

INTERFAITH RAINFOREST INITIATIVE

Updates - September 2023

BRAZIL

IRI BRAZIL LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE WILDFIRES AND DEFORESTATION IN THE AMAZON STATES

The Amazon's dry season (July to October) aligns with the period when a significant portion of deforestation and forest fires takes place. The air pollution stemming from the toxic smoke produced by tree combustion spreads across the region, resulting in severe health issues for the population, economic setbacks, and environmental degradation. The concept for launching a public awareness campaign, aimed at mobilizing the population and influencing public authorities to reduce fire and deforestation rates this year, emerged during discussions of IRI Acre's local chapter action plan in June. It was named the "Campaign for the Right to Breathe Clean Air" with the goal of highlighting the importance of upholding the right to health and a balanced environment, as guaranteed by the Brazilian Constitution. Additionally, this theme was chosen to reach a broad audience, not solely those already attuned to ecological concerns. The campaign was initiated in July within the heart of Acre and expanded its reach to encompass all other Amazon states during the month of September, coinciding with the celebration of Amazon Day. Every religious leader and socio-environmental entity within IRI's extensive network of partners received two valuable resources: i) tailored Guidance Manuals designed for Catholic, Evangelical, Ayahuasca, Spiritist, and African matrix audiences, and ii) a comprehensive communications kit of social media message cards. In the initial four days of the campaign, IRI Brazil successfully engaged 6,400 individuals on Instagram. A total of 60,000 people were reached directly with the campaign.

IRI BRAZIL FACILITATES TRAINING VISIT FOR EVANGELICAL LEADERS AT CEMADEN AND INPE

Continuing its commitment to raise awareness and foster education for religious leaders on forests, climate change and the rights of indigenous peoples and traditional communities, IRI Brazil organized an immersion visit for 40 Evangelical leaders to the National Center for Monitoring and Alerting of Natural Disasters (CEMADEN) and the National Institute for Space Research (INPE) on September 26th and 27th. For this visit, the focus was on engaging Evangelical communicators active in the Amazon and across several influential capital cities of the country, with two groups: (i) seasoned professionals engaged with traditional media outlets, including radio, television, and evangelical newspapers, and (ii) young evangelical digital influencers. The first group brought together leaders and experts from prominent media companies hailing from 6 of the 9 states within the Legal Amazon region (Roraima, Pará, Acre, Maranhão, Amazonas, and Tocantins), along with representatives from other federal units (including the Federal District, Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, São Paulo, Paraná, and Espírito Santo). Among the young participants were influential figures, with some boasting

substantial followings, a few commanding audiences of 1 million followers on Instagram and over 7.5 million on TikTok. According to the monitoring conducted during and after the visit, all 14 digital influencers actively shared content across their social media platforms during the two-day event, collectively reaching a staggering 10 million people.

IRI BRAZIL PUBLISHES ARTICLE ADVOCATING FOR THE AMAZON, SIGNED BY RELIGIOUS LEADERS ON ADVISORY COUNCIL

The article titled "A Great Blessing Called the Amazon" was published in *Veja*, one of the country's most prominent magazines and news portals, with 52 million monthly website users. The article was also made available to non-subscribers, accessible at <https://veja.abril.com.br/brasil/artigo-uma-grande-bencao-chamada-amazonia>. Signatories of the article included: Pastor Romi Marcia Bencke – National Council of Christian Churches in Brazil (CONIC), Reverend Agnaldo Pereira Gomes – Religions for Peace Brazil, Reverend Áureo Rodrigues de Oliveira – Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil, Rabbi Guershon Kwasniewsk – Representative of Interreligious Dialogue, Brazilian Israelite Confederation (CONIB), Sheikh Mohamad Bukai – Director and Representative of the National Islamic Union (UNI), Father Marcus Barbosa – Catholic Church, Candomblé Priestess Angola Mametu Nangetu – Nangetu Institute of Afro Religious Tradition and Social Development, Carlos Vicente – National Coordinator of the Interreligious Initiative for Tropical Forests in Brazil (IRI Brazil).

IRI BRAZIL PARTICIPATES IN SPECIAL SESSION FOR AMAZON DAY IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

On September 4th, 2023, a special session was held in the Chamber of Deputies titled "Amazon Day - 35 Years of Chico Mendes' Legacy: Progress and Challenges for the Fight of Traditional Territories of Common Use in the Amazon in View of COP-30." Several public authorities participated in the event, including Ministers Marina Silva and Sônia Guajajara, along with members of the House of Deputies, Senators, and a significant number of extractivist leaders and small-scale farmers from the Amazon region associated with the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (CONTAG) and the National Council of Rubber Tappers (CNS). IRI Brazil played a role in organizing the event by screening the film "Amazônia Viva."

IRI BRAZIL SCREENS AMAZONIA VIVA AT KEY EVENTS

On September 20th and 21st, the National Council of the Ministry of Public Prosecution (CNMP) and the Brazilian Association of Environmental Public Prosecutors (ABRAMPA) jointly organized an event titled "Climate Change: An Interdisciplinary Approach" where IRI Brazil showcased its work and screened the film "Amazônia Viva". Similarly, the National Council of Rubber Tappers (CNS) organized the 2023 Social Biodiversity Week, an event that stands as one of the country's most significant gatherings dedicated to the extractive activities of indigenous peoples and traditional communities, uniting collective organizations from the rubber, pirarucu, and Amazonian nuts. The event brought together over 230 Amazonian extractivists with the aim of

exploring solutions that harmonize economic development with biodiversity conservation, and IRI Brazil participated in the event by presenting its work and screening the film "Amazônia Viva." Also, the Brazilian Agency for International Tourism Promotion (EMBRATUR) launched its international campaign, "Visit the Amazon," with the centerpiece being presentation of the "Amazônia Viva" virtual reality film. The film plays a pivotal role in EMBRATUR's communication strategy, and the campaign's overarching goal is to invigorate the tourism sector in the Amazon, fostering sustainable employment opportunities and income growth. IRI Brazil and EMBRATUR signed a Cooperative Agreement for the licensing of the film, starting retroactively in April. The film's screenings are set to feature prominently at trade fairs and exhibitions organized by EMBRATUR.

IRI BRAZIL CARRIES OUT STRATEGIC ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN AIMED AT THE SUPREME FEDERAL COURT AND REJECTION OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK “MARCO TEMPORAL”

The legal framework known as the Temporal Landmark (“Marco Temporal”) posed a threat to the constitutional rights of indigenous communities, particularly regarding the demarcation of their ancestral lands. IRI Brazil initiated a comprehensive campaign directed towards members of the Supreme Federal Court and the Senate's influential Agriculture and Constitution and Justice Committees, imploring them not to grant approval to Bill 2903/2023, which aligned with the controversial Temporary Landmark concept. IRI Brazil advocacy efforts were the result of close collaboration with a consortium of partner organizations, collectively extending the reach of the campaign to encompass every STF minister and all 44 senators involved in the legislative processes within the Senate committees. The IRI Brazil communication team crafted the campaign's content, which reverberated through its network of allies, including REPAM Brasil (Pan-Amazon Ecclesial Network), CONIC (National Council of Christian Churches of Brazil), the Laudato Si Movement, and COIAB (Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon). IRI Brazil's campaign was pivotal in firmly establishing its organizational stance against a proposal that could potentially erode the rights of indigenous communities, while also reinforcing its unwavering institutional support for their cause.

IRI BRAZIL SHOWCASES AMAZONIA VIVA AT FUTURE-FOCUSED MUSEUMS ENCOUNTER

Brazil hosted the inaugural "Future-Focused Museums Encounter" – FORMS, held at the Museum of Tomorrow in Rio de Janeiro from September 28th to October 1st, 2023. The event delved into diverse themes encompassing culture, science, nature, and society. IRI Brazil received an invitation to participate thanks to the significant impact of its work, fostering dialogue between faith, science, and traditional knowledge in support of Amazon preservation and the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples and traditional communities. The screening of the "Amazonia Viva" film captivated attendees, leading several museums to express keen interest in collaborating with IRI Brazil to develop programs in their respective countries.

IRI BRAZIL SCREENS AMAZONIA VIVA AT MUSEUM OF TOMORROW

The "Amazônia Viva" film takes center stage as one of the prime attractions at the Museum of Tomorrow in Rio de Janeiro, renowned as Brazil's foremost digital museum and among the best in the world. The film has been on display since June 5, 2023. Since then, 12,179 people have watched it, with 10,199 viewers in the months of July, August, and September. Reports on the impact on the audience demonstrate the significant power of sensitization and engagement that the film possesses. Originally slated to conclude in July 2023, the screening of the "Amazônia Viva" film has been extended until November 2023 due to its tremendous success. Long queues have been forming, with an average waiting time ranging from 40 to 60 minutes. On September 5th, 2023, "O Globo", the country's leading digital newspaper boasting 27.6 million monthly visitors, prominently featured an article penned by renowned journalist Ancelmo Gois who underscored the film's pivotal role within the Museum, amplifying its significance. Ancelmo Gois has a substantial Twitter following of 1.3 million and therefore, drew significant attention to the film's importance. <https://oglobo.globo.com/blogs/ancelmo-gois/post/2023/09/museu-do-amanha-no-rio-ja-recebeu-600-mil-visitantes-em-2023.ghtml>

IRI BRAZIL ESTABLISHES PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MUSEUM OF IMMIGRATION IN SAO PAULO

IRI Brazil has secured yet another institutional partnership for the screening of the "Amazônia Viva" film in prioritized states. This time, the collaboration extends to the Museum of Immigration in São Paulo. The film exhibition is scheduled to commence in April 2024 and will stand as one of the museum's primary attractions. The Museum of Immigration annually welcomes a substantial audience of 200,000 visitors, and this partnership holds the potential to significantly raise awareness about the vital importance of preserving the Amazon and its indigenous peoples in Brazil's largest urban center.

IRI BRAZIL INITIATES "AMAZON IN COMMUNITIES" PROJECT

With the aim of fostering reflections on the importance of Amazon preservation and other biomes, and the significance of adopting environmental care for the well-being of the population, IRI Brazil has initiated the "Amazon in Communities" project. The primary target audience includes children and young residents in low-income neighborhoods of Amazonian cities and major Brazilian capitals. The project will unfold in two phases. The experimental phase will take place in communities surrounding Brasília and some Amazonian capitals, with the objective of developing and refining the methodology. Its duration will span three months, concluding in December 2023. The experimental phase kicked off on September 29th, 2026, with the screening of the film "Amazonia Viva" at Boa Vista Elementary School in Sobradinho, Brasília. Twenty-eight children from the 4th grade participated in the event.

IRI BRAZIL PARTICIPATES IN AMAZON DAY EVENT ANNOUNCING SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES PACKAGE FOR AMAZON PRESERVATION

IRI Brazil took part in the official commemorative ceremony for Amazon Day, celebrated on September 5th. President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and the Ministers of Environment and Climate Change, Marina Silva and Sônia Guajajara, respectively, announced a significant package of measures to protect the Amazon, including: (i) a R\$ 600 million investment program from the Amazon Fund to support municipalities in controlling deforestation and forest fires, funds that will be contingent on reductions in deforestation rates and wildfires; (ii) demarcation of two new Indigenous Lands; (iii) establishment and expansion of three Conservation Units, and (iv) resumption of the Technical Chamber for Allocation and Regularization of Federal Rural Public Lands. The event also featured the participation of Vice President Geraldo Alckmin, as well as various ministers, including Flávio Dino (Justice), Anielle Franco (Racial Equality), Paulo Teixeira (Agrarian Development and Family Farming), and Esther Dweck (Management and Innovation in Public Services). The first lady, Janja Lula da Silva, Funai's president, Joenia Wapichana, and representatives from civil society were also present.

IRI BRAZIL SUPPORTS III MARCH OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN BRASILIA

IRI Brazil actively participated in another important mobilization within the Brazilian indigenous movement. The III March of Indigenous Women took place in Brasília on September 12th, and IRI Brazil played a significant role in supporting and publicizing this event. IRI Brazil not only helped promote the mobilization and its key proposals but also attended the march and screened the film "Amazônia Viva" for the indigenous leaders in attendance. The event had distinguished guests, including journalists, the renowned singer-songwriter Maria Gadú (938k followers on Instagram), Joenia Wapichana (President of the National Indian Foundation – FUNAI), Isabelia Margarita Montiel (Director General of the Office of Coordination of Indigenous Peoples and Communal Territories of the Ministry of Popular Power of Indigenous Peoples in Venezuela), and representatives of indigenous peoples before the FILAC (Latin American Federation of Therapeutic Communities and Related Organizations). During the march, IRI Brazil received an invitation to participate with the film "Amazônia Viva" in an indigenous festival organized by the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples, held at the National Museum in Brasília.

IRI BRAZIL PARTICIPATES IN WORKSHOP ON EUROPEAN UNION REGULATION ON DEFORESTATION-FREE PRODUCTS

IRI Brazil participated in a workshop on the European Union Regulation on Deforestation- Free Products (EUDR), organized by the Alliance of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB) and the organizations Mighty Earth and Client Earth. Approved on April 19th of this year by the European Parliament, this law prohibits the import of products from areas with any level of deforestation identified up to December 2020, whether legal or illegal. The regulation aims to contribute to ending deforestation in the Amazon by requiring strict socio- environmental standards for products such as cocoa, coffee, meat, soy, palm oil, wood, and rubber imported

from the Amazon and sold in the EU market. Starting from December 30th, 2024, companies trading these products in the European Union will be required to conduct due diligence in their supply chains to ensure that their products are deforestation-free and legally produced. For companies producing these products in Brazil and exporting them to the EU, they will need to provide geolocation details of the areas used to produce soy, cattle, coffee, etc., and demonstrate that their products are free from deforestation (after 2020) and have been produced in compliance with applicable laws. The workshop provided a comprehensive overview of the EUDR and its requirements, introduced the EUDR complaints mechanism and how it can be used to combat deforestation and rights abuses in commodity supply chains, and discussed how the EUDR could be leveraged to advance internal reforms. IRI Brazil intends to initiate a campaign for the adoption of EUDR starting in 2024.

IRI BRAZIL PARTICIPATES IN CLIMATE WEEK

IRI Brazil had a strong presence at the Climate Week in New York, thanks to the participation of its National Facilitator, Carlos Vicente and support from Conservation International. Throughout the event, IRI Brazil actively engaged in several activities spanning from September 18th to September 21st, 2023, including: A high-level meeting at the 2023 SDG Summit, "Inspiring Faith, Hope, and Transformative Action to Accelerate Progress towards the SDGs," where IRI Brazil delivered a speech highlighting its contributions to the Agenda 2030; a meeting with Minister Marina Silva and Juliano Assunção, to discuss the potentialities of the recently published study "Carbon Prices and Forest Preservation Over Space and Time in the Brazilian Amazon"; participation in an event with leaders from the Yawanawa People; participation in the event, "Stop the Amazon Tipping Point: Designing a Pan-American Network on Bioeconomy Event", which centered on the discussion of a document and proposals stemming from the Pan-Amazon Conference on Bioeconomy, which took place in Belém-PA on June 21st and 22nd, 2023; a "Roundtable for Banks: A Deep Dive in Brazil", where IRI Brazil actively participated alongside representatives from various international banks and Brazilian authorities, focusing on the investment potentials within sustainable agendas in the Amazon and other biomes in the country; and a meeting with Inger Andersen, Executive Secretary, UNEP, where she viewed "Amazônia Viva" and received a briefing on IRI Brazil work.

IRI BRAZIL CONCLUDES ASSESSMENT ON IMPACTS OF VIEWING AMAZONIA VIVA

In order to scientifically assess the impact of the immersive experience provided by the "Amazônia Viva" film, IRI Brazil partnered with the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), a global research center that works to reduce poverty by ensuring that policies are informed by scientific evidence. The objective of the study was to determine whether the film encouraged people to adopt behaviors and attitudes that could contribute to the preservation of the Amazon and the defense of the rights of indigenous peoples. The methodology formulation and research planning took place from April to June 2023. A total of 604 randomized interviews were conducted in June and July. Approximately one-third of the total sample answered the questionnaire without watching the film, another one-third after watching the film on the tablet

version (2D), and the final one-third after watching the film on the 360o and 3D version, using virtual reality glasses. Data analysis began in August, and on September 4th, 2023, the preliminary report was presented to a group of interdisciplinary experts. The final report is expected to be published in a scientific journal in the coming months. In terms of initial results, it can be stated that the film "Amazonia Viva" when screened in 360o and 3D immersive settings, has an influence on the behavior of a significant portion of the population, as indicated by the following variables studied: i) contributing financially; ii) sharing their cellphone number to receive and share information and messages about the Amazon; and iii) participating in campaigns in defense of the Amazon. For example, the number of people making financial donations to help the Yanomami indigenous people increased by 50% after watching the film. Based on the research results, IRI Brazil is developing strategies to maximize the awareness potential of the film "Amazônia Viva" with two objectives: i) increase engagement among the population, especially among young and child audiences; and ii) expand the number of people reached by the film, making it available to schools, universities, religious institutions, socio-environmental and cultural entities.

COLOMBIA

IRI COLOMBIA SECURES COMMITMENTS TO PROTECT FORESTS WITH MAYORAL CANDIDATES IN SOLANO

As part of its running series of electoral debates with candidates for office, IRI Colombia held a public debate on forests with the candidates for mayor in Solano. The goal was to make the care of Solano's Amazon rainforest an ethical and political priority of the authorities and the people of Solano, and to secure commitments to include forest protection in the municipal development plan and investment plan (2024-2027) strategies for the municipality. At the same time, the intervention aimed to motivate candidates to reduce deforestation to zero, to stop the loss of biodiversity and guarantee the rights of indigenous peoples and peasant and Afro-descendant communities that inhabit the forests, and to ensure the participation of communities in the planning and implementation of local forest programs. At the debate, each of the four candidates for mayor in Solano committed to adopt IRI Colombia's programmatic agreement, "A New Opportunity of Hope for the Amazon". Signing of the agreement took place within the framework of the "Great Environmental Debate of IRI-Colombia for the Amazon" and at a debate that attracted the participation of 580 people (350 in person, 229 through social networks).

IRI COLOMBIA HOLDS PUBLIC DEBATE, SECURES COMMITMENTS TO PROTECT FORESTS WITH MAYORAL CANDIDATES IN PUERTO ASIS

IRI Colombia, in partnership with the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI Colombia), held a public debate with the candidates for mayor of Puerto Asis. The debate served as a platform to discuss the candidates' proposals on environmental issues, focusing on the protection of the

Amazon forests, the fight against deforestation and the rights of the communities that inhabit them. At the end of the meeting, the four candidates for mayor of Puerto Asis signed the programmatic agreement "A New Opportunity of Hope for the Amazon", committing to prioritize forest protection in their government programs. IRI Colombia and GGGI introduced the candidates to their work and offered technical support and accompaniment during the construction of the municipal development plan.

IRI COLOMBIA HOLDS DEBATE WITH CANDIDATES FOR GOVERNOR IN PUTUMAYO TO SECURE COMMITMENTS TO PROTECT FORESTS

IRI Colombia and GGGI Colombia met with Putumayo gubernatorial candidates on September 26 in Mocoa to address the department's environmental challenges and present the programmatic agreement "A New Opportunity of Hope for the Amazon," with the purpose of ensuring the inclusion of Amazon forest protection programs and projects in the departmental development plan. The three governor candidates presented their government proposals for conservation and sustainable development in the department, IRI Colombia and GGGI Colombia presented their work and the programmatic agreement, which seeks to ensure the inclusion of programs and projects aimed at protecting Putumayo's Amazon forests in the departmental development plan. The agreement was signed by all candidates at the end of the event.

IRI COLOMBIA HOLDS PUBLIC DEBATE, SECURES COMMITMENTS TO PROTECT FORESTS WITH MAYORAL CANDIDATES IN LA MACARENA

In an event held at the auditorium of the Nuestra Señora de La Macarena Educational Institution, IRI Colombia facilitated a public debate on forests with the candidates for mayor of La Macarena, and secured commitments through the signing of a programmatic agreement with those candidates to protect the Amazon region. Each candidate committed to include in their municipal development plan projects and programs that contribute to the fulfillment of the orders of Ruling 4360, contain deforestation, convert the municipality into a center of forest and biodiversity protection and, in general, protect and restore the Amazon forests of La Macarena, which are vital to preserve the connection between the Andean forests and the Amazon. Religious and social leaders, presidents of community action boards and teachers, members of the local chapters of IRI in the municipality of La Macarena and the villages of La Cristalina and Alto Morrocoy, attended the debate. The debate was the last in a series held by IRI Colombia around the governor and mayor elections.

IRI COLOMBIA MEETS WITH NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR, EMBASSY

In an effort to strengthen ties and share advances in forest conservation, IRI Colombia met with the Norwegian Embassy in Bogotá. IRI Colombia's national coordinator, Blanca Lucía Echeverry, led the meeting, which was attended by the Norwegian Ambassador, Nils Martin Gunneng, the Norwegian Embassy's Climate and Forestry Advisor, Silje Marie Haugland, and Karine Hertzberg of the Norwegian International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI). During the meeting, key

achievements of the year were highlighted, including training processes and the creation of three new local chapters in the municipality of Curillo. In addition, emphasis was placed on the intense political advocacy campaign with candidates for the governorships of Caquetá, Guaviare and Putumayo, and with mayoral candidates in the Amazonian municipalities with the highest levels of deforestation, where IRI Colombia is present through 39 urban and rural chapters.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

IRI DRC PARTICIPATES IN WORKSHOP ON DRAFT LAW ON LAND USE PLANNING

IRI DRC took part in a workshop to analyze the Policy and Draft Law on Land Use Planning organized from September 05 to 06, 2023 in the Père Henri Becker room at CEPAS. The workshop was organized by the Centre d'Appui à la Gestion Durable des Forêts Tropicales (CAGDFT), in collaboration with the Secrétariat Général à l'Aménagement du Territoire and with the support of its partner Rainforest Foundation Norway (RFN). The workshop was attended by 26 participants, divided into two categories: the Public Administration, represented by delegates from the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Land Affairs and the Ministry of Land Management; and Civil Society Organizations, including IRI-RDC, represented by the Technical Agent and His Majesty Mfumu DIFIMA. The overall objective was to mobilize the key players involved in the regional planning reform process to discuss the consolidated document of the draft law in order to : (i) share information on the evolution of the draft LAT; (ii) present the structure of the draft LAT (current version); (iii) highlight the various rights of local communities and indigenous pygmy peoples included in the draft LAT; (iv) exchange questions and concerns with the aim of clarifying grey areas. This session was opened and closed by the Secrétaire Général à l'Aménagement du Territoire. The workshop achieved the following results: informed knowledge of the evolution of the draft law at parliamentary level, identification of the various rights of local communities and indigenous pygmy peoples in the draft law, and the commitment of stakeholders to advocate for the adoption of the draft law.

IRI DRC PARTICIPATES IN WORKING GROUP LOOKING AT DRAFT LAW ON LAND TENURE

As part of the Policy Reforms and Intersectoral Coordination working group, IRI DRC organized, in collaboration with the Centre d'Appui à la Gestion Durable des Forêts Tropicales (CAGDFT) and Geofirst Development, a meeting to analyze the draft law on land tenure in the Natural Resources Network Room, from September 08 to 09. The meeting brought together 10 experts from civil society to analyze the draft law amending and supplementing Law No. 73-021 of July 20, 1973 on the general property, land tenure and real estate regime, as amended in 1980, with a view to ensuring that the interests of local communities and indigenous Pygmy peoples are taken into account. During the meeting, civil society experts analyzed each article of the bill and proposed amendments that they will submit to the deputies, with a view to ensuring that the

interests and rights of local communities and indigenous pygmy peoples to access land are properly formulated.

IRI DRC CHAPTER IN EQUATEUR EVALUATES LOCAL COMMUNITY FOREST CONCESSIONS IN MBANDAKA

IRI Equateur's technical supervision team carried out a two-week mission, from September 12 to 26, 2023, with the Local Development Communities (CLD) living in the Local Community Forest Concessions (CFCL) of the villages of Lokolama, Ilanga, Penzele, and Bikiro Centre in the province of Equateur. The aim of the mission was to assess the achievements of these local organizations and identify their strengths and weaknesses in terms of forest and peatland protection, in order to highlight actions that IRI Ecuador can implement to strengthen local development structures. IRI Maniema's approach consisted of holding events and consultations with local farmers. IRI Maniema brought together village leaders and discussed their views and concerns with them. Members of the IRI Maniema technical supervision team and local development community committees took part in the activities.

IRI MANIEMA PARTICIPATES IN WORKSHOP ON THE LAW PROTECTING AND PROMOTING THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PYGMY PEOPLES

From September 13 to 14, IRI Maniema took part in a workshop on law no. 22/030 of July 15, 2022 on the protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous Pygmy peoples. Organized by the provincial branch of Dynamique des Groupes des Peuples Autochtones (DPGA), the aim of this workshop was to prepare key players in the "defense of the rights and promotion of Pygmy Indigenous Peoples (PAP)". The workshop brought together several actors from civil society and state structures. For IRI Maniema, the opportunity was used to educate religious leaders on the law in order to better direct the actions of the local chapter in the field of protecting and promoting the rights of the PAP community, and to advocate for its promulgation. IRI Maniema reminded the organizers not to forget the religious denominations during the dissemination of the law, given that they are a key player in sensitizing communities to the importance of the law. As a result of the workshop, the IRI Maniema supervisor was able to join the circle of representatives of other provincial players involved in defending the rights of PAPs, and to gain a deeper understanding of the law and the urgent need to include aspects of protecting and defending the rights of PAPs in IRI Maniema's actions.

IRI NORD KIVU PARTICIPATES IN THIRD EDITION OF MBOSA'S LOCAL AGRO-SOCIO-TRADITIONAL DAYS

IRI-Nord Kivu took part in the Mbosa agro-sociocultural festival organized by the Programme Intégré pour le Développement du Peuple Pygmée (PIDP-SHIRIKA LA BAMBUTI) in the Kisimbosa community forest in Walikale territory, from September 13 to 15. The festival, which aims to promote knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples in relation to forest and wildlife conservation, enabled local and neighboring communities of indigenous peoples, local political

and administrative authorities, religious leaders and civil society players to discover the talents and cultural and natural wealth conserved by the indigenous people of Kisimbosa. Participating religious leaders formulated a number of recommendations and commitments, rejecting all acts leading to deforestation, giving priority to peace and social cohesion in order to contribute to sustainable forest management in North Kivu, and to install IRI in Walikale territory.

IRI DRC REACHES OVER 1,500 PASTORS IN TSHOPO

From September 13 to 17, IRI Tshopo met with the churches who were represented at the chapter launch workshop to inform and sensitize them about IRI DRC and its objectives. The meetings involved Protestant Churches, Catholic Churches, Revival Churches, Kitawala Church, Foi Bahai, Islamic Church and environmental groups including OCEAN and Trompenbols/RDC. At the end of the meetings, the religious leaders of Tshopo and their followers were informed about IRI DRC, its genesis, its constitution, its objectives, and its structure. A total of 1,500 pastors attended the awareness-raising sessions. On the Catholic side, 350 delegates from parishes and diocesan structures took part.

IRI DRC PARTICIPATES IN FIRST REGIONAL FORUM ON COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AND RIGHTS

From September 18 to 20, Kinshasa hosted the first regional forum on conservation and the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples. The meeting brought together state and non-state actors from all over the world, including several Congo Basin countries, to share and learn from experiences in promoting rights-based conservation in the DRC. The ceremony was opened by the Secretary General for the Environment and Sustainable Development. Over 140 participants took part in this regional meeting, including 4 members of the IRI DRC Advisory Council. Through its Advisory Council member, His Majesty Mfumu Difima, IRI DRC welcomed the meeting, which provided an opportunity to inform religious and traditional authorities about the progress and failures of taking human rights into account in conservation. He pledged his commitment to work hand in hand with the government to involve the population in conservation.

IRI SOUTH KIVU MEETS WITH WWF

On September 27, IRI South Kivu's supervisor met with representatives of WWF, the World Wildlife Fund, at the WWF Bukavu office. Members of IRI South Kivu requested WWF's support in monitoring the signing of decrees granting titles to communities applying for Local Community Forest Concessions (CFCL), the draft signature of which is on the table of the provincial authority. At the end of this meeting, WWF promised to integrate IRI Sud Kivu's support in the advocacy for the signature of the CFCLS CFCLS decrees with the Provincial Authority. The meeting was attended by the IRI Sud Kivu Supervisor, the WWF Bukavu Program Manager and his colleague.

INDONESIA

IRI INDONESIA LAUNCHES NEW PROVINCIAL CHAPTER IN ACEH

In September, IRI Indonesia launched a new provincial chapter in Aceh with the goal of expanding networks and collaboration among stakeholders to promote peace, tolerance, and interfaith cooperation in nature conservation, particularly in safeguarding tropical forests. The event took place September 14 to 16, in the city of Banda Aceh and served as the official launch of IRI Aceh as a religious-driven endeavor committed to tropical forest preservation. The three-day event attracted representatives from various sectors, including government officials from Aceh, 34 esteemed religious leaders from across Indonesia, and 15 dedicated indigenous community representatives. In addition, the event drew the participation of five prominent non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in Aceh. Participants delved into the core mission and objectives of IRI Indonesia, instilling a shared commitment among the diverse group of attendees to the cause of forest preservation. A key achievement was the formation of a cohesive working team, comprising both religious leaders and indigenous community representatives, a team tasked with collaboratively devising an action plan for tropical forest preservation, imbued with a religious perspective. The event also facilitated direct engagement with the Wali Nangroe Aceh, a role equivalent to a provincial governor, representing the highest leadership in Aceh. The discussion with the Wali Nangroe Aceh revolved around strengthening collaboration and ensuring the sustainable continuity of forest protection programs in the Aceh region.

IRI INDONESIA MEETS WITH THE INDONESIAN PEATLAND AND MANGROVE RESTORATION AGENCY REGARDING COLLABORATION, PROGRAM PLANNING

In a groundbreaking collaboration, religious leaders and environmental advocates have come together to launch a program aimed at raising awareness about the crucial need for forest protection and conservation, a joint effort between the Indonesian Peatland and Mangrove Restoration Agency (BRGM) and IRI Indonesia. In a meeting in September, the groups reached an agreement to host an environmental journalism workshop, including for public relations representatives from recognized religious institutions across Indonesia, with a focus on forest protection. The meeting also produced a longer term partnership agreement, where both organizations pledged to sustain their collaborative efforts, ensuring that they will continue to work together on various initiatives focused on forest protection in Indonesia. The partnership aims to bridge the gap between faith-based communities and the pressing need for environmental protection. By equipping religious leaders and journalists with the tools and knowledge to effectively communicate the importance of forest preservation, the program seeks to inspire broader public engagement and support for forest conservation efforts.

IRI INDONESIA HOLDS ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM WORKSHOP WITH 32 PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS, FOCUS ON FORESTS

The workshop, held at Pantai Indah Kapuk, Jakarta, convened a diverse assembly of 32 public relations professionals representing various official religious institutions across Indonesia. Additionally, 14 government representatives, representing the Indonesian Peatland and Mangrove Restoration Agency (BRGM), participated in the training event that's overarching purpose was to instill a profound awareness of the critical need for environmental stewardship and responsible resource management, particularly around forests. The program sought to ensure the dissemination of accurate and balanced information, and enhance the accuracy and impartiality of information sharing, particularly concerning the utilization of natural resources such as peatlands, mangroves and forests. Further, the workshop was designed to strengthen the sense of responsibility within religious organizations and institutions to report on forests in their respective networks. The event culminated in a collaborative mangrove planting activity at the Angke Mangrove Nature Park.

IRI INDONESIA PARTICIPATES IN WORKSHOP ON DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE FATWA BY INDONESIAN ULEMA COUNCIL

The discussion, held at the Buya Hamka MUI auditorium, convened 12 representatives from the Indonesian Ulema Council's Fatwa Commission, as well as five experts, including academics and professors specializing in environmental matters, and four representatives from NGOs, including IRI Indonesia, all of whom were among the proponents of the fatwa proposal. The outcome of the gathering primarily centered on aligning perspectives among the various stakeholders. The discussion facilitated a fruitful exchange of views, enabling the representatives of the Fatwa Commission to present updates on the ongoing climate change fatwa proposal. Subsequently, in-depth deliberations took place regarding the draft climate change fatwa authored by the MUI. This provided an opportunity for experts and NGO representatives to offer valuable recommendations and insights, contributing to a more comprehensive and well-informed discourse.

IRI INDONESIA CONTRIBUTES TO YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP ON CLIMATE CRISIS

Over the course of two days, a transformative camp took place alongside the Cikeas River in the KISUCI community. This collaborative initiative, orchestrated by LPLH-SDA MUI, The Climate Reality Project Indonesia, and facilitated by IRI Indonesia, in partnership with Indonesia Banking School (IBS) and Ecoliving Foundation, brought together 20 participants, including local youth and indigenous community members, as well as invited guests from outside the region. The camp included extensive training sessions, workshops, nature exploration, territory tracking, and river trekking, activities that collectively aimed to realize the objectives of the program, which included encouraging individuals and communities to make small, positive environmental changes for a sustainable future, promoting sustainable living practices through community development and collaboration, equipping youth with essential life skills for future climate

change careers, and enabling climate change prevention through heightened awareness and action in mitigation and adaptation efforts. Dr. Hayu Prabowo, national facilitator for of IRI Indonesia stressed the central role of IRI Indonesia as both a facilitator and a partner organizer in executing this significant community engagement initiative.

PERU

IRI PERU SIGNS COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

On Wednesday, September 27th, IRI Peru signed an Inter-institutional Cooperation Agreement with the Ministry of Justice MINJUSDH. The agreement outlines a shared commitment to ensuring the safety of forests defenders and attend to the rights of indigenous leaders and authorities. The document was signed by the Vice Minister of Justice Walter J. Iberos and Laura Vargas, national facilitator of IRI Peru. The agreement formalizes collaboration between IRI Peru and the Ministry of Justice over recent months on efforts to protect the rights and territories of indigenous peoples and forest communities.

IRI PERU COORDINATES WORKING SESSION WITH MEMBER OF CONGRESS ON FORESTS, AGRICULTURE

IRI Peru has been coordinating with the office of Congressman Arturo Alegria, to organize working meetings to expand knowledge and receive feedback on the bills that his party, Fuerza Popular, has presented in Congress and that are relevant to the environmental agenda, especially the Amazon. IRI Peru held a working meeting with the congressman in his office on September 7 and participated in a video organized by the Congressman's office highlighting the benefits of conservation and investment in the protection and restoration of forests in the country. They agreed to hold a follow-up working meeting to link the congressman and members of his technical team with specialists on forests.

IRI PERU CARRIES OUT ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION IN PUTUMAYO, THREATENED BY ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES

IRI Peru met with Arlen Ribeira, an indigenous Huitoto, president of the Federation of Border Native Communities of Putumayo, who sought out IRI Peru to denounce the situation that the native communities of the area are facing due to the substantial increase in illegal activities such as drug trafficking with members of the former FARC, the Sinaloa cartel, mining in the river, as well as logging and a highway project promoted by the regional government that would run from Napo to Putumayo. The road would cross national parks and areas of high biodiversity and would further facilitate the development of illegal activities. The indigenous leader asked IRI Peru to mediate in his attempts to get into dialogue with the authorities to request support in the defense of their territories. IRI Peru invited the FCDS to the meeting to develop a strategy to make the area's problems visible and support the organization's efforts. To advance this work, IRI

Peru carried out two activities: facilitating a meeting between the leader of FECONAFROPU and national authorities in MINJUS and SERNANP; and facilitating a working breakfast with public authorities, indigenous leaders, specialists and members of the IRI Peru Advisory Council to evaluate the situation in Putumayo, where all agreed to improve coordination and promote a greater presence of the State in the area.

IRI QUILLABAMBA DEVELOPS TRAINING WORKSHOPS WITH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS

The local chapter of IRI Quillabamba developed training activities for religious education teachers in the province, teachers who belong to the Catholic Education Office ODEC Quillabamba and work in different schools in the area. The training aimed to provide them with scientific information on the contributions of nature to the health of the planet and that can be used in their educational work. On September 7, IRI Peru coordinated with ten teachers from ODEC Quillabamba who learned with the educational game "Forests save the planet" and provided it for use in six schools: INA 67, La Convención, María Jesús Villalba Boneta de Pavayoc (town center), La Inmaculada, Manco II and Santa Ana.

IRI PERU DEVELOPS WORKSHOP ON EDUCATIONAL TOOLS FOR FOREST PROTECTION WITH LEADERS FROM IRI QUILLABAMBA

With the participation of 10 members of IRI Quillabamba, the training team of IRI Peru conducted two virtual workshops on Methodologies, Use of Educational Tools and Programming of Training Activities for leaders of IRI Quillabamba. In the first workshop, three program models were provided and the themes of "Ecosystem Contributions of the Amazon to Save the Planet" and "Sacredness of Nature" were worked on. A week later, the game "Forests save the planet" was played and its didactic use was explained, and IRI Peru's training materials were presented, with special emphasis on the presentation of infographics for training work.

IRI PERU MEETS WITH IRI AUCAYACU, HOLDS WORKSHOPS WITH RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF CHURCHES

A working meeting was held with IRI Aucayacu to review the situation of the forests in the area and assess the work being done by the chapter. Members of IRI Aucayacu shared the dramatic situation they are experiencing: the change in land use in the area to accommodate rice cultivation, an activity that not only leads to deforestation but also affects water sources, so there are no fish in the rivers and no water for the population. IRI Aucayacu has contacted the Provincial Councilor to address the situation and have contacted the NGO DETEC to evaluate the situation and learn about a program that allows sustainable use of the forests in order to stop deforestation. IRI Aucayacu also considered opportunities to expand the group and invite other churches, agreeing to call on the Fraternity of Pastors in the region and request the participation of IRI in the Consistory of the Church of Prophecy at the end of the month of November. IRI Peru also held two workshops with religious leaders of two churches: one with the Church in

Prophecy and the other with pastoral agents and catechists of the Catholic Church, both of which focused on sharing educational materials on forests, climate change and the rights of indigenous peoples. The dynamics of the workshop, motivated by the game "Forests save the planet" motivated a wide participation of the members, who shared their experiences, adopted the contents, reviewed their own practices and reflected on the importance of caring for the forest not only to save the planet, but as a way of expressing a real commitment of faith. At the end, participants shared the games and work modules, and reviewed their usefulness for their pastoral work.

IRI PERU DELIVERS TRAINING SESSION ON CLIMATE CRISIS FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF THE SAN MARCOS PARISH

On the occasion of the Time of Creation, the San Marcos parish of San Juan de Lurigancho in Lima was gathered to reflect on the climate crisis and the responsibility of each person in the care and conservation of forests and ecosystems in the Amazon. IRI Peru was invited to develop the session, which lasted two hours and was attended by 60 people, mostly members of the various pastoral programs of the parish. The session reflected on the possibilities and alternatives that a parish can have to face the climate crisis, including around the protection and restoration of forests.

IRI PERU RAISES NEED TO ACT IN SOLIDARITY WITH INDIGENOUS DEFENDERS FOR THE SAN EGIDIO COMMUNITY

Laura Vargas, national facilitator of IRI Peru, participated in a panel on ways to approach the issue of peace in the region. She shared that working through IRI Peru, it is possible to see that a common form of absence of peace is the daily disregard of indigenous peoples and the abandonment by the state that translates into communities where 7 out of 10 children are malnourished, widespread hunger and the absence of basic services and development opportunities. She highlighted that indigenous peoples are also being deprived of their territories, their forests, and when they defend them, they are attacked. The event was attended by 30 people linked to the community and parishioners of the Fatima Church.

IRI PERU PARTICIPATES IN MEETINGS WITH RPA TO ADDRESS CLIMATE SITUATION

Climate experts predict the presence of the El Niño phenomenon at the global level in the coming months, which in Peru will result in heavy rains in the northern regions of the country and extreme drought events in the southern Andes. Damage to infrastructure and low food production are expected to produce a food crisis that will directly affect the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of the country. In the Amazon region, rivers are expected to overflow, which will affect riverside populations and indigenous peoples, in addition to affecting crops. Resucita Perú Ahora, a coalition with which IRI Peru maintains an alliance, has been working on preparations for this impending emergency in the summer months. It has proposed the

realization of spaces for dialogue and coordination with local organizations (indigenous, canteens, labor, education, NGOs) and the State (local governments, health centers, education) to address the crisis.

IRI PERU PUBLISHES NEW ISSUE OF SOMOS BOQUE MAGAZINE

The latest issue of Somos Bosque magazine focuses on the relevance of the Amazon Summit for Peru, based on the forum in which religious, indigenous, civil society and environmental experts participated. IRI Peru also presents the case of the indigenous Ashaninka Jessica Días, threatened by illegal miners and expelled from her community. In the article IRI Peru explains the actions taken by the program to connect with authorities and seek the effective protection of this environmental defender. Finally, the magazine includes an opinion article by Pedro Solano on recent legal initiatives that endanger the Amazon and the people who inhabit it.

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