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INTERFAITH RAINFOREST INITIATIVE, IRI COLOMBIA

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION
UNITED NATIONS ON CLIMATE CHANGE – COP 28

AN URGENT APPEAL TO THE COLOMBIAN AUTHORITIES

COP 28 has come together when all indications are that we are failing to stop climate change, that is, to limit the increase in global temperature to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Indeed, the World Meteorological Organization's interim report on the state of the global climate confirms that 2023 will be the warmest year ever recorded. It also confirms that greenhouse gas levels continue to rise and that record sea surface temperatures and rising sea levels continue.

In the spirit of the purpose, principles and provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as in line with the objectives of COP 28, IRI Colombia urges the Colombian State to make the protection and restoration of the Amazon rainforest a priority for climate action. including:

1. ADMINISTRATIVELY AND FINANCIALLY STRENGTHEN COMPLIANCE WITH CROSS-SECTORAL MEASURES DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE DEFORESTATION REDUCTION

National authorities should improve the administrative, financial and coordination schemes necessary to ensure the proper fulfillment of the objectives proposed in the following documents, programs or public policy strategies that are part of the NDC's portfolio of GHG mitigation measures:

- a. Comprehensive Strategy for Deforestation Control and Forest Management.
- b. REDD+ Programs (Joint Declaration of Intent/Amazon Vision/Low Carbon Sustainable Development for the Orinoquia).



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- c. Intersectoral actions and deforestation control coordinated in CONALDEF and in accordance with the CONPES document “National Policy for the Control of Deforestation and the Management of Forests”, including measures of the respective sectoral PIGCCS.
- d. Zero Deforestation Agreements with the meat, dairy, palm oil and cocoa chains; and Intersectoral Pact for Legal Timber in Colombia.
- e. Payment for environmental services.
- f. Articulation with the goal of forest fire control.

The authorities should pay special attention to controlling deforestation in national parks and indigenous territories.

2. CONSOLIDATE THE COMMITMENT TO ACHIEVE ZERO DEFORESTATION BY 2030

The State must take the necessary actions to ensure coordinated and continuous coordination from the local level to the national and regional levels, which is essential to achieve the general objective and specific objectives of the Comprehensive Strategy for Deforestation Control and Forest Management. As derived from this strategy, this articulation requires the adoption of actions and measures whose purpose is to:

- a. Consolidate the territorial governance of ethnic groups, peasant and rural communities, and strengthen citizen awareness, through the management of information and knowledge to consolidate a culture of co-responsibility for the care and sustainable use of forests.
- b. Promote a forest economy based on the goods and services of the forests for integral rural development and the closure of the agricultural frontier.
- c. Reduce degradation and deforestation through cross-sectoral management of policy and regulations for environmental and territorial planning.
- d. Generate reliable, consistent, timely and quality information on the supply, status, pressure and dynamics of forest resources, as support for decision-making processes at the national, regional and local levels, allowing the implementation of control and monitoring actions by environmental authorities for an efficient management of the country's forest resources, and monitoring the application of social and environmental safeguards.



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- e. Carry out the institutional, regulatory and financial adjustments that provide the State with the necessary instruments for the management of forests and the effective reduction and control of deforestation in Colombia.

3. IMPROVE THE PROTECTION OF NATURAL NATIONAL PARKS AND OTHER PROTECTED AREAS

The authorities should deepen the development of the Policy for the Consolidation of the National System of Protected Areas (SINAP) and, in particular, implement the following actions identified by that policy, including:

- a. Overcoming the inadequacy of protected area management categories.
- b. Increase the creation of protected areas based on the conservation goals defined by SINAP.
- c. Control the processes and activities that drive the degradation of the natural and cultural heritage conserved in SINAP.
- d. Increasing the connectivity of protected areas.
- e. Strengthen the integration of conservation strategies into environmental planning and management processes carried out at the regional, departmental and municipal levels and in the territories of ethnic groups.

4. DEVELOP ARTICLE 286 OF THE POLITICAL CONSTITUTION AND DECREE LAW 632 OF 2018 IN RELATION TO THE CREATION OF INDIGENOUS TERRITORIAL ENTITIES AND THEIR ADMINISTRATIVE DECENTRALIZATION ON EQUAL TERMS WITH OTHER EXISTING TERRITORIAL ENTITIES IN COLOMBIA

The State must promote the adoption of the necessary legal measures so that indigenous territories enjoy the political and administrative autonomy that allows them to govern based on their knowledge systems, which have proven to be key to reducing and controlling deforestation, avoiding the degradation of soils and water sources, preserving the connectivity of forest ecosystems, and mitigating climate change.



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5. DEEPENING THE FIGHT AGAINST ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME

The State must accelerate the design of the action plan necessary to fulfill the commitments it made in the area of environmental crime when it signed the Declaration of Belém approved at the Fourth Meeting of Presidents of the States Parties to the Amazon Cooperation Treaty, in particular, but not exclusively, to:

- a. Strengthen and expand police and intelligence cooperation to prevent, rectify, and investigate environmental crimes.
- b. Establish effective cooperation mechanisms with destination countries to combat illegal trafficking of Amazonian species and products.
- c. Develop regional and intersectoral cooperation in the area of administrative control of contraventions, investigation and prosecution of environmental crimes.
- d. Promote the prompt establishment of the Center for International Police Cooperation in the Amazon, necessary for the exchange of information and intelligence and the development of investigations and alerts.

6. SOLIDIFY THE FULFILMENT OF THE TARGETS PROPOSED IN COLOMBIA'S NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTION (NDC)

There is an urgent need to take the necessary financial and administrative measures to overcome the backlog in meeting seven targets proposed in the NDC, namely:

- a. The design of the necessary instrument to monitor compliance with comprehensive territorial climate change plans.
- b. The implementation of the National System of Adaptation Indicators to monitor and evaluate the implementation of measures provided for in the National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change.
- c. Assess the appropriateness of climate action plans in the planning instruments of the six priority sectors of the economy (transport, energy, agriculture, housing, health, trade, tourism and industry).
- d. Strengthening of the strategy of awareness, training and education on climate change, focused on the different actors of Colombian society.



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- e. Increased coverage of new protected areas in the National System of Protected Areas (SINAP) by more than 2.5 million hectares, in coordination with local and regional actors.
- f. Linking one million producers to agroclimatic information mechanisms to facilitate decision-making in agricultural activities.

7. PREVENT THREATS TO THE LIFE, LIBERTY, INTEGRITY AND SECURITY OF DEFENDERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The authorities have a duty to respect and guarantee the fundamental rights to life, liberty and integrity of defenders of the environment and the rights of indigenous peoples. This must include the obligation to repress, prosecute and punish any act of violence against these defenders. In particular, according to the provisions of the Public Policy on Guarantees and Respect for the Work of Defending Human Rights, the authorities must develop and consolidate:

- a. Joint institutional strategies to address risks that threaten the exercise of the right to the defence of human rights.
- b. Mechanisms to strengthen institutional capacities for prevention and timely protection of human rights defenders.
- c. Strategies to strengthen the investigation and suppression of acts of violence against human rights defenders.

IRI COLOMBIA IS A TRUSTED PARTNER IN THE PROTECTION OF THE AMAZON

The Interfaith Initiative for Tropical Forests (IRI Colombia) is present in the fourteen Amazonian municipalities with the highest rates of deforestation or increasing rates of Amazon forest loss. There, IRI Colombia members work –in partnership with social leaders, indigenous authorities, the educational community and public authorities– as agents of social transformation that contribute to the construction of environmental citizenship and the search for environmental justice.

IRI Colombia has the moral commitment to ensure that the care of the Amazon rainforest constitutes an ethical and political priority of society and the authorities. Within this framework, the Interreligious



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Initiative for Tropical Forests IRI Colombia is a reliable and strategic ally of national and territorial authorities in overcoming the negative effects of deforestation and contributing to the strengthening of the social rule of law, the consolidation of the common good and the construction of a more equitable society.

IRI Colombia is at the disposal of the Colombian public authorities to deepen the dialogue on these proposals and also to deepen our collaboration in their design and implementation.

December 2023



Consejo Interreligioso de Colombia (Interreligious Council of Colombia)



Red Eclesial Panamazónica, REPAM Colombia (Pan-Amazonian Ecclesiastical Network, REPAM Colombia)



Conferencia Episcopal de Colombia

Conferencia Episcopal de Colombia (Episcopal Conference of Colombia)



Consejo Mundial de Iglesias (World Council of Churches)



Confederación Evangélica de Colombia, CEDECOL (Evangelical Confederation of Colombia, CEDECOL)



Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia, ONIC (National Indigenous Organization of Colombia, ONIC)



Organización Nacional de los Pueblos Indígenas de la Amazonia Colombiana, OPIAC (National Organization of the Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon, OPIAC)



Rainforest Foundation Norway



DeJusticia



Fundación Gaia Amazonas (Gaia Amazonas Foundation)