

# Democratic Republic of Congo



## Overview

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77%

Population below international poverty line

€72

per month

National minimum wage

€158

per month

Rural living income

64%

Agricultural workforce

20%

Agriculture share of GDP

4

high

Risk to workers' rights

## Context

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has a population of approximately 90 million people.<sup>[1]</sup> A slight majority of population live in rural areas 54%<sup>[2]</sup>, while 46%<sup>[3]</sup> live in urban areas. Agriculture is a major source of employment for the country, accounting for 64% of the workforce.<sup>[4]</sup> The sector represents 20% of the national GDP.<sup>[5]</sup>

The DRC is the second largest country in the African continent, and its forest is considered one of the two "lungs of the world", along with the rainforests of the Amazon. So far, 10 million of the country's 80 million hectares of arable land are cultivated, which suggests a potential for growth. In rural areas, family farming guarantees food and nutritional security for millions of Congolese. However, small producers face difficulties in accessing inputs, markets and evacuating their products to marketing and processing centers, due to poor road conditions and the lack of a fair and remunerative price. These restrictions affect the development of family farming in rural areas.<sup>[6]</sup> Still recovering from a series of conflicts that broke out in the 1990s, rural young people flee rural poverty, tension, and

conflict for the outskirts of cities in search of work. The agricultural sector, however, is still key for the country's economy as it employs more than half of the national workforce.<sup>[7]</sup>

The top produced commodities in DRC are cassava, plantains, sugar cane, maize, and palm oil fruit.<sup>[8]</sup> The top exported commodities in terms of quantity are wheat bran, cocoa beans, palm oil, green coffee and maize.<sup>[9]</sup>

## Wages

### Minimum Wage

The minimum wage in DRC is set by law at 7,075 Congolese Francs (3 EUR) per worker per day or 172,630 Congolese Francs (72 EUR) per worker per month, based on 24.4 working days.<sup>[10]</sup> The minimum wage is above the poverty line, but in practice most businesses are not in compliance with this minimum wage and face few penalties. Due to lack of monitoring or enforcement mechanisms, rest periods and premium pay for overtime are often disrespected. It is estimated that in the DRC approximately 90% of laborers working in agriculture, as well as other informal pursuits, deal with hazardous or exploitative working conditions without employers facing penalties.<sup>[11]</sup>

### Living income

The **Global Living Wage Coalition** has developed a Living Income Reference Value for rural Democratic Republic of Congo based on the Anker methodology.

The Anker Living Income Reference Value for 2021 in rural DRC is estimated at 380,033 Congolese Francs (158 EUR) per month. This value represents the amount a typical family in rural DRC needs to cover the monthly cost of a basic but decent standard of living. The living income estimate is higher than the income of a family which earns the national minimum wage. Further analysis and quality-assured studies are still needed to measure more precisely living income gaps for specific rural locations in DRC.<sup>[12]</sup>

## What's happening

### RESOURCE

#### Living Income Reference Value, Rural Democratic Republic of Congo



Living income estimate for a typical family in rural Democratic Republic of Congo to cover the monthly cost of a basic but decent standard of living.

### RESOURCE

#### Democratic Republic of Congo: Jobs Diagnostic

The report analyses the main challenges - at macro, firm, and household levels - that the country faces in creating jobs, specifically inclusive jobs for women and youth.

## Footnotes

1. World Bank (2020). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=CD>
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3. World Bank (2020). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS?locations=CD>
4. [4] World Bank (2019). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.ZS?locations=CD>
5. World Bank (2020). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.AGR.TOTL.ZS?locations=CD>
6. FAO. Family Farming Knowledge Platform. <http://www.fao.org/family-farming/countries/cod/en/>
7. IFAD. Country Profiles: Democratic Republic of the Congo. <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/operations/w/country/democratic-republic-of-the-congo>

8. FAOSTAT (2019). [http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#rankings/commodities\\_by\\_country](http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#rankings/commodities_by_country)
9. FAOSTAT (2019). [http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#rankings/commodities\\_by\\_country\\_exports](http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#rankings/commodities_by_country_exports)
10. Wage Indicator Foundation (2019). Minimum Wage-Congo. <https://wageindicator.org/salary/minimum-wage/congo>
11. U.S. Department of State. 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Democratic Republic of the Congo. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/>
12. Global Living Wage Coalition (2021). Anker Living Income Reference Value: Rural Democratic Republic of Congo 2021. <https://www.globallivingwage.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Rural-DRC-LI-Reference-Value-FINAL-Sept-13-2021.pdf>