

## Safeguarding the Amazon: Which will triumph – personal profit or the planet?

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August 2023

At the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) regional summit in early August, representatives of the eight Amazonian countries and senior US/French officials will



meet to discuss the ‘lungs of the earth’. Is there any chance that, for once, they will put the environment above personal profit?

The two-day meeting (8–9 August 2023) will be hosted by Brazil in the northern city of Belem and is due to focus on the task of establishing plans for the future of the rainforest. Topics to be covered are likely to include:

- 1. Attracting investments:** Participating countries Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela will discuss how to encourage investors into the Amazon region. They will no doubt review sustainable development projects, push for eco-friendly operations and look to engage with the private sector in an effort to stimulate socio-economic growth.
  - 2. Combatting deforestation:** Deforestation will be at the top of the agenda, with talks exploring how to combat illegal logging and maintain conservation. Possible solutions are likely to include bolstering monitoring systems, incorporating satellite imagery into deforestation tracking facilities, and preserving the Amazon’s biodiversity with cross-border collaboration.
  - 3. Protecting Indigenous peoples:** The liberties and welfare of the myriad Indigenous people groups are an essential consideration. The priority of preserving their way of life, heritage, rights and land will have a strong voice in any discussions.
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**4. Encouraging sustainable development:** Members will be looking to find a balance between what is seen as necessary economic growth and conservation of the environment. Green initiatives, technologies, eco-tourism and renewable energy solutions that produce the least negative outcome for the region will be welcomed.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will present his vision to the United Nations (UN) assembly. Attendance by senior officials from the US and France – to include US Special Envoy on Climate Change, John Kerry, and French President Emmanuel Macron – underlines the importance of the talks.

Given the size of the rainforest, its health and welfare is linked to the biodiversity and climate patterns of the entire planet. Delegates and observers know that decisions and agreements made by the ACTO forum will have global consequences, influencing international policies on conservation, climate change and sustainability progress.

The stakes couldn't be higher. To put it bluntly, which will win out? Personal profit or the planet?

*Photo by David Riaño Cortés: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/rainforest-surrounded-by-fog-975771/>*

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