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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Macroeconomic framework:

The Democratic Republic of the Congo saw a continued growth in 2023 (7.5%), despite a slower pace than the previous year (8.3%). The principal explanation for this slowdown was, according to the African Economic Outlook from 2024, the state of the extractive sector. The main sources for this economic growth were the exportations and investments- focusing specially on mining. The DR of the Congo produces a 76% of the cobalt on a global scale, and it counts with half of the total reserves of this mineral key for the manufacturing of batteries for electric cars. Nonetheless, the African Economic Outlook highlights the lack of structural transformation of the economy, partly because of a series of internal and external threats: inflation, the risk in the type of change, the geopolitical instability or the danger on the eastern border of the Congo- where the “plunder of minerals”, according to the report. The GDP of the country added up to 66 380 million dollars in 2023.

Debt:

The DR of the Congo has an external debt of 11 067 million dollars. The debt service has increased since 2012: from 225 million dollars in 2012 to 638 million dollars in 2025. It deals with an item of expenditure that will draw near to 1000 million dollars per year.

The access to foreign currency like the American dollar is ligated mostly to the prices in the international market of copper, cobalt and coltan (from which the tantalum is extracted); the fall in cobalt prices due to the overproduction at the beginning of 2025 pushed the country to announce the suspension of foreign sales for four months. With a testimonial access to the private market (1%), the majority of the Congo’s debt is in hands of multilateral agencies (65%) like the World Bank (36%) and the MFI (23%). In the bilateral section (34%) the main creditor is China (30%), which has positioned the country as one of the main axis in the commercial strategy on technological innovation.

DR of the Congo's currency has not ceased its fall during the last decade. In 2015, 844 Congolese francs translated to one single dollar; at the start of 2025, the type of change was of more than 2800 francs per dollar.

Imports and exports:

In 2023, the main exportation from the Congo was refined copper, according to the MIT Complexity Index. A little sample of the country's potential if it ceased to sell its raw materials without processing. From the 20 700 million dollars in exportations, almost a 57% belongs to that refined copper. This material is followed by cobalt and raw copper. These three minerals represent near to 8 from every 10 dollars deposited in the country for its merchandise sold abroad. Within 69% of it ends up in China, followed from quite far by the United Arab Emirates, India and Spain.

In 2023, importations accounted 12 900 million dollars. The principal purchase items were tractors and gasoline. Other products like machinery and sulphur show the mining vocation of Congolese economy. More than a third of these imports comes from China, followed by Zambia, South Africa, India and Belgium.

Electric power:

In 2023, the DR of the Congo generated 15.90 TWh of electric power. This number doubles what was produced in 2010, and it is one of the consequences of the rise in mining production in the country, and of the refinement of some of these minerals, a quite intensive process in the matter of energy. In total, the energetic production was of 1.6 millions of TJ (Terajoules), according to the International Agency of Energy. Its main source were biofuels (93%).

Defence:

The expense per year in defence materials added up to 761 million dollars in 2023, according to de SIPRI, a Sweden institute specialised in the trade of this kind of products. This number represents near to a 7% of the government's budget. A cipher that doubles the expenses from 2022, while the country attempts to recover the territories lost to groups of rebels within the east of the country – one of them, the M23, funded by Rwanda, according to the State Department and the United Nations. The main provider of the DR of the Congo since year 2000 has been Ukraine.

Demography:

Half of the population in the DR of Congo has less than 17 years old. It is one of the countries with the youngest population in the continent. Since 1990 it has not ceased to grow along with its life expectancy: from 49 years old in 1990 to 60 years old in 2023. The number Congolese has practically triplicated itself during that same time period: from 36 million inhabitants to 105 million inhabitants in 2023.

Since 1990, the process of urbanisation has gone up: then, the 30% percent of the population lived in the cities; in 2023 this number was close to the 50%.

Technological Innovation:

For a better digital infrastructure, the country has received four endorsements from the Export and Import Bank of China since 2008. The total account has been 477 million dollars, and it has served to complete two phases of fibre optic cable installation, together with the governments's telecommunication network or the modernisation of the communications of the ministry of finances.

The use of Internet among the Congolese population was inferior to the 1% in 2010; since then, more and more Congolese people have used internet, and the number has surpassed the 27% of the population in 2023. The primary device that has enabled a rise has been the mobile phone: the ICT Development Index report from 2022 points that the 48% of the Congolese owns one.