

JOINT STATEMENT

AMAZON WATERS INITIATIVE

The parties present at the Amazon Waters International Conference sign the following Joint Declaration to undertake the Amazon Waters Initiative,

Having met in Lima, Peru, on June 15, 2016,

Working towards achieving international agreements in which the interests of all and the sovereignty of each country are respected, and the integrity of the environmental system, particularly in the Amazon Basin, is protected,

Considering that the Amazon Basin is home to the largest continuous rain forest and most extensive freshwater ecosystem in the world, contributing significantly to the biodiversity, climate regulation, and water balance of the planet,

Considering that the destruction and degradation of Amazon ecosystems, including loss of habitat, pollution from mercury and other heavy metals and pesticides, overexploitation of natural resources, and introduction of invasive species, have serious consequences for the indigenous groups, local populations, and wildlife that depend on them, as well as for the whole world,

Recognizing that to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the Amazon, we must increase our understanding of and responsiveness to the impacts of development investments and other economic activities on the Amazon Basin, especially those investments anticipated in the Andean headwaters,

Accepting the forecasts that indicate that climate change is likely to exacerbate the impacts of poorly planned investments and deforestation,

Recognizing that approximately 45% of the Amazon is under a conservation or management category through protected areas or indigenous territories,

Acknowledging that recent advances in science, technology, and communications, including intercultural research, offer unprecedented opportunities to understand the Amazon as a whole and to support governments in developing innovative and effective policies and alternatives for sustainable development and conservation of the Amazon Basin,

Acknowledging that the accumulated experience and knowledge in land and natural resources management and planning by indigenous groups, local populations, the government, and scientists, provide an important source of tools and lessons learned to reconcile conservation and development objectives,

Emphasizing that active and informed citizen participation, especially among indigenous and local communities, is increasingly strengthened and is crucial in sustaining the positive results of conservation efforts and sustainable development in the long term, while respecting the human and citizen rights of indigenous groups and other inhabitants of the Amazon countries,



Promoting mutual and widespread cooperation in contributing to the Amazon Waters Initiative, which aims **to maintain the integrity of the vast, interconnected, and dynamic system of the Amazon Basin, thus improving the welfare of the human and wildlife populations that depend on it,**

Looking to promote a vision of the Amazon Basin in which the region is valued not only for its tropical forests and their importance for carbon storage, but also for its role as the world's greatest and most diverse and interconnected freshwater system,

The parties declare the following specific objectives:

1. To expand the integrated river basin ecosystem management approach, in which forests, waters, wildlife, fisheries and human populations are tightly interconnected.
2. To promote interdisciplinary and intercultural research agendas that generate relevant and timely knowledge to inform the conservation and sustainable development goals of the Amazon Basin; and transform this knowledge into timely, accessible and user-friendly information for indigenous groups, local populations, decision makers, civil society organizations, and citizens.
3. To strengthen fisheries management at adequate scales, ensuring that the development cycle requirements of major fish species are met, and actively involving indigenous groups, local populations, fishers, authorities, and civil society so that their interests are properly represented and their human and citizen rights are respected.
4. To ensure the proper management of Amazon Basin wetlands, including rivers, lakes, swamps, and flooded forests and savannas. This includes identifying wetlands that are essential for connectivity in the Amazon Basin; strengthening the management of protected areas and indigenous territories; and supporting the establishment of mechanisms for conservation or sustainable management of wetlands outside protected areas and indigenous territories.
5. To understand better the negative environmental impacts of development investments on the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems of the Amazon Basin; evaluate their vulnerability at different scales; complete a comparative analysis of various development scenarios; ensure voluntary and binding public and private commitments to adhere to international standards of environmental mitigation and offsets; and strengthen the capacity of relevant authorities and their regulatory frameworks for the implementation of these standards.
6. To build an informed, committed, and empowered constituency for the conservation of the Amazon Basin, undertaking communication efforts, disseminating knowledge and information, and strengthening alliances and partnerships.



7. To cooperate in good faith and with a spirit of solidarity in the implementation and further development of the objectives set down in the Joint Declaration.

This document is signed in three versions (Spanish, Portuguese, and English), and in case of any conflict in its interpretation, the Spanish version will prevail.

Lima, June 15, 2016



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