



IRI *at the Amazon Summit*

INTERFAITH RAINFOREST INITIATIVE



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A COMMITMENT TO THE AMAZON AND CALL TO ACTION PRESIDENTIAL SUMMIT IN BELEM DO PARÁ

1. COMMITMENT TO THE AMAZON

The Interfaith Rainforest Initiative (IRI) seeks to mobilize communities of all faith traditions and spiritualities, from grassroots to leadership, to join the broad coalition working to protect tropical forests, fight climate change, defend the rights of indigenous peoples, quilombolas and traditional communities, and promote sustainable development in the Amazon. Together with governments, indigenous peoples, civil society organizations, businesses and UN agencies, we contribute our spiritual resources to achieve this goal.

The members of the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative recognize that deforestation in the Amazon threatens the existence of local populations and humanity and that it is therefore essential to take decisive action to halt and reverse it.

Interfaith Rainforest Initiative members share the moral commitment to make the care of tropical forests an ethical priority of society and the State. Putting the spiritual, ethical and political influence of religions and their leaders at the service of the protection of forests and their guardians allows us to build a broad platform for action in the territories to:

- a) Raise awareness about the seriousness of deforestation and the urgency of acting to protect forests and reverse climate change.
- b) Facilitate dialogue between scientists and religious communities so that they can identify actions for the defense of tropical forests that incorporate their knowledge and experiences.
- c) Mobilize religious leaders and action networks in remote areas where forests face the greatest threats, and where religions can bring added value to the implementation of forest policies on the ground.
- d) Advocate for the adoption of policies and laws that protect the Amazon rainforest and the rights of indigenous peoples.



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2. A CALL TO ACTION

The Belém do Pará Presidential Summit marks a critical turning point for the region, for its inhabitants and for the planet. It is an urgent moment to act with greater ambition, commitment and cooperation to advance the goal of guaranteeing the integrity and long-term sustainability of the Amazon.

This Presidential Summit offers a historic opportunity to quickly and effectively align the necessary efforts to initiate the social, economic, political and cultural transformations needed to achieve and ensure the protection and restoration of the Amazon ecosystem and that its inhabitants have access to the real enjoyment of human rights within a framework of equality and social justice.

In this sense, we urge the governments that exercise sovereignty over the Amazon and especially the governments of Brazil, Colombia and Peru to act decisively to put an end to the deforestation of the Amazon; halt the loss of its biodiversity; stop the degradation of its soils and water sources; stop the threats against the rights of indigenous peoples, quilombolas and traditional communities, and restore the dignified living conditions of these populations.

The authorities should adopt comprehensive public policies and sustainable development plans for the Amazon to achieve the following results:

- Reach zero deforestation in the Amazon by 2030.
- Strengthen socio-environmental governance.
- Demarcate pending indigenous lands, remove invaders from these territories, eliminate mining on indigenous lands, protect isolated indigenous peoples against any attempt of forced contact, and respect the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples on enterprises that affect their territories.
- Create priority biodiversity conservation units.
- Allocate vacant lands according to socio-environmental criteria.
- Implement a transnational strategy to combat environmental crime and drug trafficking in the Amazon region.
- Adopt efficient payment mechanisms for environmental services for Amazonian communities and landowners who conserve and restore the forest.
- Establish a new standard for planning and executing infrastructure projects in the Amazon that enables the development of a bioeconomy based on the sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources.
- Encourage scientific and technological development to enable the establishment of a sustainable forest economy.



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- Provide access to essential public services (health, education, environmental sanitation, connectivity and public safety) for the Amazonian population, to reduce the serious social inequalities and poverty in the region

Accordingly, we urge the governments of Brazil, Colombia and Peru to:

1. Update the Amazon Cooperation Treaty and its amending protocol.

Updating the Amazon Cooperation Treaty and the mandate of ACTO will allow them to be brought in line with the requirements of the most modern and recent international environmental instruments and with the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It would also make it possible to agree on the setting of goals in a way that the commitments of the States would be more concrete and less declarative.

2. Generate a mechanism for the participation of Amazonian civil society in intergovernmental or interinstitutional bodies where decisions are made on public policies for the Amazon.

This mechanism should incorporate an intercultural, gender and intergenerational approach in order to improve Amazonian governance, reduce conflicts and generate better opportunities to combat common scourges such as illegal activities, violence and corruption.

3. Design and implement accountability mechanisms.

These mechanisms should include the creation and maintenance of platforms that allow for the monitoring and evaluation of compliance with international goals and commitments derived from the Leticia Pact of 2019; the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Sustainable Development Goals.

4. Design effective policies and mechanisms to combat environmental crimes head-on.

The prosecution, repression and punishment of environmental crime requires acknowledgement that it is a crime of national and transnational character. All Amazonian countries should identify instruments and tools to create or apply and strengthen international judicial cooperation mechanisms for the prosecution and repression of environmental crimes that threaten the integrity of the Amazonian ecosystem. This international judicial cooperation should apply a model of multilateral, national and regional focus that not only includes the criminal dimension, but also incorporates the elaboration of public policies to strengthen the rule of law, citizen participation mechanisms and judicial and law enforcement institutions.

5. Promoting a new Amazonian economy.

The sustainability of the Amazon requires a new economic paradigm that values traditional knowledge and promotes scientific innovation based on recognition of the opportunities offered by healthy tropical



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forests. This new economic paradigm must offer alternatives to deforestation and degradation of the Amazon. It must also transition from models based on extractive and agroindustrial activities to a strong sector based on the forest bioeconomy, renewable energy and green and environmentally friendly infrastructure.

6. Prevent threats to the life, liberty, integrity, and security of environmental defenders and indigenous peoples.

The authorities have the clear and unavoidable duty to repress, judge and punish all acts of violence against people who exercise their right to defend human rights and forests.

7. Develop effective external resource mobilization strategies to assist governments and civil society organizations to implement the public policies and actions recommended in this document.

Whether through payment-for-results mechanisms, debt swaps, direct donations, private sector investments in sustainable Amazon development, or other innovative solutions, additional resources are needed to realize the vision of a healthy Amazon.

We are confident that the proposals presented here are effective solutions to the main structural causes of biodiversity loss, deforestation, environmental degradation, social conflicts, social exclusion, poverty and threats to the democratic rule of law in the Amazon. These proposals are the fruit of decades of social mobilization, scientific studies and successful pilot projects and actions in the biome in all our countries.

We place ourselves at the disposal of the public authorities of Brazil, Colombia and Peru to deepen the dialogue on these proposals, and also to expand our collaboration for the implementation of each of them.

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