



PERU

A PRIMER ON DEFORESTATION FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND FAITH COMMUNITIES

Peru is the fourth largest rainforest country in the world and one of the most biodiverse areas of the world. Although deforestation in Peru has traditionally been very low, largely due to the difficulty of forest access, roughly 1,100 square miles of Peru's forests are cut down every year—around 80 percent of them illegally. This forest loss accounts for nearly half of the country's greenhouse gas emissions. The main drivers of deforestation in Peru are agriculture and livestock, gold-mining, roads and illegal logging. The expansion of oil and gas drilling also poses a major threat to Peru's rainforests.





PERU'S FORESTS ARE A SACRED TRUST

Peru is blessed as one of the great forest nations of the world. Its forests cover more than half of the country,⁶ and its tropical forest cover is the fourth largest in the world.⁷ Much of Peru's tropical forest area is found in the Amazon region, but tropical forests also grace the Pacific coastal region and the Andes. An important aspect of Peru's rich forest endowment is its substantial population of indigenous peoples, whose centuries-old knowledge and skill in caring for forests are critical to their conservation.

Peru's vast forests help make it one of the most biodiverse countries in the world.⁷ Indeed, it is one of the few that qualify as megadiverse, a term reserved for the world's top biodiversity-rich countries, particularly those with many species found nowhere else (endemic species).⁸ Many of its plant and animal species are unique to the country.⁴ Peru is home to the second highest diversity of bird species, and the fifth highest diversity of mammals, amphibians and plants in the world.⁹ In fact, about one tenth of all plant species are found in Peru.¹⁰ Much of this biodiversity is associated with forest ecosystems, especially the Amazon, of which Peru hosts the second largest area after Brazil.⁷

The Ministry of Environment estimates that biodiversity supports almost a quarter of the Peruvian economy.¹¹ In the commercial sector, forests supply a range of timber and nontimber forest products. In 2010, for example, exports of timber and nontimber forest products generated more than US\$ 500 million for the Peruvian economy.^{7,11} At the local level, more than 300,000 Peruvians depend directly on forest ecosystems.¹² Forests also provide economically important ecosystem services such as the storage and cycling of water and carbon, disease control, and opportunities for ecotourism, a growing sector in Peru that could account for over one-tenth of Peru's GDP by 2026.^{7,11,13}

Unfortunately, because of deforestation and forest degradation, Peru's rich endowment of biodiversity is threatened: the tropical Andes, ranging from Colombia to Peru, are one of the 25 global biodiversity hotspots—areas where exceptional concentrations of endemic species are undergoing rapid loss of habitat.¹⁰



Peru is home to the second highest diversity of bird species, and the fifth highest diversity of mammals, amphibians and plants in the world.

PERU'S FORESTS FACE GRAVE THREATS



Historically, deforestation levels in Peru have been low compared to other countries,⁵ mainly due to the impenetrability of Peru's forests and a lack of suitable agricultural conditions.¹⁴ But forest loss and especially forest degradation are increasing problems within the Amazon and the Andean foothills.^{4,15,16} Between 2001 and 2017, Peru lost 2.67 million hectares (3.4 percent) of its tree cover.⁶ About 80 percent of the deforestation and forest degradation in the country is due to illegal activities such as logging and mining,¹² and social conflicts have increased in the last few years as a result of increasing pressure on forests.^{11,17,18} In 2015, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) listed Peru as a one of 11 "top deforestation fronts" to highlight the fact that levels of forest loss and degradation are on track to be among the world's highest by 2030.^{12,19}

Forest loss in the Peruvian Amazon is responsible for the emission of 57 million tons of carbon dioxide each year.¹¹ Deforestation has also been linked to increased incidence of malaria, as human biting by malaria-carrying mosquitoes increases in areas associated with forest loss.²⁰

The national "Monitoring of the Andean Amazon Project" (MAAP) offers hope for Peruvian forests, given its finding that deforestation fell by 13 percent between 2016 and 2017.²¹ However, the rate of forest loss remains a serious concern,²¹ in part because almost a quarter of Peru's Amazon forests have no formal legal status and are not recognized as indigenous territories, putting them at greater risk of deforestation.⁴

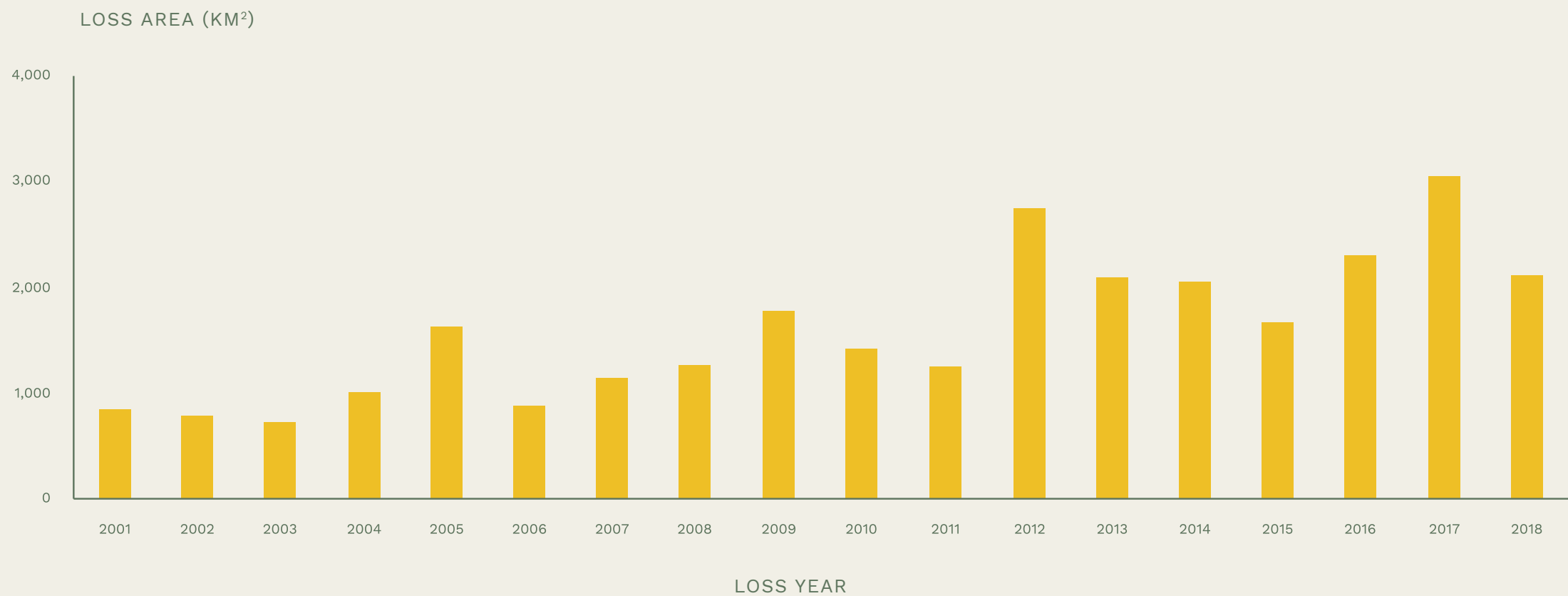


FIGURE 1. INDONESIA TREE LOSS, 2001 TO 2018

Source: Global Forest Watch, Open Data Portal, 2019



WHAT IS CAUSING PERU'S DEFORESTATION?

Agriculture and livestock expansion, including conversion of forests for cattle pasture, coffee, plantations of coca and other illegal crops, and increasingly palm oil,²² are major drivers of deforestation in Peru. Illegal logging, expansion of oil and gas concessions, and gold mining also play a major role in forest loss and degradation.^{4,17,18,23-30} Mining has intensified and now reaches even into protected areas, including the Tambopata Natural Reserve, where mercury has poisoned rivers and environmental defenders have been killed.^{13,21,29} The construction of roads and other infrastructure are also potent threats. For example, a 700-kilometer road connecting Iquitos and Saramisa is planned through the heart of Peru's largest rainforest province, and is slated to pass through several indigenous peoples' territories and protected areas, including an area inhabited by uncontacted indigenous groups.³¹

Gold mining has expanded even into protected areas such as the Tambopata Natural Reserve.

A close-up photograph of two indigenous women from Peru, smiling warmly. They have dark hair and are wearing traditional headbands. The background is a blurred natural setting.

PROTECTING PERU'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Peru is a multicultural and ethnically diverse country that is home to more than 4.3 million indigenous people.³ According to the Ministry of Culture, the indigenous population comprises 55 distinct groups—51 in the Peruvian Amazon and four in the Andes—whose people speak 47 languages.³² Peru is also home to an estimated 14 uncontacted tribes.³³ Indigenous peoples within the country directly depend on the Andean and Amazonian forests for their livelihoods.^{7,13} They are also the main inhabitants of the Peruvian Amazon.⁷

Indigenous communities have rights to almost one-fifth of Peru's Amazon.⁴ However, the struggle for indigenous rights to forest tenure has been difficult in Peru,³⁶ and has been characterised by multiple reforms, heated conflicts, competing interests, changing political priorities, and inch-by-inch

progress.^{7,34,35} Explicit recognition of indigenous land rights was first granted in 1974, but legal and other battles continued. As late as 2009, confrontations between government authorities and indigenous people over forest regulations resulted in unrest causing 33 deaths.³⁴ Since then, interest in meeting climate goals has provided a platform for advancing indigenous rights, and procedures for recognizing those rights have improved.³⁴ This historic struggle for tenure rights has fostered the creation of indigenous organizations that have achieved successes at local, national and regional levels within the Amazon.

Today, for example, titles are granted to indigenous communities for the sustainable use of forest resources for both subsistence and commercial activities.⁷ By 2016, 1,365 indigenous communities had been granted title to

more than 13 million hectares of land across the Amazon (almost one-fifth of Peru's forest area).^{11,34} 2.8 million hectares of reserves have also been established to protect indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation (i.e., those who avoid contact with mainstream society), and another 2.2 million hectares for areas shared by communities.^{34,36}

Despite these important gains, claiming legal rights remains difficult and costly, and many indigenous communities living in Peru's forests still lack formally recognised rights.^{33,34} Unfortunately, land-titling policies often do not sufficiently accommodate indigenous land management practices, resulting in rights of use being granted for areas too small and too degraded to sustainably support the traditional lifestyles of indigenous communities.³⁴

Even where land rights are granted, indigenous lands in Peru are often challenged by overlapping government concessions.³⁸ In some cases, large-scale extractive and infrastructure projects permitted by the Peruvian government in indigenous territories—including those of indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation—are having considerable negative environmental and social impacts.^{18,35,37,39} Concessions are usually granted without Free, Prior and Informed consent (FPIC), despite it being guaranteed under both Peruvian and international law.¹⁸ To make things worse, illegal logging is also putting pressure on indigenous lands across the Amazon.³⁹

Compared to the mainstream population, Peru's indigenous peoples often lack access to basic services such as medicine, education, access to markets, sanitation, and effective transport options. They also face discrimination, oppression and violence as they fight for recognition of their rights.

Legal recognition and protection of indigenous and community forest rights would bring huge benefits for forest conservation and climate regulation.⁴⁰ A study of the effects of land titling on the Peruvian Amazon found that titling reduced deforestation and forest disturbance by as much as 81 percent in the first year after title was granted, and by 56 percent the year after.⁴⁰

AMARAKAERI COMMUNAL RESERVE⁴¹⁻⁴³

The Harakbut, Yine and Matsigenka peoples co-manage the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve in Peru, together with the Servicio Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas por el Estado (SERNANP - National Service of Protected Areas). The objective is to protect traditional practices and knowledge, as well as biodiversity, within the Reserve. Established in 2002, Amarakaeri is one of the ten communal reserves created to integrate the protection of local flora and fauna with indigenous rights, and as part of the national system of protected areas it is off-limits to extractive activities. It is the largest communal reserve in Peru, covering an area of more than 400,000 hectares. The Harakbut, Yine and Matsigenka peoples established the first Amazon Indigenous REDD+ project to access international funds for their work safeguarding the Amarakaeri forest ecosystem. Thus, their efforts and traditional knowledge contribute to global action to mitigate climate change. In January 2018, representatives of the Harakbut people addressed Pope Francis on behalf of the indigenous peoples of the Peruvian Amazon, highlighting their struggle against the exploitation of nature and the suffering they face as the protectors of the country's natural heritage.

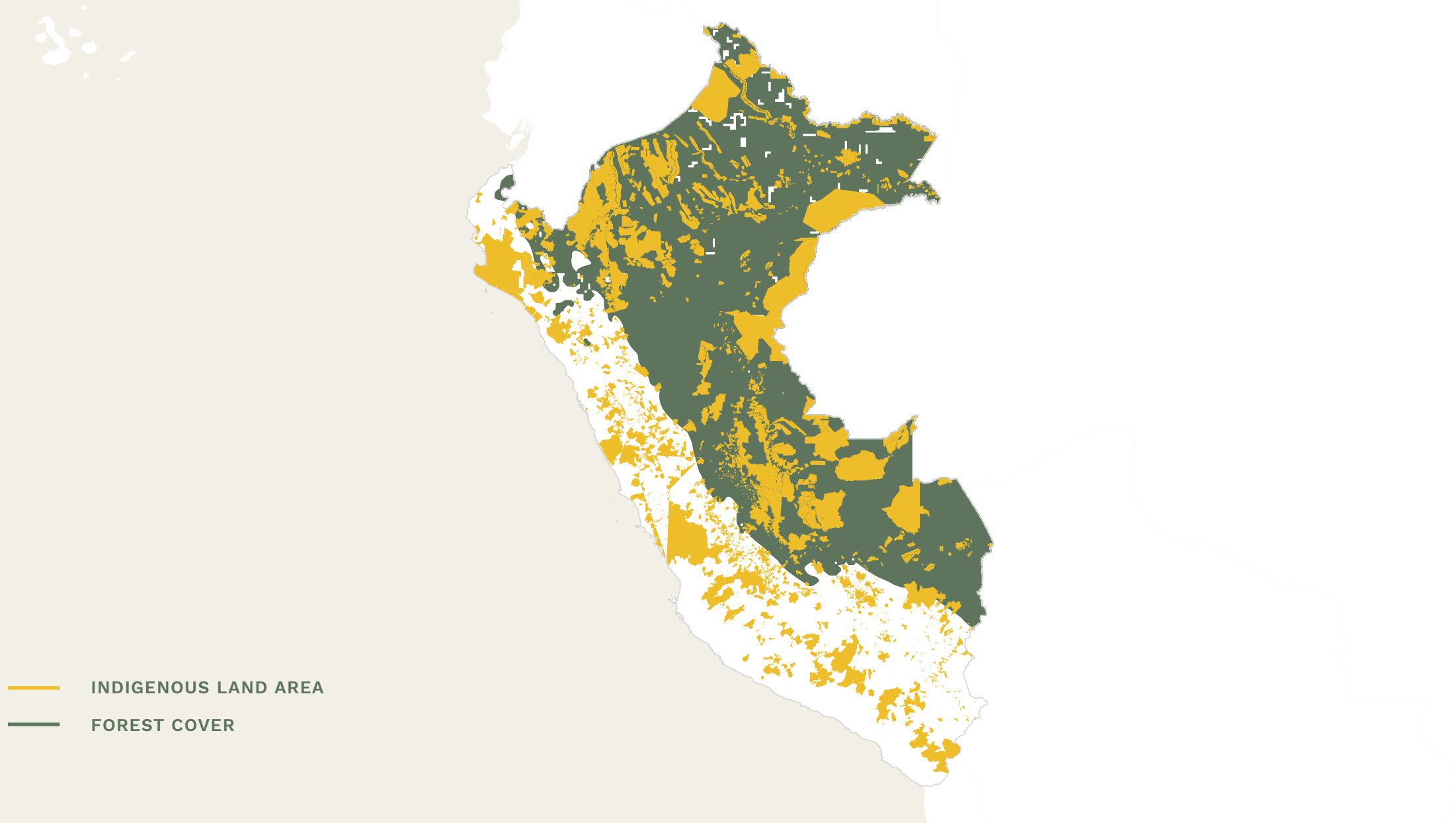


FIGURE 2. FOREST COVER AND INDIGENOUS LAND AREA IN INDONESIA

Source: Garnett, S.T., Burgess, N.D., Fa, J.E., Fernández-Llamazares, Á., Molnár, Z., Robinson, C.J., Watson, J.E.M., Zander, K.K., Austin, B., Brondizio, E.S. et al. 2018. A spatial overview of the global importance of Indigenous lands for conservation. *Nature Sustainability*, 1(7): 369–374. Hansen, M. C., P. V. Potapov, R. Moore, M. Hancher, S. A. Turubanova, A. Tyukavina, D. Thau, S. V. Stehman, S. J. Goetz, T. R. Loveland, A. Kommareddy, A. Egorov, L. Chini, C. O. Justice, and J. R. G. Townshend. 2013. "High-Resolution Global Maps of 21st-Century Forest Cover Change." *Science* 342 (15 November): 850–53. Data available on-line from: <http://earthenginepartners.appspot.com/science-2013-global-forest>.

The boundaries and names shown and the designation used on maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by UN Environment or contributory organisations.

KEY COMMITMENTS AND INITIATIVES

INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

Under the Paris Agreement, which Peru ratified in 2016, the country committed to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent compared with business as usual by 2030 (30 percent if international support becomes available).⁴⁴

Peru's framework law on climate change, passed in 2018, effectively made Peru's international emissions reduction commitment legally binding.⁴⁵ Forest conservation and sustainable management are a major part of Peru's climate strategy, accounting for more than 70 percent of the mitigation needed to achieve its national targets, according to the government.⁴⁶ In 2014, Peru endorsed the New York Declaration on Forests,⁴⁷ committing to do its part to halve the rate of loss of natural forests globally by 2020 and end natural forest

loss by 2030.⁴⁸ Under the Bonn Challenge and Initiative 20x20, a regional effort to restore 20 million hectares of land in Latin America and the Caribbean by 2020, Peru committed to restore 3.2 million hectares of degraded forest.⁴⁹ In addition, Peru's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan aims to reduce by 5 percent the degradation of all ecosystems by 2020, and of forests in particular. This ambition aligns with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets set out under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

BILATERAL COOPERATION AND REDD+

REDD+ is an international climate mitigation strategy with the goal of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in tropical forest

countries, while providing sustainable development benefits to participating communities. It does this, in part, by providing financial incentives for sustainably managing forests, and halting or reversing forest loss.

In September 2014, Peru, Germany and Norway entered into a partnership to support Peru's REDD+ efforts in the Peruvian Amazon.⁵⁰ Under the agreement, Norway committed to pay up to US\$ 300 million for verified emission reductions through 2020, while Germany committed to continue its support on climate and forest issues and to consider further contributions based on Peru's performance on emissions reductions. Peru committed to immediate action to reduce forest-related emissions and make its forest and agriculture sector carbon neutral by 2021, with a focus on transparency, accountability and multi-stakeholder participation; land rights and land use; and emission reductions.⁵¹

The agreement includes concrete commitments to advance the rights of indigenous peoples, including promoting full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in REDD+ planning and implementation; respecting the rights of indigenous communities to give or withhold their Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in relation to any operations on lands to which they hold legal, communal or customary rights; and titling an additional 5 million hectares of indigenous lands.⁵¹

In 2016, Peru adopted its National Strategy on Forests and Climate Change, which outlines the country's intentions to promote sustainable forest management and conservation and increase carbon stocks in line with national policies and international commitments. The strategy also addresses key concepts and principles for the implementation of REDD+ in Peru.⁴

AMAZONIAN INDIGENOUS REDD+ / REDD+ INDÍGENA AMAZÓNICA^{12,52}

Given their role as guardians of tropical forests and their unique vulnerability to climate change, indigenous peoples of the Amazon, working together under the

umbrella organization Coordinator of Indigenous Organisations of the Amazon Basin (COICA), have developed a proposal for "Amazonian Indigenous REDD+" to ensure that REDD+ mechanisms incorporate indigenous knowledge, respect indigenous ways of life, and provide benefits to indigenous communities. Amazonian Indigenous REDD+ promotes a broad valuation of forests' ecosystem services beyond carbon capture, as well as a holistic approach to the management of indigenous territories for productive conservation.

The development and implementation of "life plans" are central to the initiative. These are strategies developed by indigenous peoples that outline visions for sustainable development and income generation that are aligned with the protection of their forests, land and traditional ways of life. Life plans might involve, for example, forest uses including agroforestry, handicrafts, experiential tourism, medicinal programs, and ecological initiatives, among others. The life plans form a framework for the establishment of compensation mechanisms that align with the visions and priorities of indigenous peoples.

Also central to Amazonian Indigenous REDD+ are the recognition, demarcation and titling of indigenous territories to address overlapping rights, and implementation of national and regional strategies to reduce pressure on forests by extractive industries that harm indigenous territories. Amazonian Indigenous REDD+ also promotes indigenous participation in monitoring forest loss and forest health.

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY FOREST MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT⁵⁸

Indigenous communities are using cutting-edge tools to enhance their capacity to protect forests. In a study of deforestation in the 17-million hectare Yavarí Tapiche Territorial Corridor in central-eastern Peru, the Regional Organization of Indigenous Peoples of the East (ORPIO), with support from Rainforest Foundation Norway, has used the Ministry of Environment's Monitoring

Platform for Changes in Forest Coverage tool to identify the causes, magnitude and dynamics of deforestation in the Corridor, and to project its social and environmental impacts. This work will allow indigenous peoples and their partners to identify strategies to stop deforestation and mitigate its impacts on indigenous peoples, local communities and the local environment.

CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVES

The Monitoring of the Andean Amazon Project (MAAP) is an initiative of the nonprofit Amazon Conservation Association (ACA), dedicated to monitoring deforestation in near-real time. MAAP is a web-based portal dedicated to distributing technical information in an easy-to-understand format to policy-makers, civil society, researchers, the media and the general public, with the goal of enabling changes in policy and practice that minimize future deforestation and promote conservation in the Andean Amazon.²⁴

In 2017, the foundation AMPA Peru won the Green Latin-American Award with their “Gastronomy and Conservation” project, which connects the Peruvian gastronomy scene (Peru has become a culinary hotspot) with the sustainable use of natural resources from the Amazon. The project challenges the assumption that the rainforest must be destroyed and replaced with commercial cultivation in order to produce food, and instead promotes the use and marketing of local vegetables, fish or fruit produced by indigenous communities.⁵³

The Children’s Land (TiNi) initiative instills in children an understanding of how and why we should protect, nurture and restore natural ecosystems and promote sustainability. A “TiNi” is a small area of land designated for children, where they learn to collect seeds and propagate useful native species. The Children’s Land methodology, conceived by the Association for Children and their Environment (ANIA), provides tools for schools to teach about sustainable

development and create “green classrooms.” To date, TiNis have been initiated in urban and rural areas throughout 12 regions of Peru, and more than 20,000 children have participated in the program.⁵⁴

Peru’s Instituto de Bien Común (IBC) collaborates with indigenous communities in the Amazon to develop life plans—community-level sustainable development plans that integrate social, cultural, economic, political and territorial aspects of community land governance. Additionally, IBC has mapped indigenous community territories since 1998 and assisted communities in securing community land titles for their territories. Today, IBC has the most extensive land registry in Peru, even beyond that of the government.⁵⁵

The Center for Amazonian Science and Innovation (CINCIA) is the leading research institution for environmental research and technological innovation for biological conservation and environmental restoration in the Peruvian Amazon region. CINCIA focuses on developing solutions to reforest and restore degraded areas in the Peruvian Amazon.⁵⁶

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HOW RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES CAN GET INVOLVED



Religious believers and spiritual communities have a unique role to play in protecting Peru's rainforests and supporting its indigenous peoples. The ethical case for caring for the planet is deeply rooted in all of the world's religious traditions, and now is the time to reinvigorate and mobilize our respective spiritual resources, our influence, and our moral authority to collectively make the case that rainforests are a sacred trust and that tropical deforestation is a sanctity of life issue: it is wrong and it must stop.

Peruvian religious believers can take action at several different levels, including regulating their personal choices and working through their religious institutions to promote education about the value of and dangers to rainforests, advocate for economic choices that safeguard rainforests, and pursue coordinated political initiatives that combat deforestation and support indigenous peoples' rights.

PERSONAL CHOICES

People of faith can honor the planet and forests by making conscious and informed decisions that signal an awareness of where and how their food and consumer items are sourced and who produces them. Diet is one area where personal choice can directly support rainforest health. A shift toward a plant-based diet and eating less meat, particularly beef, is one of the most powerful personal choices any individual can make in solidarity with rainforests, since beef and soy production (much of it used as cattle feed) are important drivers of deforestation. Indeed, animal raising is remarkably land-intensive: supplying meat to a global population requires two-thirds of the world's agricultural land, including pastureland and cropland for feed. This extensive area is often taken from forests. Even reducing meat to intake twice a week can make a measurable impact. Reducing meat consumption also reduces pressure on a range of agricultural resources beyond forest land. Water use, fertilizer production, and greenhouse gas emissions that drive climate change—each of these declines substantially for every foregone kilo of meat.

As with meat, religious believers can make informed consumer choices around palm oil, paper, and wood products. Consumers can look for products made by companies committed to zero deforestation and ensure that up and down their supply-chains there is no activity that negatively impacts forests. This means choosing paper, wood, and other products made from 100 percent post-consumer content materials and opting for virgin wood products certified by reputable authorities such as the Forest Stewardship Council.

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY ACTIVITY

Religious believers can also help to address deforestation by working with and through their own religious institutions. More than 85 percent of people in the world have a religious affiliation, making the religious public a formidable force

for positive social and environmental change when they and their institutions pursue a common goal. Religious institutions and places of worship can incorporate forests into existing communal religious activities and practices—such as liturgies, large prayer gatherings, or celebrations around festivals, feasts, or commemorations. For example, communities that emphasize fasting can include a notion of “fasting for the forest.” And communities can set aside particular periods to pray for the forests.

Religious communities, congregations, universities, schools and places of worship can also counter deforestation by protecting trees on religiously owned land. This can involve declaring protected forests, putting in place prohibitions on deforestation or hunting wildlife, or restoring degraded lands. Many of these practices have been adopted by Hindus in India, Christians in Africa, Buddhists in Thailand and Cambodia, and followers of Shinto in Japan. Because places of worship are community gathering spots, they can help to set norms around respecting and protecting forests and biodiversity. In Ethiopia, for example, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, a Christian denomination that traces its lineage to the first century, is credited with saving many of the nation's remaining trees. Its churches have planted more than 1000 “sacred forests,” each averaging a few football fields in size, around its many churches. The forests are seen as the “clothing” of the churches, serving as community centers, meeting places, schools, and burial grounds, in addition to providing shade for people and habitat for many species.

ECONOMIC ACTION

Every economic decision constitutes a moral decision. Businesses and investors that work in forest landscapes and that depend on forests for their products have a responsibility to social and environmental stewardship that can and must be guided by the world's religious communities. Investor movements driven by people of faith can exert shareholder pressure on

businesses by insisting that they adopt sustainable practices, clean up their supply chains, and respect the forests. Corporations run by people with religious convictions need to hear from religious leaders and places of worship that deforestation is a sanctity of life issue and that business practices that destroy forests and biodiversity and that disregard the rights of indigenous peoples and forest communities are in violation of the tenets of their faith.

Divestment can be another potent strategy, given the substantial financial assets and investment portfolios held by some faith groups. There is great potential for a faith-based movement that encourages divestment from industries that engage in deforestation and investment in renewable energy projects, community-based natural resource management and social enterprises that benefit local people and local economies, not multi-national corporations and their shareholders. Making the moral decision to refuse to fund activities that destroy forests is a powerful and effective avenue to bring about change. There is ample evidence to suggest that divestment from industries that damage the planet and a transition to ethical investing can change behavior and will ultimately encourage other investors to follow suit. The faith-based movement to divest from fossil fuels—from oil, coal and gas companies—provides an instructive example of what is possible when religious institutions take a stand in this regard.

EDUCATION

Religious leaders are often among the most trusted figures in any society, looked to for ethical and spiritual guidance on economic, social and political life. They are also teachers and conduits of education, awareness and learning. Religious leaders then are key actors in the effort to raise awareness about the deforestation crisis, the risks that deforestation poses to progress on climate change and sustainable development, and the entry points for people of faith to get into action to fight for the protection of forests. As such, one

of the best ways for religious leaders to take action on forest protection is to use their influence and authority to relay information and resources on the deforestation crisis to those in their congregation.

Some of the most powerful lessons to be taken from forests are not on deforestation rates and numbers of displaced indigenous peoples (important as these are), but lessons of the heart that teach appreciation of forests in their spiritual fullness. Attitudes toward forests and trees could be markedly changed for western audiences if forests were viewed primarily as a gift, rather than resources. Indigenous traditions have much to teach in this regard. Gratitude and sufficiency are familiar concepts to people of many faiths; it is not a stretch to imagine applying these attitudes widely in our consumption of palm oil, paper, wood, and other forest products. Such a shift could be transformational.

POLITICAL ACTION

Ending deforestation comes down to mobilizing sufficient political will. Until now, globally and in major rainforest countries, the enforcement of laws and policies around forest protection have been largely insufficient to stop the destruction. Religious believers, leaders and places of worship can help to influence public debate and public policies on forests and the rights of indigenous peoples, making them moral issues that demand a moral response from elected officials. Halting and reversing deforestation will require the cultivation of new public virtues and a seismic shift in values and the way that we as a human family understand and manage forests.

Many religious leaders are uniquely positioned to lobby governments at local, regional, national and global levels and other decision-making bodies that determine the policies and practices that govern forests and the rights of their guardians. Advocacy can take various forms, ranging from quiet

diplomacy and back-channel meetings to more public statements, campaigns, petitions and demonstrations around the moral and spiritual responsibility to protect forests. To be effective, coordination across sectors is critical, to ensure that advocacy by religious believers is bolstering and advancing campaigns and efforts already underway by the broader coalition of indigenous peoples, NGOs, multilateral organizations, and grassroots activists working to end deforestation. Religious leaders also have a role in holding political leaders accountable for past commitments, and encouraging greater ambition to new commitments over time.

MULTI-RELIGIOUS COLLABORATION

The gains from deploying religious resources in the fight against deforestation are multiplied when the world's religions stand together. This kind of cooperation can prove more powerful—symbolically and substantively—than unilateral action by individual religious groups. When religious communities demonstrate the ability to work closely together, they build credibility and trust among the population at large. When they speak with one voice on issues like forest protection, their moral authority is magnified, giving them greater ability to influence policies through their influence on individuals and institutions.

For more information on actions you can take to support rainforests in Peru, connect with the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative in Peru at peru@interfaithrainforest.org.

The ethical case for caring for the planet is deeply rooted in all of the world's religious traditions. Now is the time to mobilize our spiritual resources, our influence, and our moral authority to collectively make the case that rainforests are a sacred trust and that tropical deforestation is a sanctity of life issue: it is wrong and it must stop.

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ABOUT THIS PRIMER

This primer is part of a series of briefs meant to inform and inspire faith communities to action to help safeguard tropical forests and their inhabitants. Through facts, graphics, analysis, and photos, these primers present the moral case for conserving and restoring rainforest ecosystems, supported by the latest science and policy insights. They bring together the research and practical tools that faith communities and religious leaders need to better understand the importance of tropical forests, to advocate for their protection, and to raise awareness about the ethical responsibility that exists across faiths to take action to end tropical deforestation.

PARTNERS

The Interfaith Rainforest Initiative welcomes engagement by all organizations, institutions and individuals of good faith and conscience that are committed to the protection, restoration and sustainable management of rainforests.

INTERFAITH RAINFOREST INITIATIVE

The Interfaith Rainforest Initiative is an international, multi-faith alliance working to bring moral urgency and faith-based leadership to global efforts to end tropical deforestation. It is a platform for religious leaders and faith communities to work hand-in-hand with indigenous peoples, governments, NGOs and businesses on actions that protect rainforest and the rights of those that serve as their guardians. The Initiative believes the time has come for a worldwide movement for the care of tropical forests, one that is grounded in the inherent value of forests, and inspired by the values, ethics, and moral guidance of indigenous peoples and faith communities.

QUESTIONS?

The Interfaith Rainforest Initiative is eager to work with you to protect tropical forests and the rights of indigenous peoples. Contact us at info@interfaithrainforest.org.



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