

### **PRESS RELEASE**

## **The French Foreign Affairs Minister, Bernard Kouchner, hails the work of the ILCCE in the Democratic Republic of Congo**

Goma (Democratic Republic of Congo), January 26, 2008

### **The essential points**

On the occasion of his official visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo, the French Foreign Affairs Minister, **Bernard Kouchner**, visited Goma (North Kivu Province in the east of the country), on Saturday January 26, 2008. He met with Congolese leaders assembled by the *Initiative pour un Leadership Collaboratif et la Cohésion de l'Etat en RDC (ILCCE)*, a Congolese NGO that grew out of a partnership with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (Washington) and ESSEC IRÉNE (Paris).

Accompanied by **the Congolese Foreign Affairs Minister, Antipas Mbusa Nyamwisi**, the French ambassador and parliamentarians, Foreign Affairs Minister Kouchner was given the opportunity to meet leaders who have been involved in ILCCE workshops on building leadership capacity and cohesion, including elected officials, traditional leaders, heads of military groups, representatives from civil society and the private sector. The participants were in Goma for a working session organized by ILCCE the day after the signing of "the act of engagement," which had been previously agreed upon by the Conference on Peace, Security, and Development of the Provinces of North and South Kivu. Speaking at the signing of the formal cease-fire agreement on Friday evening, January 25, the President of the National Assembly, Vital Kamerhe, emphasized: "This is an historic moment. It is imperative to make the process ending the war irreversible."

According to the Congolese participants with whom the Foreign Minister met, **the thirty workshops organized by the ILCCE in DRC since 2006**, especially in the Kivus, have helped lead to a positive outcome to the Peace Conference: "We all agree that the 'Cohesive Leadership' approach has prepared the participants for what was going to happen at the Peace Conference." "ILCCE broke down the mistrust between participants, and that is a fundamental contribution," the ILCCE workshops encourage "the passage from a culture of mistrust to a culture of dialogue and acceptance of the other," noted the Congolese signatories.



After listening to the participants, **Bernard Kouchner hailed the action led by the ILCCE, and the enthusiastic adoption of the tools for national cohesion by the Congolese signatories.** Since the beginning of the program in DRC in January 2006, **30 ILCCE workshops** have been held in Kinshasa, Goma, Bukavu, Butembo, Uvira and Matadi. Nearly **700 key leaders**, both local and national, have participated in at least one of these workshops. The meeting with the Minister was organized and led by Michel Nouredine Kassa (ILCCE Coordinator in Kinshasa), Alain Pekar Lempereur (Director of ESSEC IRÉNE), Aurélien Colson (Associate Director of ESSEC IRÉNE), and Cedric Pierard (*Négociateurs du Monde* project administrator at ESSEC IRÉNE).

## The context

**The Democratic Republic of Congo has emerged from the bloodiest conflict since the Second World War:** five million people have lost their lives since 1998 due to the repeated violence and sanitary conditions brought about by the conflict (including a series of epidemics and malnutrition problems), and six million people have had to be re-housed. A political transition process has been in place since 2003, as a result of which a new constitution was implemented in 2005 and the first free, democratic elections took place in 2006 (for the first time in 45 years).

## Elements of ILCCE Workshops

On the advice of a representative and diverse group of Congolese leaders, **the ILCCE (in partnership with WWICS-ESSEC- IRÉNÉ) inaugurated in January 2006 a cycle of training retreats destined to restore or reinforce confidence and cohesion between Congolese politicians.** The program seeks to:

- Re-establish dialogue between Congolese leaders;
- Allow them to reinforce their skills in managing conflicts and reaching agreement, through tools of communication and negotiation;
- Form a network to institute a cooperative approach to leadership;
- Elaborate analysis of situations in the DRC and research solutions;
- Implement the necessary mediations in order to avoid a return to violence;
- Assure a follow-up of the commitments and to answer to the needs of training expressed by the participants.

## Team in charge of the ILCCE:

- Coordinator of the ILCCE in Kinshasa: Michel Noureddine Kassa, former head of the office of OCHA in the DRC. He is assisted by Mamie Musasa. Father Martin Ekwa is senior advisor.
- WWICS (Washington) : Howard Wolpe, director of the Africa Program, former presidential special envoy to the Africa's Great Lakes region under President Clinton; Steve McDonald, consulting program director and former Foreign Service Officer in Africa; Natalie Jackson, program associate; Roseline Tekeu, program assistant.
- ESSEC IRÉNÉ : Alain Pekar Lempereur, institute director and professor at ESSEC; Aurélien Colson, associate director, former technical advisor for Prime Minister Jospin, lecturer at I'ENA; Cédric Pierard, administrator of ILCCE in Paris and of the project *Négociateurs du Monde* (NDM).

## Support of ILCCE:

In the DRC, **the ILCCE benefits from the support** of the national Assembly, several provincial Assemblies, members of the central Government, the United Nations and from the diplomatic community. Its financial support comes through a UNDP (United Nations Development Program) trust fund, with contributions from the European Commission and several bilateral organizations (Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Norway and Sweden).

## A WWICS-ESSEC IRÉNÉ partnership:

- The WWICS (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars) is a think tank established in Washington DC with an Africa Program created in 1999 and directed by Ambassador Howard WOLPE, former special envoy of President Clinton to the Africa's Great Lakes Region.
- ESSEC- IRÉNÉ (*Institut de Recherche et d'Enseignement sur la Négociation en Europe*), created in 1996 and directed by Alain PEKAR LEMPEREUR, is the academic leader in Europe in the field of negotiation, through three axis: academic research, the training of managers and leaders (2 500 people per year, in the private and public sectors, among which are the European Commission and several agencies of the United Nations), and post-conflict facilitation, notably in Africa.

## For additional information, please contact:

Cédric PIERARD, *Négociateurs du Monde* project administrator

ESSEC IRÉNÉ - BP 50105 - 95021 Cergy-Pontoise Cedex (00 33 6 59 48 52 57 - pierard@essec.fr)