



Environment Commission

Topic 2: Enhancing international cooperation in order to protect the Amazon rainforest.

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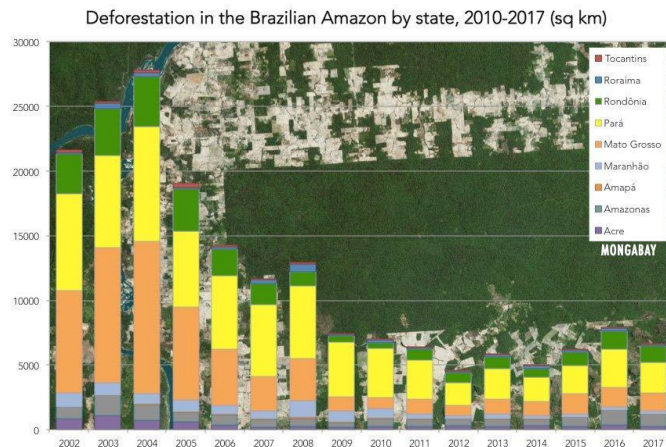
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1. Introduction

The Amazon rainforest is located in the heart of Brazil and covers about 6.7 million square kilometres. It crosses nine different countries that can make profit of its huge biodiversity. It has existed for 55 million years and, despite being one of the most undamaged forests in the entire world, in the past 40 years it has lost almost 18% of its vegetation. This continuous decrease is due to a series of factors that may lead to a catastrophe for our planet. It is crucial for all countries to safeguard this landscape because it influences the worldwide climate system and is essential to keep the atmospheric levels of the Earth normal.

Despite this abusing and looting, the Amazon rainforest has demonstrated profitable because it is an enormous supply of carbon and it is one of the biggest concentrations of biodiversity on our planet which will be lost if people don't enhance international cooperation in order to protect it. The reasons that countries usually give for looting the rainforest are primarily economic; indeed, the demand of wood and arable land is surging. Other causes include the illegal exploitation of forests, soy plantations and livestock farming which are now common in this area. Yet, deforestation and fires in this area are increasing and the Amazon rainforest

is moving closer towards a dieback situation since they had been decreasing just a couple of decades ago.



2. Definition of key terms

Rainforest: a luxuriant, dense forest rich in biodiversity, found typically in tropical areas with consistently heavy rainfall.

Looting: steal goods from (a place), typically during a war or riot.

Biodiversity: the number and types of plants and animals that exist in a particular area or in the world generally, or the problem of protecting this.

Arable land: a land that can be or is cultivated, capable of producing crops and suitable for farming.

Livestock: animals and birds that are kept on a farm, such as cows, sheep, or chickens.

Dieback situation: the unseasonal decline in a forest or stand of vegetation.

Deforestation: the action of clearing an area by cutting down trees.

REDD+: a mechanism that reduces emissions from forests and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development.

Slash-and-burn agriculture: an agricultural method in which forests are burned and cleared for planting. It provides fertilization.

3. Background information

The Amazon rainforest concerns a long history of human settlement, but the rhythm of change has recently quickened due to an increase in the population, the presentation of new



mechanized agriculture and integration of the Amazon locale into global economy. Many goods created there are traded nowadays to China, Europe, the U.S and other nations.

This transition has had considerable consequences on the region. It has increased large-scale deforestation within the rainforest, with more than 1.4 million hectares of woodland cleared since the 1970s. Conversion for cattle ranching is the greatest single driver of deforestation: in Brazil, more than 60% of the land was turned into fields supporting less than one person per hectare. However, the market-oriented cattle production has in any case extended quickly in the past decade.

Mechanical agrarian production, in particular soy ranches, has significantly influenced deforestation since the early 1990s. However, since 2006 soy industry in Brazil has been banned the use of new land for soy production, as a result of a campaign coordinated by Greenpeace. Also mining, subsistence agriculture, dams and rural fires are driving deforestation within the Amazon forest.

Deforestation is not the only reason why the rainforest is changing, as recent worldwide climate change are having a major impact on it. Higher temperatures within the Atlantic diminish precipitation in the Amazon, causing the dry season and expanding the vulnerability of the rainforest to fires.

In 2004, the Brazil government issued a deforestation reduction program. This included the introduction of improved satellite enforcement and financial incentives for respecting environmental laws. Furthermore, the private industries of soy and cattle are increasingly responsive to consumer requests for less-damaging products. Finally, the Brazilian Amazon has been the location of a number of preservation tests, extending from jurisdictional product certification to the Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) ventures, to Norway's billion dollar performance-based instalment for cutting deforestation.

Since January 2019 thousands of fires have broken out across the Amazon rainforest according to the country's National Institute for Space Research. These fires are damaging the camps of Indigenous tribes, killing animals and covering the sky with dark smoke. Basically all these fires are caused by men, as farmers often set them up voluntarily because it is a method of growing food called "slash-and-burn agriculture".

In August 2019 the British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has allotted UK funding to help tackle deforestation within the Amazon, as part of a series of activities to combat climate change and protect biodiversity and the environment. The PM will make £10 million promptly accessible to help launch endeavours to protect and re-establish the Amazon rainforest in Brazil - including in regions attacked by the current fires. These recent funds are now contributing to re-establish the rainforest in Brazil and neighbouring nations, and will help defend the colossal biodiversity of animal and plant species found within the Amazon.



Leaders of states home to the Amazon signed an agreement in September 2019 pointed at sharing resources and taking more significant steps to protect the world's biggest tropical rainforest. The meetings, driven by Colombian President Ivan Duque, took place in Leticia, the Colombian city on the Amazon river. According to the Leticia Amazon pact, the Amazonian nations will "strengthen coordinated action", "establish a regional cooperation mechanism", "increase efforts associated with checking woodland cover", and "reinforce the capacities and cooperation of Indigenous and tribal people groups", among other activities.

4. Major countries involved

- **Brazil**

Brazil is home to almost one-third of the rainforests on our planet, including the Amazon rainforest. It is also the country with more biodiversity on Earth, with about 56,000 species of plants and 578 mammals. It also has the Amazon Basin, a mosaic of nature including rainforests, seasonal forests, deciduous forests, flooded forests, and savannas. This region was subject to an exceptional loss of vegetation over the last two generations: an area of almost 760,000 square kilometer has been destroyed in the Amazon since 1970. The Amazon deforestation increased in the early 1970s because of the construction of the Trans-Amazonian Highway, which replaced large forest areas with development and commercial activities. Recently, growing populations and increased viability of agricultural operations have caused another rise in deforestation.

- **Colombia**

Although it is a relatively small country, Colombia is the second most naturally diverse nation on Earth, home to around 10 percent of all species. This biodiversity results from Colombia's changed ecosystems—from the wealthy tropical rainforest to the coastal cloud forests to the open savannas. Almost 18 percent of these species are endemic to the nation. While about 10 percent of Colombia should be under protection, its wealthy biodiversity is progressively threatened. According to UN data, each year Colombia loses about 200,000 hectares of forests—though the actual figure may be higher considering that 100,000 hectares of local forests are illicitly destroyed each year.

- **Ecuador**

Ecuador has the most elevated deforestation rate and most exceedingly bad natural record in South America. Oil drilling, logging, and road-building have had a terrible effect on Ecuador's rainforests, which nowadays cover less than 15 percent of the country's total mass. Logging in Western Ecuador regions causes the destruction of 99



percent of the country's rainforest in this region. Throughout the course of history, after a region has been logged and abandoned, settlers follow logging roads for their settlements, destroying the encompassing forests for farming and cattle pasture.

- **French Guiana**

The rainforests of French Guiana are still to a great extent unexploited and sparsely populated. Most of the population lives on the Atlantic coastal zone and lives off financial aid from France, 50 percent of which is given by the European Space Agency.

- **Guyana**

Guyana is a small, sparsely populated country on the north coast of South America. It is covered by forests for about three-quarters of its surface, 60 percent of which is classified as primary forest. Guyana's forests are exceptionally varied and, according to ITTO data, its forests comprise rainforests, montane forests, swamp and marsh, dry evergreen, seasonal forest and mangrove forest.

- **Peru**

The FAO says that Peru loses between 224,000 and 300,000 hectares of forest per year, primarily due to subsistence agriculture. Deforestation is also caused by the development of logging, commercial agriculture, mining and road construction. Nowadays most logging in the country is not legal; however, illegal loggers are not alarmed, as until 2006 none had been arrested in the country.

- **Suriname**

Suriname has an extremely low population that mainly lives in the capital city. The country has the lowest level of deforestation in the world. Civil wars between coastal and native populations were solved in 1992 when they signed a treaty. Thanks to this agreement, they had the right to their indigenous lands and the control of economic activities.

- **Venezuela**

It is one of the most biodiverse countries on the Earth, but its rainforests are threatened by logging, mining and oil extraction. In 2006, Chavez launched a project for the construction of a massive gas pipeline that would bring gas to the south. Environmentalists are scared because the project could destroy the Amazon rainforest by polluting water and building roads. This country also continues building an



electricity transmission line in Brazil. Another important activity in this area is the mining industry of gold and diamonds, especially in the southern region.

- **Bolivia**

The Amazon rainforest in Bolivia covers 59.6 million hectares. About half of Bolivia's forest is primary forest but lately it has been subjected to disastrous fires.

5. UN involvement

In September 2019 the UN Secretary-General convened the UN Climate Action Summit on the theme 'Alliance for Rainforests' and, specifically, the Amazon rainforest. It was supposed to focus on the actual problems in this area and find a long-term response plan to solve the issue. Thanks to this meeting, Germany, the UK and Norway will deliver a pledge to contribute USD 5 billion by 2020 in order to safeguard the forests. They also said that there is a need of billions of dollars to reduce deforestation. Finally, they have sent some special envoys, so that when they meet again at the Biodiversity Conference in Kunming, they will act directly to protect that region.

The Rainforest Alliance is a non-profit organization that works in many countries and focuses on business, agriculture and in particular forests. Its aim is to change the critical situation that nowadays is common to some parts of the Earth. In 2018, over 7 million hectares and about 2 million farmers were under its control.

The UN has also issued a statement in 2008 submitted by Legião da Boa Vontade, that is a non-governmental organization in collaboration with the Economic and Social Council. It addresses the issues in the Amazon rainforest and talks about the Manaus Free Trade Zone, that is a model for economic development devised by the government of Brazil. Ultimately, it says that in order to protect the forest there is a need for investments in education, science and technology. These could guarantee its territorial control, but both the role of Brazilian Government and NGOs are crucial.

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GeMUN
Genoa Model United Nations

Affiliated with



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