

Declaration of Recife (2019)

In December 2015, over 190 countries gathered to celebrate the Paris Agreement, honoring their commitment to face the climate crisis and the challenges for their nations' sustainable development.

Four years later, despite some advances, we are still on the path toward a heating of over 3 degrees Celsius, incompatible with the planet's climate security. This has been generating numerous losses in biodiversity and direct impacts to the quality of life of vulnerable populations.

The Declaration of Recife is the result of a collective effort of actors in the Brazilian society who have adopted action, diversity, and ambition as their principles. The Declaration marks the beginning of a permanent movement that brings together various sectors of society. Its milestone will be the Brazilian Climate Change Conference, to be held in Recife between the 6th and 8th of November.

We, the people and organizations undersigned here, with their respective commitments, believe that reducing poverty and inequality is the greatest challenge in Brazil directly related to facing the climate crisis. We also understand the need to ensure the integrity of current and future generations is undebatable and non-negotiable. There is no solution outside of collective action, but defined commitments are indispensable and require clear roles and responsibilities from each social and economic agent.

Thus, our goal is to promote the broadest dissemination of the efforts in Brazilian society to implement NDCs and overcome climate vulnerabilities.

Annex I – Context

IPCC's most recent report¹ has reinforced that, in order to face the climate crisis, we need to contain deforestation and thus value the preservation of the standing forest. The Amazon forest has a prominent role in this challenge, and Brazil has advantages that could make it a global reference in the field. IPCC also worryingly noted impacts in food production and the challenge of harmonizing it with energy production, especially considering the impacts in desertification, directly related to water shortage.²

The incredibly high rates of illegal deforestation and fires in the Amazon in 2019 have called into question the main national goal,³ which is to end illegal deforestation in the Amazon by 2030. The continued deforestation in the area can provoke its savannization and affect rainfall patterns, which, in turn, will impact other countries such as Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina.

The standing forest is an inexhaustible source of resources, and cutting it down is a waste. Stimulating projects to value the standing forest and improving the quality of life of local populations are important opportunities to generate work and prosperity in a sustainable way.

Recently, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated losses of over 2 trillion dollars until 2030⁴ due to loss of worker productivity due to high exposure to heat. The impacts will be more intense in the agriculture sector and in countries like Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, and others. Also in the agriculture sector, women will be more affected, for, besides suffering with salary inequality and discrimination, they have less access to education and training, and their workdays are longer than the men's, considering the time they dedicate to domestic responsibilities and family care. This highlights the importance of considering climate justice as a transversal issue within the climate agenda. ILO also mentions the concept of just transition, which is about

¹ The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is a panel of scientists responsible for disseminating knowledge about the effects of climate change in the world.

² IPCC, 2018. Summary for Policymakers. In: *Global Warming of 1.5C*. Available at: <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/spm/>.

³ We decided to not present data on fires and deforestation due to the need for updates in the letter's text. But, when this text was written (September, 2019), the official data from INPE – National Institute for Spatial Research indicated that deforestation alerts had a 55% increase on the average from 2016 to 2019; from January to August, 2019, the area under alert was roughly 2,300 square miles, up from 1,150 in 2018. And fires were up 34% on the period's average: until August, 2019, over 46,000 fires were registered, up from 34,000 in the average from 2016 to 2019.

⁴ International Labour Organization (ILO), 2019. Working on A Warmer Planet: The impact of heat stress on labour productivity and decent work. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_711919.pdf.

defending the importance of policies for upskilling and reskilling, as well as decent working conditions to face the challenge of climate impacts on labor markets.⁵ On the other hand, ILO estimates that 24 million jobs could potentially be created globally by 2030, if the right policies are implemented.⁶

Adding to work-associated risks, climate change in Brazil will bring about issues like floods and great droughts, impacts on electricity generation, impacts on agriculture production, with the possible elimination of certain crops (for instance, soy and coffee), as well as a rise in the sea level, posing an enormous risk for coastal populations.

Climate and environmental agendas transcend disagreements. It is about a civilizing, strategic, systemic agenda encompassing decisions of economy, technology, international trade, energetic model, human rights, national security, and peace among nations.

The opportunities for a low carbon economy in Brazil are numerous. To maintain the standing forest and its ecosystem services, there is great potential in the programs of Payment for Environmental Services and in activities geared to reducing deforestation and forest degradation, promoting reforestation, and recovering pasture. Several programs have been implemented to develop products based on forests' biodiversity, using the knowledge from indigenous people and traditional populations coupled with structuring actions in supply chain, with concrete and very positive results. Brazil has displayed leadership in low carbon agricultural techniques and has very favorable conditions for the large-scale use of renewable energy and promotion of energetic efficiency. Facing climate change is an urgent global effort. Using opportunities while considering this urgency means more resources, more competitiveness, more exports, more prestige, and more technological development for Brazil. There is no other way, and the participation of all of society is imperative, leading the process in its various instances.

The Declaration of Recife suggests the adoption of commitments by various actors in the Brazilian society with the goal of prioritizing compliance to the decarbonization

⁵ Adding to ILO's definitions, the concept of a socially just transition toward environmentally sustainable economies and societies is adopted by the International Trade Union Confederation. According to ITUC, a just transition to a low carbon economy can transform climate actions in a motor for sustainable economic growth and social progress. For more information, go to: <<https://www.ituc-csi.org/just-transition-the-pathway-to?lang=en>>.

⁶ ILO, 2018. World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with Jobs. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_628654.pdf>.

agenda and strengthening resilience in Brazil.

The commitments are based on action—meaning they are affirming commitments to drive effective change—; diversity—reflecting the multiplicity of actors—; and ambition—with the conviction that, though Brazil has ambitious reduction goals, we should always enhance our actions and ambition.

Annex II – Suggested Commitments

1. We, undersigned companies, pledge to:

- Publicly assume commitments to reduce emissions according to the goal of limiting the average global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- Choose business leaders and make them spokespeople for our actions and the urgent agenda to fight climate change and be agents of multiplication.
- Assume commitments to: end illegal deforestation in all our production stages and value chain; achieve zero net deforestation, making up for any illegal deforestation if reforestation and forest restoration actions.
- Create a broad plan for adaptation and allocating investments for its implementation.
- Invest in carbon pricing, publicly defending the regulation of a carbon market and the creation of a national system to manage emissions.
- Influence the financial market to adapt its investment policy to encourage sustainable practices.

2. We, undersigned governments, pledge to:

- Create, implement, monitor, and report actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- Create tax incentives that prioritize less polluting productive sectors.
- Promote energy efficiency, increase in renewable energy sources, and clean mobility.
- Stimulate sustainable consumption and climate education in public schools and universities.
- Fight illegal deforestation and promote the sustainable development of

agriculture and livestock farming.

- Stimulate local implementation of environmental compensation mechanisms (such as Payment for Environmental Services, REDD, and others).
- Ensure transparency regarding decision-making on investments, incentives and public policies directly and indirectly related to the climate agenda.

3. We, undersigned civil society organizations, pledge to:

- Monitor actions by companies and governments.
- Establish partnerships and mechanisms to exchange solutions among organizations, thus optimizing actions to face the climate crisis.
- Establish partnerships with companies and governments to create metrics to measure efforts regarding the Brazilian NDC.
- Ensure the continuation and perpetuity of this movement and of the Brazilian Conference on Climate Change.
- Strengthen actions to quantify benefits from ecosystem services in the maintenance of agricultural and forest productivity, as well as the continuous growing maintenance of productive industrial and commercial activities.

4. We, undersigned academic and teaching institutions, pledge to:

- Advocate in favor of the knowledge about climate change, its effects and possibilities of adaptation in universities, such as to raise awareness about the subject's importance and urgency.
- Systematize and disseminate public interest knowledge about the subject's relevance, risks and vulnerabilities, practices and actions of mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
- Work with networks of elementary, middle, and high schools to make sure that the National Common Core Curriculum (BNCC, in the Portuguese acronym) is aligned with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Share referenced content, making it easier for schools and educators to have access to the subject.

- Stimulate scientific careers that structure the bioeconomy industry and the productive models of the standing forest, as well as careers related to low carbon economy.

By signing and supporting the letter, we also encourage organizations to publish their specific commitments, considering the above-mentioned, and to establish a public and effective channel to relate their contributions and advances to societies over time. To ensure the actual commitment of undersigned organizations, we will establish processes and deadlines to follow-up on the commitments suggested by the organizations engaged in the movement throughout 2020.

Not a member yet? Want to get involved? Access our website:
<<https://www.climabrasil.org.br/>>.