

**Consolidated forest recommendations
for the February 2023 meeting between President Biden and President Lula da Silva**

*Compiled by the “Kitchen Sinks” coalition of environmental and non-governmental organizations
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The upcoming Biden-Lula Summit is an unprecedented opportunity for two of the world’s most forested and biodiverse countries to change the trajectory of global deforestation and forest degradation and reverse environmental destruction. In our individual/organizational capacity, we emphasize the urgency of prioritizing conservation and stewardship of forests and critical ecosystems to address the interlinked climate, forests, human rights, and biodiversity crises. We respectfully submit the below recommendations for key, top-level messages and topics President Biden and President Lula should discuss, as well as the technical steps the two governments can take to halt and reverse deforestation in both Brazil and the United States, avoid ecological tipping points, and meet their forest-climate commitments.

I. HIGH-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

In the chapeau text, we suggest the leaders note the fundamental linkages between biodiversity and climate mitigation and adaptation and the Global Biodiversity Framework on ecological integrity. We suggest they state that primary forests and other high-integrity ecosystems, both in the tropics and the Global North, are vital nature-based climate solutions. We suggest the chapeau emphasizes that the rights and territories of Indigenous and traditional peoples are fundamentally important. We suggest the chapeau recognizes that Brazil has already committed to eliminating illegal deforestation by 2028, which will promote positive economic, social, and environmental benefits, and state the United States’ intent to act as a partner in this effort.

As overarching objectives, we suggest the United States and Brazil **commit to working together to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation globally as soon as possible and no later than 2030**, as called for by the Glasgow Declaration on Forests and Land Use.

We urge the leaders to commit to achieving this *through the following sub-objectives*:

- Pursue regulatory and technological solutions to de-link agricultural commodity production from deforestation, particularly for cattle and soy, and end corruption and illegality in the natural resource sector.
- Catalyze the appropriate financial resources to halt and reverse deforestation and degradation, to manage existing and new protected areas, for Indigenous lands, and to engage in ecological restoration
- Promote the ecological integrity, connectivity, and resilience of forests and critical ecosystems in the United States and Brazil.
- Champion the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities, who are often the most effective environmental stewards.

President Biden and President Lula have the historic opportunity to make a joint U.S.-Brazil Forest and Land Use Declaration (or Partnership) encompassing actions their administrations will take by 2024. We urge the leaders to formalize their commitments in such a declaration, implemented through the technical recommendations below.

II. TECHNICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

A. De-link agricultural commodity production from deforestation and end illegality in the natural resource sector

Noting the interlinkages between deforestation and agricultural commodity production, illegality in the natural resource sector, and trade, we suggest President Biden pledge to:

- Eliminate further trade-based contributions to the destruction of the Amazon and other deforestation-risk biomes in Brazil, in recognition of the United States' role as a major importer of forest-risk commodities (including timber, leather, and beef) from Brazil.
- Convene a CEO-level White House roundtable to discuss how the private sector can contribute to efforts to eliminate deforestation and degradation from global supply chains.
- Work with Congress to pass legislation, such as the FOREST Act, that would stop the importation of agricultural commodities grown on recently deforested land and require U.S. importers to make supply chains transparent and traceable.
- Assist Brazil to develop more robust commodity traceability systems to comply with emerging regulations, by increasing transparency and traceability of information about the movement of commodities linked to deforestation.
- Strengthen U.S. law enforcement – including by fully implementing and enforcing the Lacey Act in the U.S. - and enhance cooperation with Brazil to crack down on crimes, including illegally sourced timber, as well as illegal fisheries, illegal mining, and illegal wildlife trade, and associated money-laundering.
- Support Brazil’s research, development, and commercialization of alternative proteins¹ that do not need rangeland.

We suggest President Lula pledge to:

- Provide more robust traceability of cattle, soy, timber, and other key commodities; to stop illegal cattle ranching and laundering, implement mandatory full individual animal traceability from birth to slaughter, requiring traders, slaughterhouses, and tanneries to trace cattle back to their birth farm.
- Clean up the Brazil-US timber trade by a) strengthening the collaboration with the U.S. on prosecuting environmental crimes under the U.S. Lacey Act, and b) rolling out science-based methodologies to identify timber species and their origin (wood ID), monitor timber supply chains (traceability and big data analyses), and monitor forest cover changes.

B. Catalyze appropriate financial resources

We suggest President Biden pledge to:

- Meet the United States' \$9 billion pledge set in the President’s Plan to Conserve Global Forests.

¹ The United States and Brazil are the two global leaders in private investment in low GHG proteins, such as plant-based meat and cultivated (lab-grown) meat.

- Increase funding for the global Sustainable Landscapes program and other programs to support nature-based solutions at scale, in line with the vision set out in the USAID Climate Strategy 2022-2030.
- Increase support for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' (IPLC) tenure rights and forest guardianship in Brazil in keeping with the Forest Tenure Pledge² committed to in Glasgow.
- Provide Development Finance Corporation support to banks and other financial institutions seeking to finance sustainable agriculture, forest conservation, and projects supporting or led by Indigenous peoples and local communities in Brazil, particularly the Amazon.
- Assist Brazil in accessing more robust technologies for traceability, transparency, and monitoring of agricultural products.
- Make a financial contribution to the Amazon Fund, or a similar vehicle for rainforest stewardship.
- Work with Congress to enable investments in results-based forest conservation and emissions reduction programs, such as through the bipartisan AMAZON21 bill.
- Noting the US-based companies' role as a financier of products from the Amazon, incorporate forest risk in climate-related securities and banking regulations; in line with the Glasgow Leader's Declaration on Forests and Land Use, work to align financial flows (both public and private sources) towards forest and critical ecosystem protection and away from financing deforestation and habitat loss.
- Enhance U.S. cooperation with Brazil for prevention of zoonotic disease spillover and early detection of infectious diseases in wildlife, domesticated animals, and people.
- Designate Brazil as a priority country for the implementation of the President's Plan to Conserve Global Forests and Critical Carbon Sinks, including the protection of high-integrity forests.

We suggest President Lula pledge to:

- Increase support for agencies to supervise environmental licensing and combat illegal deforestation. This includes ensuring sufficient budget allocation, with international support, for enforcement, restoring access to socio-environmental information, modernizing the SINAFLOR (Sistema Nacional de Controle da Origem dos Produtos Florestais), and restoring/modernizing INPE's forest monitoring capabilities.
- Work with Brazilian states to enable them to access international results-based payments for jurisdictional forest conservation and emission reductions (e.g., REDD+).
- Incorporate forest risk in climate-related securities and strengthen enforcement of forest-related banking regulations.

C. Promote the ecological integrity, connectivity, and resilience of forests and critical ecosystems in the United States and Brazil

We suggest President Biden pledge to:

- Work to promote strong, global implementation of the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use as the co-chair of the Forests and Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP), through encouraging regular reporting from signatories; forest protection leadership from countries in the Global North; and the application of robust, scientifically supported definitions that ensure the protection of climate-critical forests.

² <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/nov-16-2022-usaid-announces-progress-support-indigenous-peoples-conserving>

Noting the importance of protecting domestic forests (consistent with Executive Order 14072) and demonstrating solidarity with Brazilian domestic forest protection actions, we also suggest President Biden pledge to:

- Initiate a rulemaking process to enact a strong, lasting rule that will protect mature and old-growth trees and forests on U.S. federal lands from logging, allowing the recovery of old-growth forests that have been lost.
- Move forward with 30x30 objectives by promoting new conservation designations on public lands, including national monuments.
- Review reporting of forest carbon impacts; enhance the transparency of reporting on emissions attributable to forestry and other sectors; utilize the U.S. National Nature Assessment to report on the value of nature.

We suggest President Lula pledge to:

- Commit to ensuring 80% of the Amazon is protected from deforestation and degradation by 2025 to avoid a tipping point. (i.e., where tropical forest converts to other ecosystem types, such as savanna, as a result of excessive deforestation and degradation).
- Enforce and strengthen the implementation of the Brazilian Forest Code; strengthen the legal protections of forests and accelerate land regularization; make good on commitments to halt illegal invasions of Indigenous Territories, and accelerate the legal designation of unallocated public lands, including as Indigenous Territories and protected areas.
- Take appropriate steps to halt and reverse the loss and degradation of other key ecosystems including the Cerrado and Pantanal.
- Include a roadmap for ending deforestation as part of Brazil's application for membership in the OECD.

D. Champion the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities

Both leaders pledge to ensure their bilateral relationship contributes to social and climate justice, demonstrating their commitment to local and international human rights law including by working with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in any forest-related program design and implementation that will have direct or indirect effects on those constituencies.

We suggest President Biden pledge to:

- Support Brazil and its Indigenous Peoples and local communities by working with other nations to strengthen international funding mechanisms that support forest and ecosystem conservation and traditional livelihoods, as well as through U.S. export credit and foreign assistance agencies.
- Improve corporate accountability mechanisms that target environmental crimes and human rights violations within US companies' supply chains.
- Invest in Indigenous-led forest conservation in the United States.

We suggest President Lula pledge to:

- Recognize and safeguard the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities, ensuring their meaningful participation and the right to free, prior and informed consent in all relevant processes related to their forests and territories.
- Ratify and implement the Escazu Agreement to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators of crimes against human rights and environmental defenders.

- Strengthen local and Indigenous communities, by recognizing their rights and completing the demarcation of their territories, redirecting and strengthening FUNAI to support the protection of the traditional identity and culture, and expelling encroachers from indigenous territories.



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