

Declaration of global priority for conservation in the Amazon Biome

CONSIDERING reports by the Monitoring of the Andean Amazon Project (MAAP), over a period of 17 years (2001–2017) that around 4.2 million hectares of Amazon rainforest were lost; that of this total, 50% were in Peru (2.1 million ha), 41% in Colombia (1.7 million ha) and 9% in Ecuador (359,000 ha); that according to the Institute of People and the Environment of the Amazon (Imazon), the deforestation of the Amazon in Brazil increased by 15% between August 2018 and July 2019, with 5,042 km² of deforestation being recorded during this period; that the main causes are agriculture, livestock farming, mining, dams, roads infrastructure, etc.; and that it is estimated that 59 million metric tonnes of carbon were lost in the Peruvian Amazon alone during the period 2013–2017;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that it is important to update the data to represent the hectares of rainforest lost after July 2019 due to deforestation and forest fires in the Brazilian and Bolivian Amazon, demonstrating colonisation and urbanisation as additional causes;

BEARING IN MIND that, according to information from the Brazilian National Institute for Space Research (INPE), a total of 72,843 fires were detected in the Brazilian Amazon up to August 2019, representing a rise of 83% compared with 2018, creating devastating conditions in one of the world's most emblematic ecosystems;

AWARE that the Amazon is home to 10% of the world's biodiversity and stores 86 billion tons of carbon, which, if released to the atmosphere would represent 315 pentagrams (Pg) of CO₂, or equivalent to 10 years of current global emissions;

AWARE that this mosaic of rich and diversified landscapes is also home to over 30 million people, including 2.7 million indigenous people representing approximately 400 different indigenous ethnicities, with about 60 known groups living in voluntary isolation; and

OBSERVING that some policies encouraging agriculture, cattle and mining that are being implemented in some countries threaten the safeguarding of natural and cultural heritage, that they accelerate the direct and indirect drivers of deforestation, increase poverty and socio-environmental conflicts over access to resources, and lead to the disappearance of habitat and biodiversity; and

RECOGNISING that the vast majority (close to 50%) of murders of environmentalists take place in the Amazon Basin, requiring the necessary actions for the effective protection of life and honouring of people working for the defence of the Amazon and its native people;

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020, at its session in Marseille, France:

1. RECOMMENDS that the Director General and Members recognise the Amazon Biome as the largest continuous tropical forest and freshwater ecosystem representing a fifth of the world's forests playing an important role in supporting global and continental climate stability and safeguarding 10% of the world's biodiversity;
2. ASKS the Director General to declare the Amazon Biome as threatened and therefore as a priority region for conservation and fire prevention, due to the global and local benefits it provides in tackling climate change, protecting biodiversity, and ensuring sustainable development;
3. REQUESTS the IUCN Director General and state governments to recognise the crucial role of indigenous territories for the conservation of the Amazon and the Rights of Indigenous People as stipulated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) including the right to respect International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169, supporting the implementation of a Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) process with local, traditional and indigenous communities in matters that affect them;
4. URGES Members and Commission members in the Amazon to address any threats or conflicts that might arise in relation to the FPIC process;
5. CALLS ON the countries that share the Amazon Basin to take the necessary steps and to create shared public policies, aligned with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) agendas, so that the forests and aquatic ecosystems in the Amazon Biome and the goods and services they provide are safeguarded beyond the borders of the countries encompassed by the Amazon Basin, including policies that

incorporate specific, urgent actions for fire prevention, as well as for the effective conservation and sustainable use of the resources in the Amazon Biome, comprehensively and with a territorial approach, including traditional knowledge of indigenous people;

6. REQUESTS the IUCN Director General to consider the provision of compensation, incentives and rewards to the indigenous people of the Amazon Biome involved in protecting, conserving and preserving the biodiversity and ecosystem of the region to halt further deterioration and damage to the Biome; and

7. REQUESTS countries to continue strengthening their systems of protected areas within the Biome, including territories and areas conserved by indigenous people and local communities.