emergence of heavy industry.

Seven years have not been enough for each of these solutions to be fully implemented. Which is why we must remain committed to modernizing and industrializing the country.

In order to accelerate our progress towards development, the following six action items need to become a priority for the 2016-2021 timeframe:

- 1. Making men and women the heart of development.
- 2. Galvanizing the strategic role of the State in the economic and social spheres.
- 3. Fortifying and stabilizing inclusive economic growth through diversification and economic reforms.
- 4. Preparing young people for the jobs of the future with relevant skills training.
- 5. Aligning the Congo with the development of the digital economy.
- 6. Continuing needed institutional reforms.

These items form the heart and soul of our societal project. What follows are proposed responses to some of the most pressing issues we face today.



Sports Complex, Kintélé



A. Neto Airport, Pointe Noire



Justice Ministry, Brazzaville



1/ MAKING WOMEN AND MEN THE HEART OF DEVELOPMENT



In today's context, economic development is not something that simply happens.

Development is undertaken by and for men and women. Without people, there is neither development, nor a need for it.

In order to best serve the goals of development and garner the most benefit from it, the men and women of a country need to possess certain predispositions. Experience teaches us that when they are prepared – educated, ready to go, empowered, disciplined and driven by a sense of hard work and success – they will be better able to produce and benefit from development.

Making the men and women of the Congo the heart and soul of development means convincing them to internalize the values that promote it. Such values include: **work, rigor, discipline, responsibility, conscientiousness, integrity, entrepreneurship, the will to succeed, a taste for undying effort and a love of country.**

All these values and others that promote development must be shared by everyone at all levels of society.

Executives and government administrators must show proof of their own good conduct and set the right examples. They must adopt behaviors that demonstrate their respect for the country's laws and regulations, their commitment to work and national service, their sense of responsibility, their integrity, their instinct to fight corruption, misappropriation and fraud, their patriotism and their belief in the country's future.

Civics classes in the schools of the Republic must teach these development-promoting values.

It is in this way that the State will be enabled to:

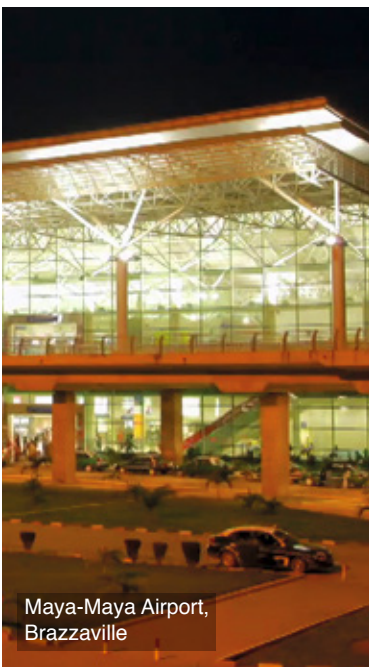
- **sensitize the population to the values of development** by all relevant means;
- **empower the greatest number of people** to adopt these values;
- **convert those who resist** and punish, by all legal means, those who break the rules;
- **motivating everyone** to get invested in the work of development.



Hospital, Loandjili



General Infrastructure Development Fund, Brazzaville



Maya-Maya Airport, Brazzaville



Autonomous Port, Pointe Noire

2/ GALVANIZING THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF THE STATE IN THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SPHERES



Over the next five years, the State will continue to steer economic and social policy.

In the economic realm, it will need to:

- **pursue the construction of the bases of modern infrastructure;**
- **investing in productive business sectors** that are insufficiently supported by the private sphere in order to maximize productivity and job creation;
- **investing equally**, alone or in partnerships with private operators, **in strategic sectors** such as natural resources, high tech, computer and communications industries and in the creation of development-oriented financial investment institutions;
- **fostering private initiatives** in productivity, for example by founding and sustaining **small business startup incubators** in primary and tertiary sectors (agriculture, livestock, fishing, aquaculture, plumbing, electricians, auto mechanics and more), as well as for small businesses (soapmaking, plant oils, brickmaking, etc.);
- **granting tax benefits** or short-term subsidies to companies looking to **provide job opportunities to young and inexperienced new entrants to the job market** and contribute to the structuring of national productivity levels;
- **aiding or directly/indirectly financing start-ups or growing small and mid-sized businesses** operating in high unemployment areas or liable to reduce reliance on imports;
- **reducing everyone's tax burden** while expanding the tax base by incorporating individuals and businesses currently on the sidelines.

In the social sphere, the State will need to:

- **fully implement the new social services regime**, in particular related to the new laws for helping distressed families and children and national health insurance;
- **help foster the creation of new living wage jobs**, in order to fight unemployment, especially by helping highly productive industries;
- **grow and enhance the purchasing power of households** by fighting the causes of inflation and encouraging wage negotiations that help employees;
- **strengthen and modernize city services** including waste management and sanitation;
- **protect the environment**, including especially fragile ecosystems and biodiversity.





**3/ FORTIFYING
AND STABILIZING
INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC
GROWTH THROUGH
DIVERSIFICATION AND
ECONOMIC REFORM**



The Congo has experienced economic growth for the past fifteen years. That is a fact. However that growth has been rocky at times (7.6% in 2000, 3.8% in 2001, 4.6% in 2002, 7.6% in 2005, 9% in 2010, and 3.8% in 2012), and not always strong over a sustained enough period to establish the country on a path towards development. Every time growth has exceeded 5% per year, it has done so primarily due to increases in oil production.

Consolidating growth therefore means ensuring the production of goods and services exclusive of petroleum is responsible for propelling more than 5% of the country's growth each year. Once this is achieved, increased production in the oil and gas sector would serve to fuel the country's growth rate into the double digits.

Stabilizing growth means maintaining a consistent average rate of around 10% or more per year for the next decade.

Achieving comprehensive (inclusive) economic growth means ensuring that it leads to reduced unemployment by generating hundreds of thousands of jobs that raise tens of thousands of Congolese families out of precarity.

Today, we are all aware of both the main obstacles to, and the best springboards of, economic growth.

Furthermore, in order to consolidate and stabilize growth, we need to:

- **ensure the availability of qualified human capital.** Whence the never-ending quest to train and educate qualified human resources that can drive the competitive production of goods and services of all kinds;
- **eliminate or reduce structural barriers** to the effective creation of productive capacities, in particular insufficient basic infrastructure and prevailing public attitudes against work, productivity and the entrepreneurial spirit;
- **improve the business climate** not only by passing business friendly laws, but ensuring they are rigorously applied;
- **supporting the construction of a strong domestic private sector** and the installation of more foreign businesses in our country;
- **forge a potent domestic financial sector** based on public and private savings and supported by foreign capital attracted to the Congo;
- **foster the country's resiliency** to domestic and international shocks by diversifying the domestic economy;
- **strengthen sub-regional integration** to exploit the inherent synergies of economies of scale.

This is how we can remove the primary and longstanding obstacles to national economic growth. Even as we are eliminating these bottlenecks we can:

- **better diversity the economy** by transitioning it from oil and gas based industries to agriculture, industry and their related private sector services;
- **heighten the country's march to industrialization** ever more intensely. The basic strategy remains the one set down in "Path to the Future," which seeks to promote industrialization by moving the country away from natural resource extraction and towards manufacturing in specialized economic zones. This strategy seeks to move towards relying on private and government-sponsored standalone and partnership-based small and mid-sized businesses to meet local demands in the place of imports. The large-scale manufacturers located in the special economic zones will produce primarily for export in areas such as:
- **develop agriculture, livestock, fishing, mining, forestry and services.**



With respect to agriculture, the State will support it in all its forms (modernized peasant farming, farm products diverted for domestic purposes and large scale agribusiness for exports), in order to ensure it is integrated into the value chain at all levels of the domestic and internationally-facing economy.

The plan for mining and forestry is for the government to update existing laws so that they are more like those governing the petroleum industry, in order to give rise to production-sharing arrangements and service contracts.

For the services industry, the State needs to be especially involved in developing the individual and business services sectors delivered by domestic-based small and mid-sized firms.

Other needed economic reforms will supplement this in-depth diversification. Reforming economic structures means further freeing up creative energies. This will entail:

- **further reducing economic and business regulations**, such as those governing the creation of new businesses. For the first time this year, it will be possible to use the “Guichet Unique” (“single government portal”) to create new businesses in the Congo, in less than three days. Paperwork and red tape have been reduced to the absolute minimum;
- **streamline and unclog** government-business relationships in order to make business dealings easier.

Reforming economic structures also means:

- **encouraging freelance and contract workers** in the service sectors and other forms of self-employment likely to stimulate job creation for others. Fostering the finance industry by;
- **stimulating competition** within our borders;
- **reducing obstacles** that weigh down the pace of economic activity and cut back or eliminate new entrants into industries and product lines;
- **support the informal economy** in its process of transition to formal business activity;
- **promote gains in productivity** across all firms by fostering the spread of new technologies and best practices.



4/ PREPARING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR WORK WITH JOB TRAINING



The current school and university system is to be lauded for its capacity to accept nearly every child and young adult with a high school diploma. However we cannot content ourselves with the sizable quantity of students educated to date. A quick glance at the level of employability of our youth graduating from the national education system leaves one less than satisfied. Sixty percent of unemployed diploma-holders have graduated from the various divisions of the Université Marien Ngouabi, (school of liberal arts, law, economics, etc.). Our national system needs to be updated to create better synergies between education and employment.

The State will continue to favor a progression of the system towards **training in trades and skills** related to jobs needed in the market and to further economic growth. Those forms of education that create job-ready graduates need to be favored above all.

At the university, high school and even (vocational-technical) middle-school levels, learning needs to be focused on **training in skills relevant to current and existing jobs in our society**.

Public and private centers dedicated to the trades and professional training of academically-struggling youth as well as **adult continuing education programs** all deserve the same governmental support granted to traditional educational paths.

Every young Congolese has a right to job-relevant skills training. This is the mission we need to assign to the new national education system.

Consequently, the government will set a goal of dedicating 25% of its annual budget to national education. This in order to:

- **securing training**, in other countries if need be, **for thousands of teachers equipped in training** for the trades and specialized skills across various domains;
- **providing initial and professional level training** to hundreds of thousand of Congolese youth;
- **founding and supporting (public and private) trade related centers and universities;**
- **building specialized infrastructures** to house this new training model;
- **revamping and equipping**, existing university and academic organizations to meet new training requirements;
- **creating space** in dormitories for students studying at primary, middle, secondary and post-secondary institutions;
- **creating the conditions for attracting and retaining the best teachers** to our national education system.



Media Center



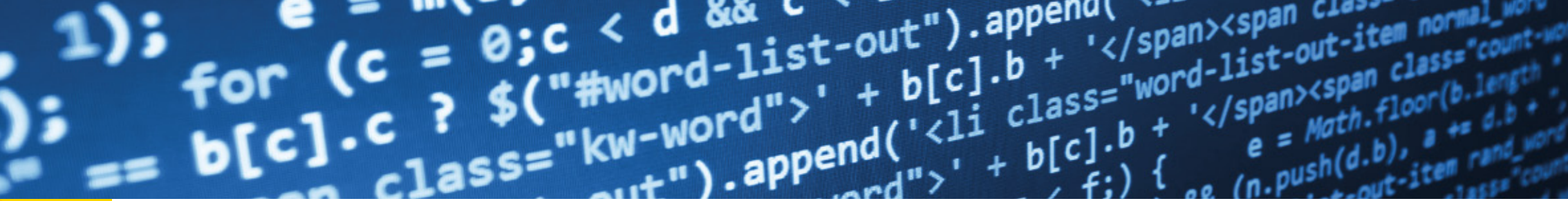
University Amphitheater, Brazzaville



University, Kintélé



5/ ALIGNING THE CONGO WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DIGITAL ECONOMY



In the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as into the early 21st century, industrialization was a key distinguishing factor between developed or developing countries, and others. Today is witnessing the digital revolution. The digital revolution is clearly the next step beyond the industrial age in terms of a new paradigm for production. Digital therefore represents the new frontier of economic development.

It is up to the youth of today to dive into the digital economy head on, rich as it is with promise for the future. In order to fully accomplish this, we must prepare now. Doing so requires that we:

- open early preparation primary schools (even if only one per district) where reading, writing and arithmetic will be taught in bilingual French/English classrooms;
- in these schools, teach (in English) the fundamentals of information and communications technology and familiarize students with practical exercises in them;
- make it a requirement at these schools to use e-learning resources and computers;
- forge networks with similar schools throughout the world and host well-known teachers from abroad;

- found, in each district, “High Schools of Excellence” that will continue the instruction received at the preparatory primary and middles schools, again in both languages;
- send a segment of students from these high schools to top universities abroad whose curricula are aligned with the latest developments in the digital revolution;
- foster the conditions for the opening in the next few years of high level teaching and research universities dedicated to digital technology;
- provide extra support to students admitted to these preparatory schools, high schools of excellence and specialized research universities.



Constitutional Court, Brazzaville



City Center, Brazzaville



Pool Departmental Council Building



6/ PURSUE INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS



Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazzaville

The reform of institutions was accelerated by the referendum adopting a new Constitution. The implementation of the new Constitution requires us to go above and beyond in the modernization of public administration in general, and the criminal justice system and police forces in particular, in addition to the country's political life as well.

The action items for achieving this modernization are laid out in "Path to the Future." A few items mentioned there include:

- better equip the civil service sector;
- foster a culture of good governance and transparency;
- reform the civil service corps;
- favor decentralization;
- fortify an independent judiciary;
- provide it with more resources to do its job;
- provide better training and professional development for police and security forces to ensure they are best able fulfill their mission;
- provide these forces with equipment that meets international standards;
- codify the status of the republican opposition and ensure its peaceful relations with the majority;
- promote national dialog and advisory councils.

As part of the institutional reform process currently underway, additional actions and movements towards decentralization are also being undertaken.

The way in which the work of development is conducted by the State is largely based on a competent and dedicated civil service corps, which still requires certain reforms, including, for example:

- **the formation of an administrative elite** able to assume responsibility competently and effectively for government-related development challenges;
- **the establishment of a body of technocrats** who can efficiently implement the development policies and metrics the government adopts;
- **right-sizing and rational consolidation of departments and agencies** to ensure all government employees are fully utilized, as well as to ensure every Franc spent goes towards the accomplishment of goals in the public interest;
- **strengthen the capabilities of agencies** charged with collecting data and statistics to be relied on for decision making and used in macroeconomic assessment and future planning;
- **ensure results-oriented administration designed** to constantly improve government-provided services and recipient satisfaction;
- **reinforce both internal and external audit processes** of every agency and administration, tied to real consequences;
- **fight corruption, misappropriation and fraud.**



Decentralizing, the other major component of institutional reform, primarily means:

- **improving** local governance in order to bridge the gap between public agencies and citizens;
- **giving** local authorities the resources to better meet the needs of the populations in their areas;
- **involving** everyday citizens in planning for their own future;
- **broadening** the ways in which populations can hold their local administrations more accountable.

Everything will be done to ensure the spirit and the letter of the provisions of Article 210 of the Constitution of the Republic, which cover the primary domains of decentralization, will be enacted in every city and village.

To achieve this aim, the central government will commit to:

- **strengthening the capacities of local officials** to define the most important development projects, goals and effective ways to get there;
- **mobilizing adequate human and financial resources** needed by local communities;
- **properly outfitting the entirety of our national territory** to ensure all areas are attractive to development;
- **making information more easily available to the public** regarding the administration of their localities;
- **garnering the public to denounce** bad decisions and actions taken by the local advisory councils set up by the new Constitution.

Thus the core spirit of the project is for the long term, however in the very near term, responses are needed to urgent situations or petitions from local people. Here are a few of these responses to the most pressing problems we currently face.

RESPONSES TO PRESSING CURRENT ISSUES

1/ HOW TO PRESERVE NATIONAL PEACE, UNITY, SAFETY AND STABILITY?

- **Strengthening the State**, by fully implementing the 25-October-2015 Constitution, which provides the Congo with institutions tailored to meet the needs of its unique context and thereby maintain national unity, cohesion and stability.
- **Ensure everyone obeys all laws and regulations** without fail or complicity, and without any abuse of authority either.
- **Upgrade the national police force** in order to guarantee the security of everyone.
- **Promote permanent, ongoing national dialog** and the expression of national aspirations, particularly within the framework of the constitutional advisory councils.
- **Pursue projects to promote the equal development** of all areas of the country in order best integrate them and ensure national unity.

2/ HOW TO IMPROVE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT STARTING RIGHT NOW, IN 2016?

- **Create, in every district in the country, two to three incubators** (startup support apparatuses) for young entrepreneurs in the agricultural field including farming proper (crops, livestock, fishing, farm fishing, etc.), industry (agricultural tools and equipment, small scale raw farm commodity processing, quasi-industrial woodworking, etc.) as well as services (silos, cold storage, machine shops, farm product transport, farm input sales, plumbing, electricity, etc.).
- **Make the “Fonds d’Impulsion et de Garantie” (FIGA, business financing/ underwriting funds) a reality** for small and medium-sized businesses, artisans and independent workers.

In pursuit of this, open lines of credit and create financial establishments designed to provide financing or loans for companies and artisans who can provide jobs to unemployed young graduates.

- **Forge contracts with companies providing jobs to young people**, permanent or temporary positions. Financial incentives to hire young employees such as salary-sharing, tax benefits or lower withholdings will be granted by the government to such companies.
- **Broaden the sphere of operations for the “youth employability” project** currently agreed to with the World Bank. Work to ensure at least 100,000 young people can benefit from this project and are able to then find skilled jobs that would otherwise have remain unfilled, or to create such jobs themselves.
- **Give home-based jobs** such as house cleaners, childcare workers, home healthcare and eldercare workers, private residential security guards and gardeners **the status of State-protected employment** receiving the same CNSS (social security) coverage and paid holidays and sick leave as other workers in the so-called formal sector.

RESPONSES TO PRESSING CURRENT ISSUES

3/ HOW TO ACT NOW TO PROVIDE GREATER ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE FOR EVERYONE?

- **Open thirteen (13) out of the fourteen (14) large hospital complexes to the public in 2016-2017** that are currently under construction or being outfitted, in order to improve the scope and quality of patient care.
- **Revamp and better equip existing public healthcare training programs** to ensure quality health coverage nationwide.
- **Ensure no-cost healthcare is really being provided** to those covered by state-sponsored medical care programs.
- **Afford easy access for poorer populations** to lower cost healthcare by setting means-based fees and payment options designed to ensure nationwide uniformity and equality of care.
- **Make “universal healthcare” a reality in 2016.** We would begin by covering the most common illnesses.
- **Establish and fund** programs to fight certain illness.
- **Encourage private initiatives** offering health related services.

4/ HOW TO IMPROVE POTABLE WATER AND ELECTRICITY TO URBAN AND RURAL “DESERTS?”

- **Continue pursuing Operation “Water for Everyone,”** to address these issues throughout the Congo.
- **Increase potable water production capacity** in cities and modernize distribution networks.
- **Accelerate the rollout** of various rural electrification projects such as BAD and the India Accord, and better fund public investment for coverage of rural areas.

- **Continue to increase installed electric power generation capacity** (expansion of the natural gas co-generation facility at Pointe-Noire from 300 MW to 450 and then 900 MW, complete the Sounda (1,000 to 1,500 MW), and Chollet Dams (600MW); build mini-hydroelectric projects and solar generators), and finalize the “National Energy Boulevard” infrastructure.
- **Modernize electricity distribution networks** in cities.

5/ HOW TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE IN OUR CITIES?

- **Institute master city plans** that will renovate and modernize cities.
- **Provide cities with high quality infrastructure** available to all residents.
- **Rehabilitate and reorganize** so-called impoverished districts.
- **Make all urban areas more accessible** and facilitate interconnections between neighborhoods.
- **Keep cities forever clean** by ensuring proper waste pickup and management, sewage system and street cleaning, and park maintenance by professionals.
- **Intensify anti-epidemiological and rodent campaigns** using sanitizing agents and rodenticides.
- **Increase the amount of affordable housing** and encourage the real estate construction industry.
- **Ensure the implementation of rental and housing cost controls.**
- **Forge common ground between housing development,** city transportation and urban environmental conservation.
- **Protect fundamental rights to housing.**

6/ HOW TO PROMOTE LASTING ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION?

- **Preserving land and aquatic ecosystems** and restoring those that have been decimated.
- **Pursuing tree-planting and reforestation initiatives.**
- **Continuing to promote sustainable natural resource extraction methods.**
- **Encouraging the development of clean renewable energies** and the adoption of green technologies.
- **Fighting pollution and deforestation** wherever they arise, as well as soil degradation and the unsustainable use of natural resources.
- **Upping the fight against poaching**, and the illegal exploitation and trafficking of protected species.

7/ HOW TO POSITION THE CONGO IN TODAY'S GLOBALIZED WORLD?

- **Maintaining good neighborly relations** in Central Africa.
- **Providing support** when requested for conflict resolution in Africa.
- **Reinforcing economic diplomatic efforts** throughout the world.
- **Developing the country's natural strengths** to attract the maximum amount of foreign direct investment.
- **Actively furthering** regional and sub-regional integration.
- **Aiding in the fight** against international terrorism.

CONCLUSION

The “March Towards Development” is a natural outgrowth of “New Hope” and “Path to the Future.”

It is along these lines that I propose to keep the Congo safe and at peace.

Reforms must be pursued with drive and determination, even as we safeguard the gains we have already made.

It is by putting the men and women of the Congo at the heart of our project that we can ensure our country's development.

Fortifying and stabilizing inclusive long-term economic growth, galvanizing the strategic role of the State, preparing our youth for jobs, aligning the Congo with the digital future and pursuing institutional reforms are the primary challenges we face in the five years to come.

Together, let's keep moving, accelerating the spirit that has driven our development thus far. Let us get through these difficult times that dictate we leave no quarter to backward values such as corruption, indiscipline and permissiveness. Above all, we must work to adapt our behaviors to meet the world of today, all the while preserving our culture, our traditions and our shared values.

Such is the spirit that will propel us towards a better life for all, thanks to more generous social programs, an education system that works for people of all ages, and training that enables people to meet the challenges of all moments in life.

We always be vigilant to ensure no one is left by the roadside on our path to development.

Yes, together, let's go further.

