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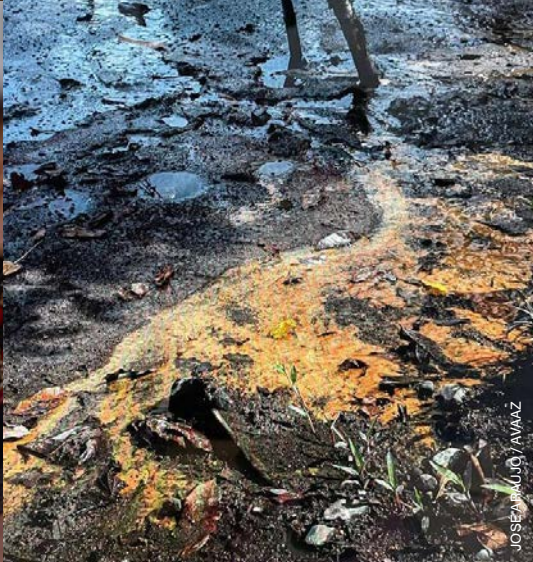
ALBERTO CÉSAR ARAUJO - AMAZONIA REAL (VIA FOTOS PUEBLICAS)



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JOSE ARAUJO / AVAAZ

# From COP28 to COP30: Urgent actions to avoid the Amazon collapse – and global havoc

Avaaz position paper for UNFCCC COP28, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 30 November-12 December, 2023



ALBERTO CÉSAR ARAUJO - AMAZONIA REAL (VIA FOTOS PUEBLICAS)



JOSE ARAUJO / AVAAZ



IVAN CASTANEIRA / AVAAZ



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## Open letter to UNFCCC negotiators

### Why addressing the Amazon emergency is key for climate action

Excellencies,

**The Amazon is on the brink of collapse.** Anthropogenic impacts caused by political, economic and financial decisions have pushed the Amazonian ecosystems to their limit. Primary drivers of this [Amazon tipping point](#), as stated by scientists, are activities such as oil and gas exploration and extraction, extensive industrial agriculture and cattle raising, and mining, which result in land-use change, land-grabbing and force displacement of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPs and LCs). Most of these decisions are made in the name of “development”, however it is urgent to halt these activities and change our approach to the Amazon, moving towards a model of sustainable development that keeps the forest standing.

This emergency is global: without the Amazon forest, we cannot keep global warming [under 1.5°C](#). **If we lose the Amazon, we will lose the fight against climate change.** A key element here is to understand that the Amazon rainforest has been shaped by humans for millennia. Highly organised and complex communities of millions of people were already living in the forest before the arrival of Europeans. Today, the healthiest forests are found in territories managed by IPs and LCs.

#### **The next round of NDCs need to include concrete milestones on IPs and LCs land tenure for climate action**

The leadership of IPs and LCs in climate and biodiversity action is increasingly well-established by science and it was, for instance, well-documented in the latest official climate and biodiversity reports (IPCC and IPBES). Nearly half of the remaining intact forest is in Indigenous territories, and worldwide, IPs and LCs manage territories and unique ecosystems that host 80% of the world’s remaining biodiversity, contributing to the conservation of [25% of the world’s carbon sinks](#) - though they make up only 5% of the global population. Clearly, to support Indigenous leadership is to enable climate action.

In the case of the Amazon, IPs and LCs are crucial actors for its conservation. About [27% of the Amazon](#) are Indigenous territories. In Brazil, it is also important to look at the *quilombola* lands, pertaining to afro-descendant communities and that present outstanding conservation results - currently, 148 *quilombos* are titled in the country, [with land degradation rates unaltered in the past 13 years](#) on their lands

However, land demarcation and titling efforts are still insufficient. Indigenous and environmental groups affirm that roughly [100 million hectares of Indigenous lands](#) are pending formal recognition and titling by governments of the region. Supporting tenure rights on their lands and territories is not only just, but a very cost-effective climate and biodiversity solution, as reports from major international institutions (from the UN to WRI) have also documented in recent years.

**COP28 is the first climate COP after the same Parties<sup>1</sup> agreed and adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.** In this landmark deal, the role of IPs and LCs is central. The upcoming UN climate talks should similarly ensure the rights of these communities and enable them to fulfil their role in conserving the world’s major carbon sinks by reflecting it in the decisions, political commitments and speeches of world leaders.

As Parties conclude the Global Stocktake, it is important to ensure that the next round of NDCs, to be presented at the COP30, include concrete milestones on land tenure for climate action.

#### **Banning oil extraction from Amazonia**

While the roles of IPs and LCs are critical to the future of the Amazon, the other thorny issue is the impact of oil extraction in the region. Fossil fuels are the backbone of the climate crisis, and we cannot solve the issue without addressing the social and environmental impact of oil drilling in the region either. In many ways, **the Amazon is a new oil fron-**

<sup>1</sup> With a few exceptions, notably the United States of America.

## Open letter to UNFCCC negotiators

Why addressing the Amazon emergency is key for climate action

**tier both for governments and oil companies.** In Ecuador alone, 54% of the Amazon coincides with oil blocks - with most of the oil extracted in the region going to California. In fact, the US state, often cheered as a climate champion by many, [is the world's number one importer of Amazonian oil](#).

Brazil is at a particular crossroads. President Lula has made it clear that he has plans to continue drilling in the region, particularly in the rivermouth of the Amazon northernmost state of Amapá, with the risk of devastating impacts to the Amazon rivers and biodiversity. In fact, days ahead of the Amazon summit in August 2023, President Lula also announced new investment plans that includes [R\\$323 billion](#) (roughly US\$65 billion) in investments in Petrobras, Brazil's oil giant, for the next 3 years. While most of these oil drilling projects are not in the Amazon, private and public actors are agitating to increase oil revenue from the region in the near future.

Right at the beginning of COP28, it was made public that [Brazil would join OPEC+ in January 2024](#). This is a terrible sign for the Amazon, and Brazil's ambition ahead of it assuming its COP Presidency. In this context, it is even more important that the rest of countries in the region to Avaaz calls on all Amazonian governments to back the call for a [Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty](#).

## Financing the future of the Amazon

Finally, we need to talk about how we are financing the Amazon's future. Studies already indicate that guaranteeing land ownership for Indigenous people can provide significant benefits to Brazil, Bolivia and Colombia, estimated at between [US\\$679 billion and US\\$1.5 trillion in the next 20 years](#). Meanwhile, according to a [2022 study](#), establishing 1.3 million km<sup>2</sup> of new conservation areas in the Brazilian Amazon

(in order to reach 80% of forest coverage in conservation areas) would cost around US\$1.0 - 1.6 billion in establishing costs, and an annual cost of US\$1.7 - 2.8 billion to manage it. However, in 2020 alone, due to the loss of 10,851 km<sup>2</sup> of forests, the states of the Brazilian Amazon generated 52% of the country's greenhouse gas emissions, and contributed [less than 10% of the national GDP](#).

The Amazon is bearing the consequences of a set of global failures that must be urgently addressed by the Parties. In order for the COP28 to deliver a meaningful agreement that can help the Amazon (and any other ecosystem) survive, it must deliver on the very foundations of the climate crisis: the global dependency to oil, the appalling funding gaps for developing countries, the pillage of the land and the ocean and their biodiversity. Parties must show up at the negotiations to strengthen the multilateral space, and address all fronts of this crisis. That is how we ensure the UNFCCC delivers on the Rio promises from 30 years ago and keeps the spirit of the Paris Agreement alive.

We strongly urge Parties to take into consideration the following suggestions that are urgently needed to keep the 1.5°C alive. Backed by our 70-million members, at Avaaz we are committed to working together for COP28 to be a turning point for our common future.

With hope and determination,

*Diego, Aleks, Lily, Edda, Raúl, Emilio, Laura, Lilian, Dudu, Miguel, Carmen, Chris, Citla, Luciana and the whole Avaaz team*



## 1. The Amazon emergency is a human rights emergency

When assessing the case of the Amazon, it is clear that all of the drivers of deforestation and degradation have an impact on the social dimension that includes severe violations of human rights and lack of respect to Indigenous Peoples' fundamental rights. Such continuous violation and disenfranchisement, often propelled by the legacy of colonisation, creates the conditions for a “relational tipping point” that precedes the **ecological one**. With broken trust between Indigenous, traditional and local communities and the States that promote devastating policies that affect biodiversity and climate, key elements that are inherent to Indigenous cultures and relationships such as consent, trust, accountability, and reciprocity are undermined.

It has been **reported** that in 2022, at least 177 persons were killed defending their land, the environment and their natural resources. From this total, 64 were Indigenous defenders, and 7 were women. This brings us to the outrageous reality that, in 2022, every two days the world lost a person who dedicated part of their life to defending territories where life is threatened.

The Amazonian basin lost 39 environmental and human rights defenders in 2022, 11 of whom were Indigenous People. Others have been harassed and suffered all forms of violence because of the essential role they perform in defending the most important biome for global biodiversity conservation and climate action, and for sustainable devel-

## 1. The Amazon emergency is a human rights emergency

opment in this region. At least [296 environmental defenders were killed in the Amazon between 2014 and 2022](#).

Addressing human rights cannot be dissociated nor sidelined from climate change policies, as is the norm within climate policy circles. This pattern amplifies inequity and distrust. Climate negotiations, like any negotiation concerning global matters, and in particular those concerning our common environment, do not happen in a vacuum.

In this sense, the three Rio Conventions, the UNFCCC, the UNCBD and the UNCCD, include in their binding provisions the call for respecting the rights of IPs and LCs. This was cemented in the preamble of the 2015 Paris Agreement. Unfortunately, the reality of how climate change negotiations, policies and strategies are still approached demonstrates the opposite, even if many of the States, including those present in Dubai, have committed to pursue and respect Indigenous Peoples' rights, under agreements such as the [ILO Convention 169](#), the [American Convention on Human Rights \(Pact of Saint Joseph of Costa Rica\)](#), the [Durban Agreement of the World Parks Congress](#), and despite the existing jurisprudence across the world, such as the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the judgement of the case "[Xákmok Kásek Indigenous Community vs. Paraguay](#)". These agreements and jurisprudence should be considered because the very drivers of climate change are also behind the disenfranchisement of Indigenous communities, and should be tackled together. Ensuring that these agreements and jurisprudence are respected and enforced to secure human rights is essential for rebuilding the trust that is needed towards joint climate action.

Therefore, ensuring that the [UNFCCC processes take a human rights-based approach is critical](#). In this regard, Avaaz highlights decision [1/ CP.26 at UNFCCC COP26](#) which emphasises, amongst other things, the important role of the culture and knowledge of IPs and LCs in effective action on climate change, and urges Parties to actively engage them in

the design and implementation of climate actions. Avaaz believes that to finally observe the mandate in this and other UNFCCC decisions, Delegates here in Dubai should duly reflect Indigenous Peoples' contributions to protecting key carbon sinks in the Global Stocktake, in the upcoming NDCs, and other related provisions, as in [all UN processes](#).

Considering that the Amazon is home for more than 50 million people of different cultures, the region demands a paradigm shift towards an equitable, inclusive and sustainable development model with human rights at the centre. The wellbeing of its people today and in the future, requires a model that respects and fosters conservation efforts, strengthened by the formalisation of land tenure, and envisions a comprehensive approach to environmental recovery with Indigenous Peoples, *quilombolas*, and all local communities that live in the forest.

It should be taken into account that the struggle for land tenure in the region has not been without its conflicts, resulting in a race to the bottom where powerful players are quickly transforming the land and conservation efforts are being deprioritized in the political agendas. Recent research shows that in the Amazon basin [almost 255 million hectares of intact areas and Key Priority Areas with low degradation](#) are yet to be designated. These should be ideally designated to Indigenous Peoples who have proven efficiency for biodiversity conservation.

The Amazon, along with Indigenous leadership, must be at the centre of the discussion at COP28. Concrete results must emerge from this conference, demonstrating the commitment of global leaders to save the Amazon from the tipping point. The focus should be on protecting and conserving Amazonian ecosystems, respecting the human rights of IPs and LCs and prioritising an urgent shift towards equitable and inclusive sustainable development.



## 2. Three pillars to avoid the Amazon collapse and further climate breakdown

Avaaz outlines three key pillars in this position paper that are critical to achieving conservation and sustainable development in the Amazon, and therefore protecting the crucial role it plays in regulating weather patterns in the region and climate around the world.

These key pillars align with the principle of sustainability, as any plans, programs, and projects promoted and implemented in the region must actively consider the human rights of Amazonian IPs and LCs, *quilombolas*, river dwellers, and other traditionally vulnerable communities. Furthermore, the design and implementation of a governance model for the Amazon basin should ensure that IPs and LCs play an active role, including their formal recognition and representation, and respecting their right to self-determination.

Another benefit of this approach is that it can be adapted as appropriate and replicated for the protection of other major primary forests in the world and the Indigenous Peoples that inhabit and conserve them.

### **Pillar 1: Averting the tipping point through a moratorium on extractive activities and through protection measures**

Global scientific bodies like [IPBES](#) and [IPCC](#) emphasise the intertwined challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, signalling the urgency of concerted efforts. Understanding this concept is fundamental within the framework of this COP.

## 2. Three pillars to avoid the Amazon collapse and further climate breakdown

The destruction of the Amazon stands as one of the most alarming contemporary environmental crises, withstanding unprecedented changes driven by human activities. According to recent [research from MapBiomas \(2023\)](#), the anthropogenic transformation of the Amazon into pastures, monocultures, mining, or urban spaces, has escalated dramatically. In 1985, only 6% (about 50 million hectares) of the Amazon had been affected. However, in just 36 years, by 2021, this area nearly tripled, [reaching 15%](#) deforestation (almost 125 million hectares) of the entire region. The magnitude of the destruction varies across countries, with Brazil facing a critical [19%](#).

Internalising the strategic imperative of protecting, conserving and sustainably managing the Amazon basin for climate action hinges on the concept of a tipping point - an irreversible moment with far-reaching consequences. In 2018, scientists Thomas E. Lovejoy and Carlos Nobre [highlighted](#) the delicate balance of the Amazon system, identifying negative synergies between deforestation, climate change, and fires. Their warnings spoke of a tipping point, projected to occur at 20-25% deforestation, potentially leading to a shift to non-forest ecosystems in key Amazonian forested areas. The ecological implications of severe droughts and floods in the last decade are considered early signs of this tipping point.

Crucially, Lovejoy and Nobre called not only for halting deforestation but also for restoring forest ecosystems through reforestation, emphasising the need to reduce the deforested area to less than 20% to avoid the aforementioned tipping point. Furthermore, it has been published that if the Amazon were to release all the carbon it currently stores, it could warm the planet by [as much as 0.3°C](#), making the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C impossible to achieve.

Scientific experts, including IUCN and studies like [“A Global Safety Net”](#) echo the urgency. The data emphasises specific protection targets, with [IUCN calling for 80% protection by 2025](#) to avert the point of no return. In April 2023, [the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues](#) supported and urged for the protection of 80% of the Amazon by 2025.

[President Lula's commitment](#) to halt deforestation in the Amazon by 2030 is a message of political will to move forward and protect its relevant ecosystems and carbon sinks. There's evidence of a significant [59%](#) decline in deforestation in Brazil between January and September 2023, compared to the same period 2022.

Yet, the urgency to halt deforestation and degradation of the Amazon ecosystems persists and the Amazon is perilously close to the point of no return. Urgent and drastic measures are imperative to halt deforestation and restore critical areas, especially considering the escalating deforestation in neighbouring countries like [Peru](#) and [Bolivia](#), and a focus should be placed in southern and eastern Amazonia due to its critical role in the region's hydrological cycle and beyond.

To ensure sustainable development in the region, protecting the Amazonian ecosystems should be aligned with halting their increasing degradation by extractive and extensive industrial activities. Undesignated lands are especially vulnerable to land-grabs and unsustainable or illegal activities, as well as privatisation. In line with what has been proposed for the protection of the Amazon and [averting its tipping point](#), Avaaz calls the COP in its 28th meeting to support a moratorium on extractive activities (public and private) in the Amazon, including on Amazonian undesignated lands, and for a formal commitment to protect these lands and its peoples.

### Pillar 2: Enabling Indigenous leadership for climate action

In the pursuit of recognizing and amplifying the leadership of Indigenous Peoples in climate action, a paradigm shift is imperative - one that transcends historical biases and challenges the ingrained misconceptions dating back to the era of colonisation. A historically racist and discriminatory approach that has persisted to this day must come to an end through the full recognition and respect for the human rights and self-determination of Indigenous Peoples.

## 2. Three pillars to avoid the Amazon collapse and further climate breakdown

This history has led governments to long ignore Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, a perception that continues to overshadow their excellent track record in territorial management. In particular, cases of successful governance models within Indigenous communities, achieved without external funding, show their capacity to find balance between economic sustainability, environmental respect and social development.

To truly acknowledge and empower Indigenous leadership, governments must commit to protecting the human rights of Indigenous Peoples, fostering respect for the territories they've inhabited for centuries. These territories serve as living testaments to their organisational prowess, showcasing a sustainable equilibrium between resource consumption, the well-being of their people, and the preservation of ecosystems.

This achievement, documented by both Indigenous knowledge systems and [scientific research](#), warrants global recognition, especially within international forums dedicated to environmental protection. It is crucial to disseminate these success stories beyond regional borders, particularly within the community of International Financial Institutions (IFI). Enhancing cooperation with IFIs is vital to align investment models with the rights and values of Indigenous Peoples, fostering equity and eliminating power imbalances in representation and decision-making.

The role of Indigenous Peoples in protecting, conserving, using sustainably, and restoring the Amazon is paramount and must be safeguarded through their Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). This must be reflected in the elaboration and implementation of critical environmental strategies, such as National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), as well as the definition or redesign of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) to mitigate and adapt to climate change. This applies to all forms of local to national development plans.

This enabling approach encompasses the demarcation of Indigenous lands and territories, protection and restoration of primary forests, and the design/redesign of conservation strategies. While this paper specifically addresses the Amazon, these principles are universal and essential for effective protection in other forests and ecosystems worldwide.

**Avaaz emphasises the urgent need for the full recognition of Indigenous lands and territories, ensuring legal security for Indigenous Peoples' land rights.** Putting a stop to degrading activities on undesignated lands, coupled with official recognition, will bolster global efforts to limit temperature rise. Additionally, IPs and LCs manage significant carbon stores yet often face exclusion from climate finance initiatives. Governments, philanthropies, private entities, and financial partners must pledge support for Indigenous Peoples' initiatives and their active participation in carbon markets, aligned with human rights principles.

**To create a just and inclusive future, Indigenous Peoples should be direct recipients and managers of funds.** Despite being custodians of global biodiversity and safeguarding 45% of intact forests in the Amazon, they have received less than [1% of climate funding](#). Worse, despite an important pledge made during UNFCCC COP26, research published before COP27 showed that [only 7%](#) of the global funding intended for IPs and LCs actually reached them on the ground. This is not only unfair, it is a poor allocation of resources for those who most effectively maintain biodiversity and carbon sinks. **Avaaz urges a redirection of funds where they are most impactful and calls for transparent and accountable financing mechanisms.**

COP28 must clearly establish the [direct access of Indigenous Peoples](#) to this funding from all sources, including but not limited to the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund and the existing and new funds and mechanisms that are to be developed and operationalized for climate finance. This will allow their full and effective participation as partners in the protection, conservation and sustainable development of the Amazon.

## 2. Three pillars to avoid the Amazon collapse and further climate breakdown

### Pillar 3: Financing should target the drivers of deforestation

Where to get the money for the conservation of Amazonia, and more generally for tropical forests, has been a contentious issue for several decades now. There is another central issue, however, that is receiving less attention from high-level policy-makers: **the question of what this money should be spent on.**

Logically, these two questions should be intimately connected, but this is not what we are seeing in practice. Instead, we are seeing that both government-led initiatives such as RED-D<sup>2</sup> and voluntary carbon markets [overfocus on results-based payments](#) that seem common-sense from afar but pose major problems in practice, notably because of all the intermediary costs involved in measuring the evolution of carbon stocks on the ground.

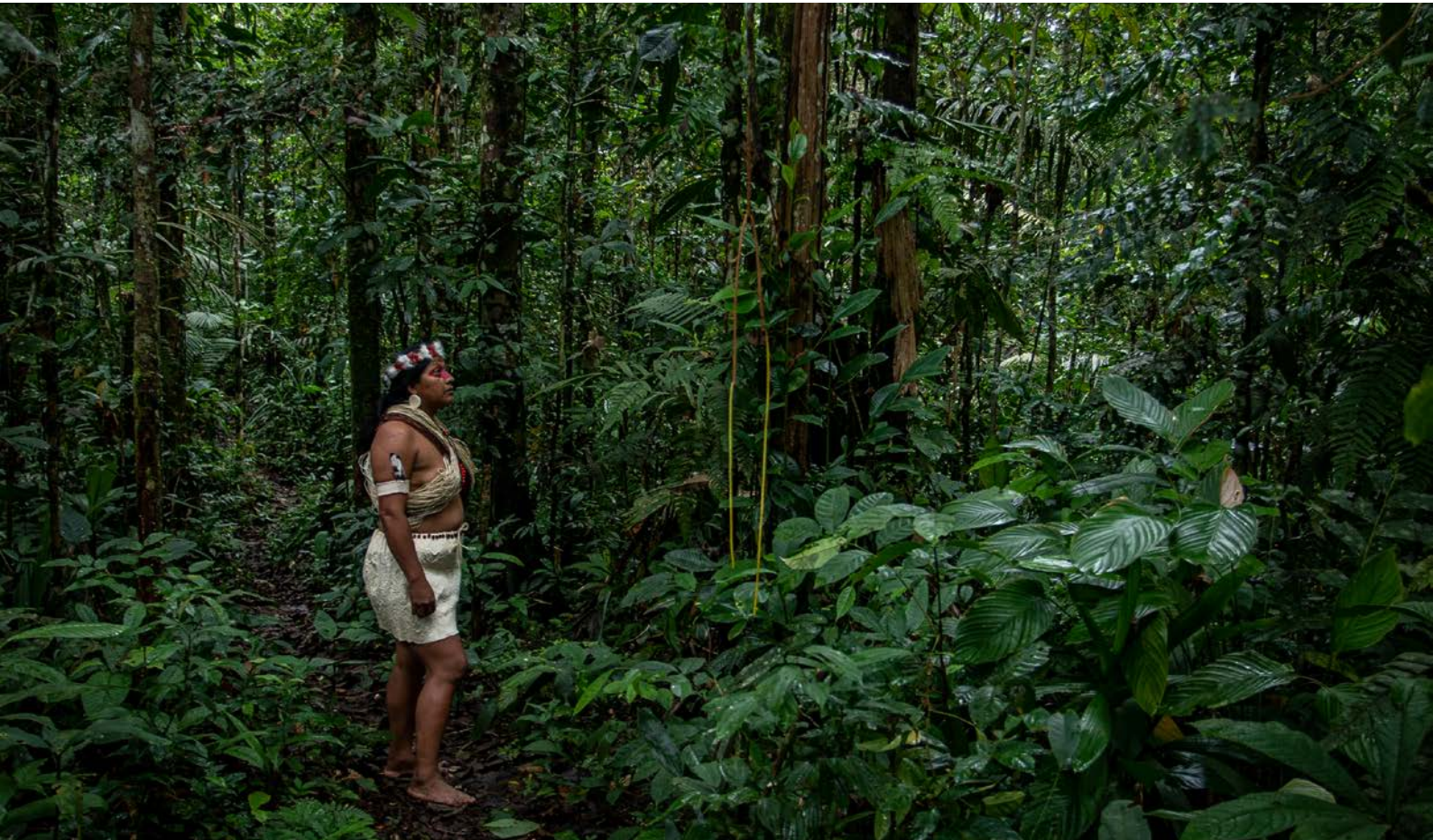
The latest development is the [proposal by Brazilian president Lula](#) to launch a fund to reward countries for the surface area of tropical forest on their territory. The idea is to compensate these countries for the “ecosystem services” they provide to the world by not cutting their forest (*e.g.*, to replace it with agriculture areas), through a form of bargain between environment and development. In practice, this can amount to compensating “avoided deforestation”, an issue that has been contentious for a long time, with several researchers [warning of the pitfalls of this approach](#) as early as the 2000s. Such an approach usually entails comparing scenarios of how forest surface and/or carbon stocks would evolve in the absence of policies meant to avoid deforestation, leading to a strong incentive to exaggerate both the expected rates of future deforestation and the capacity of public action to avoid it.

On top of creating serious trust issues, this approach risks creating “hot air” (artificial emissions reduction) and also poses important ethical concerns. Even in the case where it’s not “avoided deforestation” that is rewarded, serious flaws persist. If the funds are just a form of rent for the existing forest area of a country, this could lead to sending large amounts of financing to countries where the government in place is actively dismantling environmental regulation and institutions that play a role in stopping deforestation – as was the case very recently in Brazil under the Bolsonaro administration, and could happen elsewhere.

What other options do we have? The drivers of deforestation are multiple but they are all rooted in issues of poverty and development, in issues pertaining to land rights, in how certain economic sectors operate nationally (agriculture, timber), and how these sectors are connected to and influenced by international trade. On all of these issues, governments can act through regulations and economic incentives.

Instead of overfocusing on the “result”, we need to urgently act on these drivers, and to [develop a stronger international cooperation](#) so that the international financing to stop deforestation is geared towards supporting sustainable development strategies that would benefit both local populations and the international community.

As [Avaaz suggested during COP27](#), the logic of Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETPs) could be emulated (and made better) for all the other sectors that need to be decarbonized, including the sectors that are primarily involved in deforestation in different countries. As outlined above already, in many places it is the IPs and LCs who are at the forefront of tropical forest conservation, and the issues pertaining to their rights should be front and center in such an approach.



### **3. Conclusion: from COP28 to COP30, the work begins now for all of us**

What happens at a COP doesn't stay at a COP. It has ramifications at national levels and other areas of international cooperation. But it also connects with, and partly determines, the agendas of the COPs to come. COP30 in 2025 will be a major landmark this decade, and it is already around the corner.

In 2015, a series of landmark international decisions and agreements were achieved: the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement on climate. Together, they renewed the international cooperation framework on human development within the ecological limits of the planet.

Ten years after 2015, 2025 could similarly be a year of convergence. The follow-up to the Addis Ababa conference, the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, (sometimes known as "Addis Ababa +10") will take place in 2025. Then, a year after its G21 summit, Brazil will host COP30, in the heart of the Amazon forest. After the Global Stocktake in 2023 and the related decisions at COP28, countries will have until the end of 2025 (COP30 being a likely deadline) to submit revised Nationally Determined Contributions. COP30 should thus be the COP where global climate ambition until the end of the decade will be assessed and discussed, and the question of funding will surely be on the table. Furthermore, a new, post-2025 collective climate finance goal (known as the "New Collective Quantified Goal")

### 3. Conclusion: from COP28 to COP30, the work begins now for all of us

- NCQG), superseding the “US\$ 100 billion per year” is supposed to be adopted in 2024 at COP29. The question of how to implement this goal will most likely be on the table at COP30. And, if countries do not manage to agree on it at COP29, it will be even higher on the agenda of COP30.

Finally, 2025 will be of symbolic importance, marking the five-year deadline to achieve the SDGs. The [2023 SDG Summit](#) ended with calls and commitments to accelerate and mobilize much more funding; two years after, results are unlikely to deliver on the necessary commitments. In this case, the 5-year deadline will give even stronger political impetus and opportunity, especially to developing countries.

In this context, Brazil must develop a strong leadership right now, one that is more encompassing than the topic of “payment for ecosystem services” and that will be at the level to put multilateralism back on track for the rest of the decade. The signals sent by Brazil are worrying. On one hand, the expansion of oil extraction in the Amazon and the joining of OPEC+ and, on the other, the push for a “rentier” behavior for forested countries, all in the guise of development and justice, appear for now more as short-sighted maneuvers rather than the foundations of what could become a solid ambition for the years to come. We also must note that this expansion of fossil fuels, while on the other hand relying on carbon sinks to keep cleaning up the mess, is the typical greenwashing behavior that private companies are criticized for, and the behavior of wealthy countries that Lula himself [criticizes](#) as colonial behaviors. These lines are making Brazil lose a lot of credibility.

We believe that remembering the spirit of Rio 1992 would be helpful here: the idea is to achieve a new global social contract, and not stay stuck at the level of mere bargaining and tactical shots. All Parties have a responsibility here: leaders of rich nations must accept the imperative to share more and diminish their average footprint (which in many cases will mean addressing blatant inequalities at home, too). And leaders of developing nations must stop basing their political narratives on the promise of a material “development” that

is meant to catch up with the consumerism of the world’s wealthiest. This is a dead end, and we must collectively expect our politicians to speak these hard truths to all of us, because there is no way around them.

This is why we would like to conclude on a message to all, but civil society in particular. We need to pay much more attention to what can lock or unlock climate action worldwide, and notably, be attentive to national elections in the coming years. If you take the strongest economies of the world (G21), what we see is that economic inequalities and the associated sense of betrayal by elites are pushing the electorate towards more conservative and authoritarian politicians in many countries around the world.

Several national elections will take place in the coming years, and some of them might change what the G21 looks like. Between now and the end of 2025, most G20 members will have general elections: Australia, Canada, the European Union, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, the United Kingdom, the United States, South Africa, and South Korea. The African Union is now an official member of the G21, and there will be 25 general elections in Africa by the end of 2025. These elections could strongly determine how far we will be able to go on the road to 2030.

Working together, at a global scale, will be of utmost importance. The opponents of [economic and ecological justice](#) are very similar, wherever we find ourselves in the world. As a final word, for now, Avaaz invites members of civil society (ourselves included), from the Global North, South, East, West, to better reflect on this point for the mobilizations ahead. Fragmentation is surely affecting us, too; but those opposing change are more united than ever. We must find ways to better work together, on the international agenda of course, but also during national elections and other campaigns to come.

We are sure your comments will be useful for our work, so please never hesitate to reach out. This could give us a chance to understand each other better and imagine a path to sustainability and justice that we could walk together.

## About Avaaz

Avaaz - meaning “voice” in several European, Middle Eastern and Asian languages– launched in 2007 with a simple democratic mission: organize citizens of all nations to close the gap between the world we have and the world most people everywhere want. Currently, Avaaz has a membership of almost 70 million people from all countries and territories.

Avaaz empowers millions of people from all walks of life to take action on pressing global, regional and national issues, from corruption and poverty to conflict and the environment. Our model of internet organising allows thousands of individual efforts, however small, to be rapidly combined into a collective force.

Each year, Avaaz sets overall priorities through all-member polls. For 2023, our membership has chosen the following top five priorities: responding to the climate crisis (64%), fighting destruction of biodiversity (64%), defending democracy from the far-right and autocratic attacks (45%) and defending human rights (45%).

In other words, the Avaaz staff doesn't set an agenda in advance and then try to convince members to go along with it.

It's quite the opposite: Avaaz staff create actions that are in line with priorities chosen by members. Because Avaaz is wholly member-funded, democratic accountability is in our DNA: we don't accept funds from governments, corporations, political parties, or foundations, and have policies in place to limit disproportionate influence of high net worth individuals: we thus only receive small individual donations, and the highest amount we can accept is US\$ 5,000.

Our community runs campaigns in 17 languages, served by a core team on 6 continents and thousands of volunteers. We take action -delivering petitions, researching, emailing, lobbying governments, organizing “offline” protests and events, and funding grassroots campaigns, litigation, or direct actions on the ground- to ensure that the views and values of the world's people inform the decisions that affect us all.

Avaaz is mobilized on all three Rio conventions through engaging with civil society at the national and global level, and with officials from Parties and international organizations to connect each sector of society in the common goal of moving towards a sustainable future.

## Credits

### Supervision

Diego Casaes and Laura Moraes  
*Campaign Directors*

### Coordination

Miguel Soto  
*Senior Campaigner*

### Authors

Diego Casaes  
*Campaign Director*

Edda Fernandez Luiselli  
*Senior Policy Advisor*

Aleksandar Rankovic  
*Senior Policy Advisor*

### Contributors

Miguel Soto  
*Senior Campaigner*

Emilio Spataro  
*Policy Advisor*

Dudu Lessa  
*Senior Campaigner*

Liliana Harrington  
*Campaigner*

Lillian Sobral  
*Campaigner*

Luciana Weyne  
*Media Campaigner*

Raul Estrada  
*Media Consultant*

### Proofreading

Johnny Shaw

Lilliana Harrington

Chris Miller

### Copy Editor

Raúl Estrada

### Design

Gustavo Lo Valvo

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