

Brazil back in the fight against Amazon deforestation

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By María Josefina Arce

Last November at the UN Climate Change Conference in Egypt, the then president-elect of Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, expressed his commitment to the fight against climate change and the deforestation of the Amazon.

Lula da Silva's mere presence at the important event was a sign of his willingness to bring Brazil back into this global effort against a phenomenon that seriously threatens life on the planet.

And without wasting any time, already in the first hours of taking office, he began to fulfill his promises. One of his first measures was to revoke a decree that allowed gold mining in the Amazon region, a controversial activity that has been blamed for deforestation, pollution and attacks on indigenous peoples.

The decree had been signed in February last year by his predecessor in the Planalto Palace, Jair Bolsonaro, who during his four years in office encouraged mining and agribusiness in the largest tropical forest in the world.

According to published data, artisanal mining destroyed some 125 square kilometers of the Brazilian Amazon in 2021 alone.

There is consensus among scientists that the Amazon rainforest is approaching a tipping point. They point out that the massive loss of trees and vegetation could release enough carbon into the atmosphere to ensure catastrophic consequences of climate change.

Therefore, another of the measures taken by Lula Da Silva has been the reestablishment of the Amazon Fund, whose main contributors Germany and Norway indefinitely froze their contributions in the face of Bolsonaro's anti-environmental policies.

The former president had dissolved the Technical Committee and the Guiding Committee, bodies that defined the destination of the Fund's resources, created in 2008, during Lula Da Silva's second term.

But after the victory of the Workers' Party candidate in the second round of the general elections last October, Norway expressed its desire to resume financial aid to Brazil to reduce deforestation in the Amazon rainforest.

The Scandinavian country was the largest donor, as between 2008 and 2018 it donated US\$1.2 billion to the initiative, which aims to prevent, monitor and combat indiscriminate logging in the region.

And in these actions, native peoples, faithful guardians of biodiversity and the environment, play an essential role. Thus, in Egypt, he met with indigenous leaders from all over the world, who expressed their satisfaction with Lula Da Silva's intention to take advantage of his strategies and proposals regarding the care of Mother Earth.

Under the leadership of the new president, Brazil returns to the international arena and joins global efforts to address climate change and its serious consequences for humanity.

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