

TIPPING POINT

Solutions from the Inside Out
21-23 September 2021



GLF
AMAZONIA

OUTCOME STATEMENT

KEY MESSAGES:

1. The Amazon will cease to exist as we know it if deforestation is not stopped.
2. Strengthening protected areas and indigenous rights is the most effective strategy to halt deforestation.
3. International efforts should be channeled to promote an Amazonian development model based on socio-environmental rights and local knowledge.
4. Value chain actors should make zero-deforestation a socially inclusive business.
5. Democratizing scientific technology and data triggers inclusive development in the Amazon.

WHY GLF AMAZONIA AND WHY NOW?

Amazonia, the world's largest tropical rainforest, is one of the most culturally and biologically diverse regions on Earth. Its forest floors and canopies vibrate with a tenth of all known life forms in the world across an area twice the size of India, while battling global warming by storing **some 200 billion tons** of carbon dioxide. The Amazon also holds spiritual significance for more than 410 ethnic groups – including both Afro-descendants and Indigenous Peoples. Yet this vibrant territory where multiple actors, livelihoods, and ideas coexist, compete and cooperate, is reaching a tipping point and, in some parts, is now emitting more CO₂ than it captures amid the vicious cycle of deforestation, climate change, drought and wildfires. 17% of the total forest cover has been converted for pasture, agriculture and infrastructure. The tipping point, estimated to occur at around 20-25% total deforestation in the Amazon: in order to avoid it, the world needs to act now!

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I want people from outside to hear us and to know that in reality we are fighting for life. This [fight] is not [only] for the life of Amazonian people, but for all humankind living on this planet.



Nemonte Nenquimo

Leader of the Ecuadorian Amazon's Waorani people

GLF Amazonia took place at a crucial time in a calendar marked by several landmark events, such as the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26) in Glasgow this year, and in 2022, the 30th anniversary of the Earth Summit held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. Voters in some Amazonian countries are deciding on their own political and environmental futures, with Peru recently electing a new president, and Colombia and Brazil set to go to the polls next year.

Against this backdrop, the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) held its digital conference **GLF Amazonia: The Tipping Point – Solutions From the Inside Out** on 21–23 September 2021, to canvas the views of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs); Afro-descendant Peoples (ADPs); farmers; conservation, development and other civil society organizations; community leaders; researchers; policymakers; financial investors and private sector representatives; youth groups; women's groups; activists; and other local and global actors. Their overarching message was clear: the protection of the Amazon is crucial for mitigating the global climate crisis and the survival of local, traditional and Indigenous communities in the Amazon.

WHAT HAPPENED AT GLF AMAZONIA?

More than 5,800 registered participants from 112 countries tuned in to the conference, which reached 27 million people on social media. About 3000 young people registered. Over 40 youth spoke in sessions across GLF Amazonia. These include, but are not limited to, the nine youth-led sessions held in Portuguese or Spanish.

GLF Amazonia featured 278 speakers, including **Benki Piyāko**, Asháninka community leader; **Leila Salazar-Lopez**, Amazon Watch executive director; **Manuel Pulgar Vidal**, a former environment minister of Peru; **Jazz Mota**, director of the Ava Amazônia Film Festival, and a range of other prominent stakeholders.

The **Amazonia Film Festival** also took place each day, with documentary screenings and Q&A sessions with the region's filmmakers. More than 60 journalists attended a **seminar** on

the reporting of environmental crimes organized along with Mongabay Latam, featuring experts and journalists from the World Resources Institute, the Bolivian Documentation and Information Centre (CEDIB), and the Kichwa people of Sarayaku in the Ecuadorian Amazon, among others.

GLF Amazonia **'launchpads'** showcased the results of locally led successful projects. One such project introduced young community-based storytellers from Madre de Dios, Peru, who presented short documentaries portraying their own stories of poverty, hardship and activism to protect the forest that is their home.

Want more? Catch up on sessions or download the White Paper


 [Download White paper](#)

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TAKING LOCAL ENGAGEMENT: A STEP FURTHER

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS:

- More than 50 percent of sessions and plenaries were hosted or co-hosted by organizations based in one of the nine Amazon countries (Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana), addressing the biocultural identities of the biome.
- Indigenous and Afro-descendant groups set the scene each day with special plenaries:
 1. **Voices of the landscapes: rights for sustainable landscapes**
 2. **Voices of the Landscapes: New paradigms for human-nature relations**
- A key outcome of GLF Amazonia was the launch of an urgent call to action titled: **"Life is one and is in our hands"** (available in **English**, **Spanish**, and **Portuguese**). It was developed by multiple civil society organizations representing local, Indigenous, and Afro-descendant

 **51**
sessions in three languages

 **278**
speakers

 **214**
speakers from the nine Amazonian regions

 **135**
partners

 **77** percent of participants were from Latin America & Caribbean

 **15,000+**
times were sessions, plenaries and launches viewed

 **27** million people were reached with key messages on social media

 **5,833**
registrants from 115 countries

 **57%**
of registered participants were women

presenting the diversity and complexity of cultural and geopolitical realities of the Amazon

voices, and endorsed by a number of local and global organizations. The statement is one result of the local engagement process in the Amazon region. It urges all governments, corporate leaders and investors in Amazonian countries, and those who import, consume or trade products from the Amazon, to act now to protect the biome and its peoples.

The statement calls for urgent action to maintain the Amazon's full ecological functions, diversity and beauty, and to protect its 30-million-plus population.

Since its inception in 2013, the GLF has been working closely with youth, Indigenous representatives and other local groups to support the implementation of **territorial or landscape approaches** to solve the most pressing development challenges of our time. These challenges include:

- a. tackling insecure tenure, community and gender rights;
- b. addressing food insecurity, declining rural livelihoods and falling health standards;
- c. restoring degraded ecosystems;
- d. protecting and conserving biodiverse landscapes; and
- e. promoting sustainable value chains and the responsible use of natural resources.

The GLF has been an accelerator of dialogue, incorporating local and Indigenous communities and their knowledge and practices, as well as innovative science-based technologies and investors.

GLF Amazonia is a new milestone in connecting local and national actors, acknowledging their socio-cultural realities and including them in the global policy dialogue: Through a 6-month long engagement with local experts on the **GLF Amazonia Knowledge Committee**, we did extensive local outreach and engagement for and socialization of GLF Amazonia. In a series of co-creation workshops, we engaged representatives from research institutes, environmentalists NGOs, IPLC rights NGOs, ADPs, youth and religious organizations from Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Ecuador. Together, we ensured that their needs, ambitions, and visions of a safe and prosperous future for themselves and their families were represented on the event's agenda by the strongest voices of their communities.

KEY MESSAGES

The key messages presented in this statement are expected to inform and influence ongoing discussions and political processes.

1. The Amazon will cease to exist as we know it if deforestation is not stopped

It is unquestionable that the Amazon is in danger of ceasing to be a rainforest, as deforestation rates, combined with rising temperatures, seasonal instability and wildfires, do not show signs of slowing down. The Amazon biome

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If we do not change the current path, we will achieve 20-25 percent loss of forest cover by the end of this decade. If we lose the Amazon, the global temperature can grow up to 0.25°C and Brazil can lose 25 percent of its rainfall. We cannot afford that – it is time to act now to reverse the trend by stopping deforestation and [forest] degradation and make the Amazon the powerhouse of action, practice and inspiration for the planet, where people and nature can thrive together.



Tasso Azevedo
Coordinator of MapBiomass

struggles to produce its own rain and shows signs of dieback – losing its function as water generating rainforest. This is the tipping point for the Amazon, and its early stages are already underway.

In July 2021, **Luciana Gatti** from Brazil's National Institute for Space Research (INPE) was lead author of a **study** that made headlines around the world, with the finding that parts of the Amazon are now emitting more carbon than they capture each year. Gatti was a speaker in several sessions at GLF Amazonia, drawing connections between the Amazon and its neighboring biomes, and explaining the consequences of a tipping point in the region.

2. Strengthening protected areas and indigenous rights is the most effective strategy to halt deforestation

Protected areas are the most effective, cheapest, and fairest way to halt deforestation, as evidence shows in the latest **FAO report** led by **David Kaimovitz**, one of GLF Amazonia's speakers. Based on an analysis of the approaches that have proven effective in recent decades, a set of investments and policies is proposed for adoption by climate funders and government decision makers in

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Global leaders have a fundamental responsibility to maintain protected areas and to support them with public policies that value local cultures and traditional livelihoods – and simply value the existence of its people!



Angela Mendes

Socio-environmental activist and coordinator of Chico Mendes Committee

collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and local groups. These measures include strengthening collective territorial rights, compensating for environmental services they provide, and strengthening territorial governance and local organizations. Such investments could significantly reduce expected carbon emissions at a low cost, in addition to offering many other social and environmental benefits.

But the indigenous territories that cover **35 percent of the biome** and are among the best protected, remain under threat from land grabbers, infrastructure development, and other means of exploitation, in addition to the effects of climate change and human-induced environmental degradation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also escalated threats to Indigenous groups, highlighting their insufficient access to healthcare and the lack of means to defend their lands. During the conference, Indigenous leader **Aventino Tirió** described how his people suffered from cases of COVID-19, despite being so far entrenched in the forest in the north of Brazil's Pará State in Indigenous territories that are only accessible by plane. "Our rights are threatened in a different way, and they are directly threatened by a lack of healthcare," he said.

Indigenous leaders and organizations called on global leaders to address the emergency of protecting the Amazon and its Indigenous lands. The protection and sustainability of the Amazon's biological and cultural wealth rests on the legal security, recognition and protection of rights, through direct political representation by democratic processes.

3. International efforts should be channeled to promote an Amazonian development model based on socio-environmental rights and local knowledge

While Amazonia's importance for climate change and biodiversity attracts most international attention, it is often overlooked that the region is still among the poorest on Earth. For decades, it was viewed as little more than an exporter of commodities such as beef, soy, mining and timber. Amazonians were forced to adhere to an economic model based on converting forests into other land uses, as if there were no economic alternative. While carbon markets, zero-deforestation commodity pathways, and other alternatives can be important to reducing deforestation and generating some economic prosperity, the best way to change the current scenario is to find an Amazonian development path that creates value for Amazonia's people—based on healthy forests as well as local values and traditions.

At GLF Amazonia, participants heard from entrepreneurs, producer association heads, and local leaders such as **Daniel Larrea**, **Isabel Castillo** and **Sara Hurtado** and the message was unanimous. The Amazon has huge potential to supply regional and global markets with tropical fruits, as well as ingredients and products for the growing organic personal-care industry, which is projected to reach **USD 23.6 billion** by 2027. Brazil nut, açai and palm fruits already support local livelihoods, and when grown sustainably generate important economic revenue while helping to preserve forests. Yet, despite this potential, the Amazonian share of global supply is still very small.

Amazonia needs a strong coalition promoting scientific innovation, capacity building and market development to support business entrepreneurs and local communities to upscale the production of already-marketable products, and to develop new products. This should be catalyzed by a strong influx of public and private investment: the whole world needs to be involved. Some of these investments should be channeled to **community funds** such as the **Dema Fund** and the **Babassu Fund**, which have been hugely successful in supporting autonomous development, combining the traditional knowledge of the communities with the academic training of younger generations.

It is critical that local knowledge is a key ingredient of the Amazonian development path. As many speakers at GLF Amazonia – such as **Romier da Paixão Sousa** and **Eduardo Góes Neves** mentioned, the practices employed

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In a world threatened by climate change, the push towards a more environmentally friendly economy is not an option: it is an obligation for every one of us.



Noelia Trillo

CEO of Forest Bambu



“Weaving the river” is an image of the children of the Ticuna community and their close relationship with the river, San Pedro de Los Lagos Amazonas Colombia. Photo by Yair Suárez Salazar

by the Amazon’s Indigenous Peoples to this day serve as a perfect example of how food production can and should be blended with biodiversity conservation. By combining various crops, animals, and trees with different spatial and seasonal arrangements, land users – including ancient people and modern farmers – design their farms to mimic natural processes. This leads to more productive crops and animals, as well as healthier ecosystems.

4. Value chain actors should make zero-deforestation a socially inclusive business

As expanding agricultural lands drives deforestation and threatens the rights and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, meaningful efforts have been made over the last decade by corporations and consumer countries to eliminate deforestation from the production of commodities such as soy, beef, cocoa, and coffee. We now need to strengthen this movement – in particular by calling on more private actors to adopt commitments, and incentivizing more ambitious and quicker targets. Governments and corporations play a key role in implementing traceability mechanisms along the upstream supply chain. Meanwhile, designing and implementing incentives to reward commodities with higher socio-environmental standards is vital to promoting change.

However, developing more stringent environmental regulations, as the European Union is doing, for commodities without considering broader landscape actors and dynamics doesn’t necessarily reduce deforestation and it may induce a range of perverse incentives, as mentioned by several GLF Amazonia speakers. For example, in the

Brazilian Amazon, nearly 600,000 smallholders may not be able to comply with EU environmental regulations; in the Peruvian Amazon, there are around 450,000 smallholders in the same situation. If these people aren’t supported by governments through proper measures to facilitate their rapid adoption of standards and best practices, they risk being excluded from the potential benefits of international trade, and will be tempted to pursue illegal economic activities, says [Marcello Brito](#), who leads the Brazilian Coalition on Climate, Forest and Agriculture. Condemning people to market exclusion also strengthens

“Commodities are not good or bad – their production or land use might be the problem. As such, it’s not the objective to reduce anything because of the commodity. In principle, we should rather change the patterns of consumption and production.



Hugo-Maria Schally

Head of the European Commission’s Multilateral Environmental Cooperation Unit

anti-environmental narratives associated with poverty and geopolitical interests, which create the conditions for less forest-friendly politicians to be elected, according to [Daniel Nepstad](#), executive director of the Earth Innovation Institute.

5. Democratizing scientific technology and data triggers inclusive development in the Amazon

The technological revolution offers immense opportunities to promote change in the Amazon – for example by supporting corporations to monitor suppliers, or Indigenous groups to protect their lands. Advances such as earth observation and geospatial information systems are playing an increasingly vital role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions through monitoring deforestation, fires and protected area networks. SERVIR, a NASA initiative that provides developing countries with satellite imagery to inform land-use decisions, provides “unprecedented depth” of insight into the changing planet, according to [Gavin Schmidt](#), NASA’s senior advisor on climate change. While these technologies do not provide solutions in and of themselves, they offer important information and support for driving political solutions. Making this data available

by democratizing it is the basis for a level playing field for all actors, especially marginalized groups, noted several scientists including [Louis Verchot](#) and [Ane Alencar](#).

Technological devices, specifically those with access to the Internet – such as mobile phones and computers – are already helping Indigenous Peoples such as the Waorani in Ecuador by enabling them to document transgressions and injustices, to access scientific knowledge, to record traditional know-how, obtain finance and demarcate their own lands. Technology can also help to transfer messages to authorities and translate Indigenous knowledge and concerns into actions, which can then be spread through the media and NGOs to influence state agencies and businesses, said [Lorenzo Pellegrini](#), an associate professor of the economics of environment and development at Erasmus University in Rotterdam. Another important advance in the role of technology is the use of satellite data to help enforce initiatives such as [Brazil’s Amazon Soy Moratorium](#). As mentioned by [Patricia Sugui](#), sustainability manager at food production company CJ Selecta, this has significantly reduced deforestation linked to soy, which has frequently affected Indigenous lands over the past decade.

GLF AMAZONIA

events.globallandscapesforum.org/amazon-2021/

Global Landscapes Forum

The Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) is the world’s largest knowledge-led platform on integrated land use, dedicated to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Climate Agreement. The Forum takes a holistic approach to create sustainable landscapes that are productive, prosperous, equitable and resilient and considers five cohesive themes of food and livelihood initiatives, landscape restoration, rights, finance and measuring progress. It is led by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), in collaboration with its co-founders UN Environment and the World Bank and Charter Members.

Charter Members: CIAT, CIFOR, CIRAD, Climate Focus, Conservation International, Crop Trust, Ecoagriculture Partners, The European Forest Institute, Evergreen Agriculture, FAO, FSC, GEF, GIZ, ICIMOD, IFOAM – Organics International, The International Livestock Research Institute, INBAR, IPMG, IUFRO, Rainforest Alliance, Rare, Rights and Resources Initiative, SAN, TMG–Think Tank for Sustainability, UNEP, Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation part of Wageningen Research, World Farmer Organization, World Agroforestry, World Bank Group, World Resources Institute, WWF International, Youth in Landscapes Initiative (YIL).

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