



ERAIFT researchers animate a conference – debate on the issue of sustainable management of forest ecosystems at the University of Lodja in the province of Sankuru

Monday January 22, 2024

Monday January 22, 2024, ERAIFT, a category 2 center under the auspices of UNESCO organized in Lodja (Sankuru province in the Democratic Republic of Congo), a conference – debate on the issue of sustainable management of forest ecosystems. This conference was led by Mr. Joël MOBUNDA TIKO and Mrs. Jémima OBANDJA, respectively doctoral student and master's student at ERAIFT under the supervision of Professor Pierre Albert NGUELIELE, Post-Doctoral student at ERAIFT.

The main objective of this activity was to raise awareness among students as well as teaching staff at the University of Lodja on the issues of sustainable management of forest ecosystems, especially since Sankuru is a forestry province and is home to the one of the largest tropical forest reserves in the world, the Salonga National Park (PNS), a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

This forest habitat is very diverse and is home to a series of remarkable animal and plant species, such as Bonobo (*Pan paniscus*), a species endemic to the Democratic Republic of Congo and fully protected. A total of 112 participants took part in these exchanges of high scientific significance.

To this end, the speakers drew the attention of the audience that despite the international interest in this national park, the biodiversity of the latter is compromised by the unreasonable exploitation of natural resources, including poaching, exploitation of timber and slash-and-burn agriculture.

With a view to reducing these various threats weighing on the PNS, the speakers insisted on sustainable forest management tools, including sustainable forest management which integrates the participatory approach to forests and another very effective tool. community forestry which puts the community itself at the center in the management of its natural resources.

In addition, the speakers presented to the audience the different opportunities for obtaining a scholarship in general and more particularly the procedure for obtaining a scholarship at ERAIFT, explaining all the eligibility criteria and the conditions for submitting the application via its website: www.eraift-rdc.org



The speakers (Mr Joël MOBUNDA and Ms Jémima OBANDJA) and the audience

ERAIFT sincerely thanks the University of Lodja through its management committee for facilitating this training session. ERAIFT is also grateful to the European Union and the Kingdom of Belgium for their financial support through the DeSIRA Agro-Forest program that ENABEL is implementing in Sankuru.