



8. Interfaith Action to Protect Rainforests

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The COVID-19 crisis highlights the urgent need for G20 leaders to support and protect tropical rainforests. Destruction of these forests poses an existential threat to the global climate: deforestation results in emission of billions of tons of carbon dioxide each year, exacerbates the effects of global climate change, and threatens the livelihoods of Indigenous communities.

Faith-linked initiatives play pivotal roles in directing global attention to the challenges facing the world's rainforests and in empowering local communities to pursue sustainable solutions. Moreover, proactive partnerships between these initiatives and G20 member countries offer significant opportunity to enhance awareness and spur action. The Italian G20 presidency includes “planet” among its top three priorities, calling on governments to “lead the world towards concrete and lasting solutions” on climate change, land degradation, and biodiversity loss.¹ Key recommendations of the 2021 G20 Interfaith Forum Policy Brief on Rainforests include:

Protect and Restore Rainforests

Preserving intact rainforests and restoring degraded land are essential to curbing the long-term damage of deforestation. G20 members should promote measures that protect forests endangered environments rehabilitate degraded ecosystems. Leaders can also take decisive action by withdrawing support for subsidies to industries that rely on deforestation.

Promote Indigenous Rights

Indigenous populations are disproportionately affected by deforestation. G20 rainforest countries can take concrete steps to support these populations by upholding customary land rights, recognizing Indigenous claims to ancestral lands, and supporting community-based monitoring systems that report human rights violations. Furthermore, G20 leaders should ensure that Indigenous voices are included in policymaking processes at all levels.

Stronger Oversight of Industry, Promotion of Lifestyle Changes

G20 leaders should use their influence to press for greater transparency regarding the environmental and human rights impact of commercial industries. Support for independent third-party verification mechanisms to regulate company supply chains and address potential violations is one promising approach. G20 governments should endorse national initiatives to reduce consumption of meat and dairy sourced from deforested land.

Support Research and Faith-Linked Advocacy Efforts

G20 leaders should fund research to better understand the impact of deforestation on the spread of viruses; rainforest countries in particular should promote land protection efforts that reduce the risk of disease transmission from animals to humans. G20 countries and organizations such

as the UN and WWF should continue to work closely with faith actors on issues of deforestation and conservation.

ⁱ “Planet.” Italian G20 Presidency. <https://www.g20.org/planet.html>