



## IRI DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

### IRI DRC holds workshops, develops actions with chapters in Ituri and Equateur



Local workshop in the province of Ituri

From June 21-24, IRI DRC held a workshop in Ituri and focused on the development of action plans. The workshop, held in Bunia, was attended by 23 leaders from various religious denominations, the provincial government, indigenous peoples representatives, civil society, and research institutions. As a guiding principle and goal, participants agreed “By 2030, all stakeholders, indigenous peoples and local communities participate in the protection and sustainable management of tropical forests, taking into consideration the laws and ethics for the well-being of present and future generations.” Both IRI Ituri and IRI Equateur used

the same methodology to conduct an organizational analysis and defined an action plan to protect the tropical forests of the provinces and develop advocacy campaigns to influence decision makers, public policy and the private sectors. Draft plans have now been developed that outline concrete actions in the areas of mobilization, education and outreach, and political advocacy. The workshops also included a training by Global Forest Watch, with the goal of empowering the IRI provincial chapters with the tools and satellite data to collect information about forest changes, threats and land activity.

### IRI DRC secures commitment to protect tropical forests from Ituri’s military governor, Ituri’s ECC President and Chancellor of the Catholic Church



IRI DRC continued efforts to raise awareness about its mission by meeting with the military governor of the province. Ituri is a province currently in a state of conflict and governed by the military since the beginning of May. While the governor’s priority is to restore peace in the region, he committed to protecting the tropical forests of the region and the rights of the indigenous Pygmy people as a pathway to achieving peace

and security. IRI DRC also met with the Chancellor of the Catholic Church and the Ituri President of the Church of Christ in the Congo (ECC) who endorsed IRI’s plans in the province. The President of ECC Ituri offered a permanent working space for the team and committed to get personally involved, saying “Peace without the forest is only partial... it is difficult to live amongst each other if we can’t live at peace with the forest”.

*“The Interfaith Initiative is an opportunity for us religious leaders to commit ourselves to the protection of forests and to plant many trees to fight against global warming and at the same time promote the integral well-being of man in accordance with the divine plan..”*

Mgr Théodore KATEMBO,  
ECC Ituri President

## IRI DRC launches issue primer on forest restoration as contribution to UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

IRI DRC has launched its national issue primer on forest restoration as a contribution to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The primer outlines how forest restoration is a necessary complement to the forest protection agenda, what forest restoration looks like in practice, and how religious organizations in DRC can get involved. The primer also includes a case study about the Art Circle of the Congolese Plantation Workers, where participants sell their artwork and reinvest in the restoration of degraded forests. Click [here](#) to download the primer in French.



## IRI DRC releases new animation video

IRI DRC has released a new animation video that gives an overview of the consequences of deforestation in the country, the urgent need to bring together faith communities to remedy the situation and the advocacy work being done by the DRC team to influence public policies and encourage change. The IRI DRC animation video is available [here](#) in French and [here](#) with English subtitles.



## IRI DRC youth organize awareness sessions for faith communities

Following the launch of IRI Equateur, youth from three religious denominations and members of IRI DRC organized awareness sessions to present the mission, mandate, and importance of IRI DRC. A session with the CDJP Community Listening Club on June 23rd was attended by 73 youth (including 42 women), while a session at the Ikongowasa district mosque on June 25th was attended by 80 youth. The two denominations committed themselves to work together to spread the messages of IRI DRC.

## IRI DRC team of experts meets to elaborate advocacy strategies and action plans

An IRI DRC team of experts has been charged with analysing the legal frameworks relating to the sectors that have an impact on the protection of forests, biodiversity and the rights of indigenous peoples. The goal is to develop a clear policy platform for IRI DRC, to engage policymakers in informed discussions about the need for strengthened, enforced or new legislation to protect forests. The IRI DRC team of experts recently met with Rainforest Foundation Norway (RFN) to share information about current policy reforms in DRC and the next steps to developing an IRI DRC advocacy strategy and framework. Once completed, religious denominations working through IRI DRC will use the strategy as a road map for political advocacy efforts in the months ahead.

## IRI DRC provides input into country's NDC roadmap

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is currently working on a revised and more ambitious Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) ahead of UNFCCC COP 26, stating that the country plans to cut its emissions by more than 20% by 2030 through forestry, agriculture, energy and waste sectors. To deliver a revised roadmap, national and provincial governments have established a framework for consultation and intersectoral coordination, creating an opportunity for civil society organizations to provide input and suggestions. The REDD Climate Working Group (GTCRR), the Circle for the Defence of the Environment (CEDEN) and Fern, a European organization dedicated “to protecting forests and the rights of people who depend on them” have set up thematic groups for civil society experts to present their position and thoughts on DRC's NDC roadmap. IRI DRC has been invited to be a part of this coordination process and is in the process of providing inputs into the NDC.



## IRI DRC meets with the European Union's Directorate General for International Partnerships

In collaboration with Fern, IRI DRC recently participated in a meeting with the European Union's Directorate General for International Partnerships. IRI DRC is working hand in hand with Fern to influence European policies that directly affect the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The meeting had three objectives: (i) learn about the Directorate General's position on proficiency testing and Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs), (ii) learn about the Directorate General's views on deforestation regulations and measures to be taken, and (iii) receive updates on evolving forest partnerships. All parties discussed new regulations, EU's budget, the future of Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade, and the second generation of Voluntary Partnership Agreements.

## IRI COLOMBIA

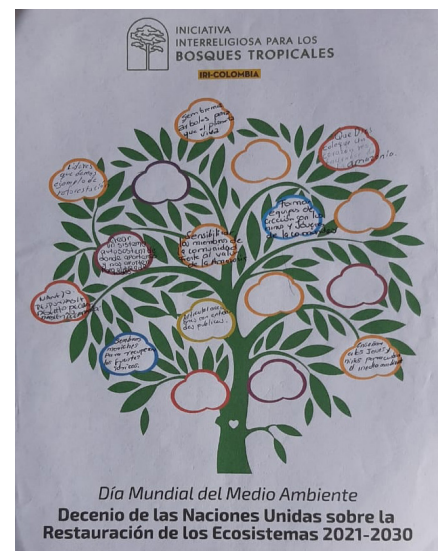
### IRI Colombia continues far-reaching communications campaign to grow awareness on the importance of tropical forests

IRI Colombia continued its communications campaign to raise awareness about its mission and expand engagement in the 36 local chapters where IRI has a presence. IRI Colombia radio spots (which will run through the end of 2021) are being broadcast seven days a week on the country's leading radio networks and will reach over 250,000 people. Listen to the radio spots in Spanish [here](#). IRI Colombia has also commissioned 10 billboards in strategic locations with messages like "Forest = water and oxygen" and "Plant a tree" to increase awareness about the importance of protecting and restoring tropical forests. The 36 IRI Colombia local chapters continue implementing their 2021 action plans, which include activities such as reforesting watersheds and springs, cleaning up riverbanks, and establishing tree nurseries.



### IRI Colombia's forest restoration campaign inspires faith communities to hold events for World Environment Day

From June 2-5, several IRI Colombia local chapters carried out activities to commemorate World Environment Day and join the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. Religious leaders from IRI-San José del Guaviare conducted a collective exercise of imagining what the future of the Amazon would look like, writing down their ideas on a sketch of the tree of life. Members of IRI-Puerto Asis dedicated the day to ecological prayer and the planting of 49 different species in the El Santuario de la Vida nature reserve. A group led by Pastor Luis Abelardo Muñoz Novoa from the World Missionary Movement and member of IRI-San José del Guaviare planted abarco (also known as Colombian mahogany) and cuyubi trees in the village of Las Brisas. John Jairo Escobar, IRI-Puerto Rico coordinator and lead pastor from the Assemblies of God Church gathered a group of children and invited them to draw the Amazon Forest and how they imagined it in the future.



## IRI Colombia's local chapters make progress in the fulfillment of their action plans

During the month of July, IRI Colombia and its 36 local chapters continued delivering on activities proposed in the 2021 Pastoral Action Plan. **IRI San José del Guaviare , IRI Charras Boquerón and IRI El Capricho conducted awareness activities by placing messages on billboards** on the conservation and preservation of forests in public places. The other local chapters will continue delivering similar activities over the upcoming weeks.



Meeting with religious leaders in San José

## IRI Colombia receives support from the Anglican communion

The Anglican Communion shared IRI Colombia's institutional video on their website reaching over 12,000 people and received endorsement from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby. **The Archbishop has also opened a space for the Initiative to present its mission and mandate during the 15th Lambeth Conference** from July 27th to August 8th 2022. The conference titled 'God's Church for God's World: Walking, Listening and Testifying Together' will bring together thousands of bishops from the faith community to discuss the challenges we face in the twenty-first century.

## IRI Colombia begins implementation of its "development program" strategy for the second half of 2021

During the second half of 2021, IRI Colombia will implement an advocacy strategy focused on the Development Program with a Territorial Approach (PDET). IRI Colombia has developed a theoretical framework to analyze each of the Initiative's local chapters under PDET. The PDET is a planning and management instrument born from a Peace Agreement between the Colombian State

and the FARC to promote economic, social and environmental development in areas most affected by internal armed conflict. **IRI Colombia is focused on the first pillar of the PDET "Social Ordering of Rural Property and Land Use" to transform and influence the relationship society has with nature and forests,** and contribute to the sustainable use of natural resources.

## IRI Colombia releases document outlining achievements since its launch

IRI Colombia recently developed a document presenting its overall achievements since November 2018, including the country's general social, political, and environmental context, the initiative's intervention strategy and **all the activities organized including launching of local chapters, training sessions, political advocacy and communication efforts.** Download the presentation [here](#).

## IRI PERU

## IRI Peru launches national issue primer on forest reforestation as contribution to UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

IRI Peru has released a new forest restoration primer as a practical guide for faith communities to undertake restoration activities. The primer provides an overview of why forest restoration is a necessary complement to forest protection efforts, and offers suggestions for how religious leaders and faith-based organizations can develop their own restoration projects. **Included in the primer are several case studies of restoration in action in Peru,** including work by the Presbyterian Church of Moyobamba, in the San

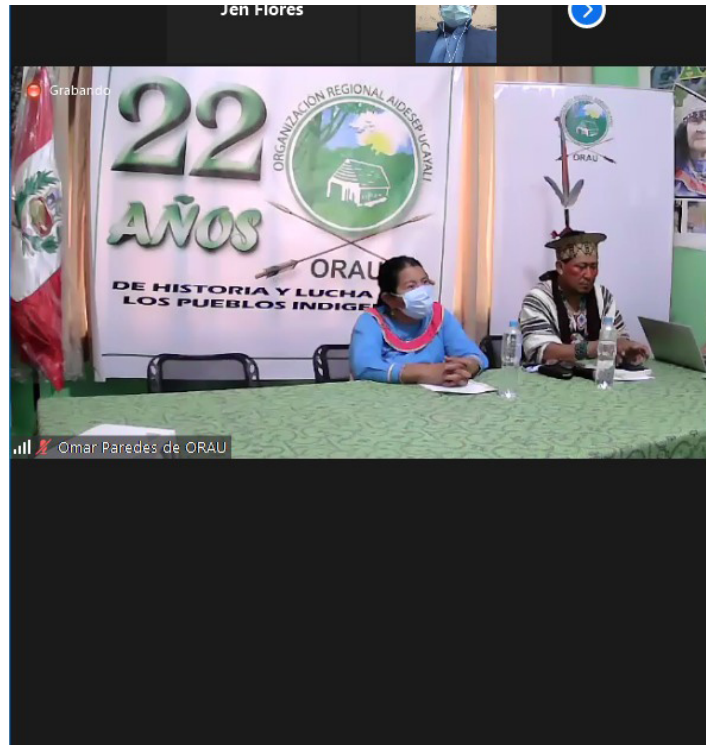
Martin region, where faith groups are restoring the banks of the Rumiycu and Mishquiyacu. Read and download the primer in Spanish [here](#).





## IRI Peru holds meeting with congressmen-elect to guarantee the rights of indigenous people

On June 29th, IRI Peru and AIDESEP Ucayali convened a meeting with six congressmen-elect and three congressional advisors to draft a joint work agenda for the new Congress of the Republic. During the meeting, the congressmen-elect were presented with an IRI Peru draft proposal focussed on the rights of indigenous peoples, sustainable development for the Amazon region, and the ratification of the Escazú Agreement. The congressmen and advisors committed to start these conversations within the congress and respond to indigenous peoples' requests during their term of office. Agenda items discussed during the meeting can be found [here](#).



- Q Buscar un participante
- Marylita - IRI Perú (A)
  - LV Laura Vargas
  - AP - Elvis Vergara
  - Francis Jhosmina Pai
  - HS Hitler Saavedra
  - JC Juan Carlos Mori
  - Kené Instituto de Est
  - LC Lizardo Cauper
  - LF Luis Fares Yunis
  - LP Luis Picón
  - MA Manuel Alberto Ruel
  - OP Omar Paredes de O
  - Pedro Solano
  - R- Ricardo - Amazon V

## IRI Peru organizes a webinar to raise awareness about tropical forests

On June 23rd, IRI Peru held a webinar to reflect on the value of forests to the country, the need to keep them healthy, and the opportunities they offer for sustainable development. The webinar included the participation of Fabiola Muñoz as well as senior leadership from UNEP, the Instituto del Bien Común, Rainforest Foundation Norway and El Bosque de las Nuwas. Topics of the virtual panel included reforestation, the importance of forests in Peru, forests as a development tool, forests for communities, climate funding for local organizations and the El Bosque de las Nuwas' initiative, a community-led project to preserve traditional knowledge. Watch a video of the webinar [here](#).

## IRI Peru advocacy on road between Peru and Brazil recognized by President of the Congress

The Executive branch of the Peruvian government admits that the bill allowing the construction of a road between Pucallpa and Cruzeiro do Sul is "an attack to the Amazon and violates the rights of indigenous peoples." IRI Peru's request that the government reconsider approval of the road was officially recognized by the President of the Congress.

## IRI Peru holds a virtual interfaith prayer session for the International Day for the Conservation of Tropical Forests

On June 26th, IRI Peru organized a prayer session for faith communities to congregate and honor tropical forests. The event included the participation of 10 representatives from IRI Peru local chapters including Beatriz Osuna, Brother Leonidas Saavedra, Sister Lucero Guillén, Pastor Alipio Morán, Pastor Ángel Sullón, Sara Alvarado and Diandra Torres and Darik Alvarado Vela. Pastor Cristian Scheljee, President of the Union of Evangelical Christian Churches of Peru opened the collective prayer with a reflection on how forests are present in the heart of God. Delio Siticonatzi, an indigenous teacher, spoke about the presence of forests in human hearts and sang songs in Asháninka referring to the different elements of nature. Click [here](#) to watch the event.





## IRI Bellavista organizes a reforestation event for World Environment day

On World Environment Day, IRI Bellavista organized a reforestation day to plant trees around the new MINSA hospital in Bellavista. Participants included students from IESTP Bellavista and CEBA Bellavista in partnership with the municipality of Bajo Biavo, UGEL Bellavista, Big Change and the local Economic Development Agency. The activity was in line with the “Generation Restoration” campaign launched by UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.



Participants at the World Environment IRI Bellavista day



## IRI Peru organizes course on Faiths and Forests in Bellavista

In June, IRI Peru convened a specialized course on Faiths and Forests entitled: “Unidos por la Amazonia: Somos Bosque” for members of the IRI Bellavista chapter. The course is aimed at leaders of faith communities, pastoral agents, educators and teachers. A total of 16 leaders participated in five sessions on the science of forests and climate, the ethical and spiritual basis for acting to stop deforestation, and the development of advocacy strategies. During the closing session, participants presented a political advocacy plan they will implement at the local level.

## IRI Peru presents an Interfaith prayer at the national bicentennial anniversary

On July 26th and on the occasion of Peru’s bicentennial celebration transmitted on TV Perú, former President Francisco Sagastim, government authorities, ministers, ambassadors, members of the Inter-religious Council of Peru and more came together as an act of interreligious peace to honor the country. Rabbi Guillermo Broinstein and Laura Vargas presented a homily that included messages about the importance of reconciliation between Peruvians and Mother Earth. They both insisted on the inclusion of a care paradigm to respond to the serious rates of deforestation in the Amazon over the past several years. Click [here](#) to see the full celebration, and Rabbi Broinstein’s and Laura Vargas’ interventions at 39:44.

Consejo Interreligioso del Perú  
Religiones por la Paz

# ORAMOS POR EL PERÚ

Primer encuentro interreligioso de gratitud por el país en el bicentenario.

Desde el Templo de Lima Perú de la Iglesia de Jesucristo de los Santos de los Últimos Días.

Transmisión en directo por: **tpe**



26 de julio



7:30 P. M.

Artistas invitados:

Susana Baca, Jean Pierre Magnet, Silvia Falcón, Sandra Miente, Manuel Miranda, Deyvis Orosco, Jaime Cuadra, Emilia Drago, Rossana Fernandez Maldonado, Renata Flores, Augusto Casafranca, Iza Penano, Dirck Ordor, Delio Siticonatz y Renato Bonifaz.

BICENTENARIO PERÚ 2021



## IRI Peru places editorial in prominent national newspaper

On the occasion of Peru's 200th independence anniversary and the arrival of the new President-elect, IRI Peru's national facilitator, Laura Vargas, published an editorial in the national newspaper "El Comercio". The editorial lays out the urgent environmental challenges that need to be addressed by the new government. Through the lens of protecting and restoring forests, she addresses three main points: the climate, health and the loss of biodiversity. The editorial proposes a solution in line with the United Nations Decade for Ecosystem Restoration – to implement reforestation programs that drive sustainable economic recovery. The piece also argues for stronger emphasis on addressing climate change in the country, as well as the safety of human rights defenders – in particular Amazonian indigenous communities – through the ratification of the Escazú Agreement in the Congress of the Republic. Read the full article [here](#).

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## IRI Peru prepares the launch of two new local chapters in Quillabamba and Puerto Inca

On July 19th and 21st, IRI Peru met with religious leaders in the cities of Quillabamba, in the Cusco region, and Puerto Inca in the Huánuco region to present their work and future plans for the local chapters. The meeting in Quillabamba was attended by members of various faith communities such as the Parish of Quillabamba, the Council of Laity, the World Missionary Movement of Quillabamba, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Christian Alliance Church of Quillabamba, the Provincial Federation of Peasants of La Convención Yanatile y Lares – FEPCACYL, the National Intercultural University of Quillabamba – UNIQ, the Central de Comunidades Nativas Matsigenkas – CECONAMA, and the Provincial Municipality of La Convención. Participants endorsed the initiative and promised to work hand-in-hand to implement forest restoration projects. IRI Quillabamba's launch is scheduled for August 4 and the IRI Puerto Inca's launch for August 5.



## IRI Peru local chapters continue organizing training sessions

After the successful completion of the "United for the Amazon: We are Forest" course presented to the IRI Bellavista members, IRI Peru continued building awareness through courses aimed at faith communities, pastoral agents, educators and teaching staff. During the month of July, IRI Ucayali concluded five sessions also part of the "United for the Amazon: We are Forest" program. A total of 21 participants were present including members of the IRI Moyobamba local chapter, which is currently drafting a local advocacy plan. The next course will be held in August for the IRI Iquitos chapter.

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## IRI Peru to join the "Resurrect Peru Now" campaign led by the Peruvian Episcopal Conference

In response to the health and economic crisis Peru is facing, the Peruvian Episcopal Conference has launched "Resurrect Peru Now", a campaign designed to develop sustainable strategies that reactivate the economy all whilst integrating ecology. The working group led by Cardinal Pedro Barreto, S.J. (president of the Panamazónica Ecclesial Network and Coordinator of "Resurrect Peru Now") has invited IRI Peru to be a part of the process. In collaboration with Eduardo Salas, IRI Peru will provide insight and learning to ensure that the reactivation of the economy is aligned with the protection of the Amazon and its communities.

## IRI Peru has launched its latest edition of "Somos Bosque"

At the beginning of July, IRI Peru launched the latest issue of "Somos Bosque", its bi-monthly newsletter. It includes Cardinal Pedro Barreto, S.J.'s opinion column on the Declaration on Indigenous Security, in support of IRI Peru and their efforts to protect indigenous leaders and environmental defenders. IRI Peru is also preparing a special edition of the newsletter highlighting Peru's 200th Independence Anniversary and the challenges the country faces in 2021. The edition will include contributions from congressmen, state officials, business leaders, indigenous peoples, religious and scientific leaders. It will be launched on August 9th, the International Day for Indigenous Peoples. Download the newsletter [here](#).



## IRI INDONESIA

### IRI Indonesia organizes training and soft launch for the West Papua Chapter

The official IRI West Papua launch has been postponed to a later date due to political instability in the region and the pandemic. A soft launch event, however, included the participation of 100 leaders from Christian, Catholic, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist faith communities as well as representatives from the Alliance of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago (AMAN). The Governor of West Papua presided over the event and shared remarks about the current situation in the region. He endorsed the soft launch of the IRI West Papua chapter in the province and welcomed the planning of an official launch event. The event also included keynote addresses on the legal and deforestation issues that West Papua faces, the protection of forests and indigenous peoples' rights, and how to implement environmental teachings from sacred texts.



Religious leaders at the West Papua soft launch

### IRI Indonesia briefs Governor of West Papua on faith-based action to protect forests



Meeting with governor, IRI Advisory Council members and religious representatives

Prior to the West Papua soft launch, IRI Indonesia met with the Governor of the province to present the Initiative's mission, mandate and objectives in the region. Several members of the IRI Advisory Council were present and had the opportunity to discuss their partnership with the initiative and previous actions to protect the tropical forests of Indonesia. The Governor along with an indigenous leader and a Christian leader all endorsed the work being developed by the initiative, and confirmed that it was in line with the province's goals: tolerance, harmony and environmentally-friendly.

### IRI Indonesia organizes training sessions to present resource guides to religious communities

During the month of June, IRI Indonesia and the Supreme Council for the Confucian Religion in Indonesia, MATAKIN, organized a training in Manado City, North Sulawesi, to present the resource guides developed by IRI Indonesia and the religious councils in the country. The guides cover the science of forests, climate change, biodiversity, sustainable development and the rights of indigenous peoples, while the religious teaching books give religious leaders practical tools to incorporate calls for the protection of rainforests into their teaching, drawing from their respective spiritual traditions and sacred texts and scripture. The resource guides were also presented within the Buddhist community at the Buddha Aramaic Meditation Training Center in Makassar City and ideas on how the monastery can play an active role in encouraging worshippers to preserve the environment were shared. Romo Yonggris Lao, MM, Head of Permabudhi South Sulawesi

Region, Bhante Bhadramitra Sthavira, Head of the Maha Buddha Aramaic Meditation Training Center and Kemiran representative from the Permabudhi Center attended the event.



Religious representatives at the IRI Outreach Program



## IRI Indonesia releases issue primer on forest restoration as contribution to UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

IRI Indonesia has released its national issue primer on forest restoration as a contribution to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The primer includes explanations about forest restoration, the types of activities that can be undertaken to achieve the objectives defined by the UN Decade, the importance of planting in addition to safeguarding already existing forests and guidance on how religious communities can get involved in restoration activities. Click [here](#) to read the primer in Bahasa.



## IRI Indonesia releases new animation video

IRI Indonesia has released a new animation video that gives an overview of the deforestation challenge in Indonesia, IRI Indonesia's mission and mandate, and the four key areas of work undertaken by the program on education and awareness raising, network expansion across the country, influencing laws and public policies on forests and influencing the policies and practices of the private sector. The IRI Indonesia animation video is available [here](#) in Bahasa and [here](#) with English subtitles.



## IRI Indonesia and Permabudhi organize tree planting session for Vesak

Following a tree planting session held in Bali for Earth Day, Permabudhi Makassar was inspired to carry out a similar activity. Father Yonggris Lao, Head of Permabudhi in the South Sulawesi Region, developed a program to plant 5,000 trees of which 2,000 were planted for the celebration of Vesak (Buddha day). Interfaith representatives, religious institutions as well as the former Mayor of Makassar participated in the event and planted trees around the mosque.



## IRI BRAZIL

## IRI Brazil releases issue primer on forest restoration as contribution to UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

IRI Brazil has released its national issue primer on forest restoration as a contribution to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The primer includes information about the importance of forest restoration as a necessary complement to protection efforts as well as case studies of successful forest restoration efforts in the country, including where the local government of Espirito Santo has implemented a strategy encouraging inhabitants to reforest 80,000 hectares of land and where a local company has transformed pastureland into a forest of native tree species. Click [here](#) to download and read the primer in Portuguese.