

Rome, April 23, 2025

IAMazonia Unveils Transformative Forest Conservation Model Honouring Pope Francis' Environmental Legacy on the 10th Anniversary of Laudato Si' and 55th Earth Day

In a deeply emotional context marked by the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis, **IAMazonia** presented its model for nature-based solutions projects during a solemn behind-closed-doors gathering held in Rome on April 22. The event, originally planned to coincide publicly with the 55th Earth Day, was reshaped as a tribute to the Holy Father's environmental teachings and legacy, as articulated in the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

IAMazonia is a high-impact initiative launched by prominent Italian business leaders to pioneer a **regenerative model of forest conservation and climate action**—now taking shape in the heart of the Brazilian Amazon through its first and flagship **project: Mejuruà**.

"This 55th anniversary is indeed a day touched by sorrow," said **Kathleen Rogers, Chair of Earth Day**, in the opening remarks of the meeting. "Yet, it is in memory of Pope Francis and to honor his profound legacy that we gather. United in purpose, we're here to actively implement his vision of integral ecology and care for our common home, especially as we mark the 10th anniversary of Laudato Si'. My sincere gratitude to Gaetano Buglisi, Founder of IAMazonia, for his vision and tireless efforts in convening this crucial assembly, all dedicated to safeguarding our future and protecting our precious forests under the umbrella of IAMazonia."

During the event, a Letter of Intent was signed by H.E. **Victor Genina Cervantes, Director of Human Development at Caritas Internationalis**, and **Gaetano Buglisi, CEO of IAMazonia**. This marks the first step in a collaborative partnership aimed at combating social and ecological injustice. Caritas Internationalis will take on a guiding and monitoring role in the implementation of IAMazonia projects to ensure full adherence to environmental sustainability and integral human development principles.

The global relevance of IAMazonia's model was underlined by a special video message from **André Corrêa do Lago, President of COP30**, the upcoming 2025 United Nations Climate Change Conference to be hosted in Belém, Brazil. Corrêa do Lago emphasized the strategic importance of replicable, high-integrity forest-based projects like Mejuruà in advancing climate goals ahead of COP30.

IAMazonia's model redefines sustainable development through a regenerative economy centred on human flourishing. Project Mejuruà generates revenue through the sustainable production of timber, rubber, and açaí berries, alongside the issuance of carbon credits for voluntarily forgoing deforestation. This approach ensures financial viability and fair benefit-sharing, with project profits equitably allocated among investors, reinvestment in future initiatives, and programmes supporting local communities.

Fundação Getúlio Vargas will produce a position paper in collaboration with **Harvard University Professor Alexander More**, aimed at defining, developing, and evaluating the model conceived by IAMazonia, with a view to its replicability in other nature-based solution projects.

Looking ahead, **IAMazonia plans to expand its model to** other tropical rainforest regions — including the **Democratic Republic of Congo, Venezuela, Tanzania, and Southeast Asia** — where discussions and regulatory approval processes are already underway with national authorities and local stakeholders.

H. E. Mme **Eve Bazaiba Masudi, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development** of the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, participated remotely in the event to underscore the importance the DRC Government places on nature-based solutions — not only as a climate strategy but also as an opportunity to attract skilled, responsible, and long-term foreign investors such as IAMazonia.

Following the welcome remarks by Prof. **Giovanni Tria** — Chair of IAMazonia, economist, academic, and Italy's former Minister of Economy and Finance — additional speakers included **Donatella Parisi**, Communications Coordinator, Laudato Si' Movement; **Virgilio Viana**, Chairman Fundação Amazonia Sustentável; **Rubens Antonio Barbosa**, former Brazilian Ambassador to the United States and the United Kingdom; **Javier Fiz Perez**, Professor, European University of Rome and Vice-President of Core Values Org; **Richard Muyungi**, Climate Envoy and Advisor to the President of Tanzania on Environment and Climate Change.

Located in a vast and biodiverse region of the Brazilian state of Amazonas, **Project Mejurua represents a groundbreaking case of regenerative forest conservation and socio-economic development**. The landowners have permanently renounced their legal right to deforest the area, which will now be fully protected through satellite surveillance and on-the-ground stewardship, effectively safeguarding it from illegal logging.

The project has already secured collaboration agreements with leading local institutions, including among others:

- The **Government of the State of Amazonas**, to support and promote the initiative, as reaffirmed by **Governor Wilson Lima** and by **Flávio Cordeiro Antony Filho**, Chief of the Civil House of the State of Amazonas;
- **Fundacred**, to offer scholarships and educational financing for young residents;
- **Associação dos Moradores do Baixo Riozinho**, to support local açai berry production via a cooperative purchasing model that empowers small-scale farmers—especially women—and preserves traditional agricultural knowledge.

In the initial phase alone—and without accounting for the broader economic ripple effects—project Mejuruà will create more than **500 jobs**, build **new housing for more than 150 indigenous families**, finance schools, aqueducts, water treatment systems, a **biomass-powered energy plant**, a **brand-new sawmill** facility, and provide access to medical care, internet connectivity, and digital inclusion programmes in forest villages.

As the world mourns the loss of Pope Francis, IAMazonia moves forward with renewed purpose, seeking to incarnate his vision of integral ecology through action—transforming landscapes, empowering communities, and offering a model of environmental stewardship rooted in social justice, economic dignity, and hope for the future.

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