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**COLOMBIA** Caquetá | **ECUADOR** Pastaza | **INDONESIA** Aceh, Central Kalimantan, East Kalimantan, North Kalimantan, Papua, West Kalimantan, West Papua | **IVORY COAST** Bélier, Cavally | **MEXICO** Campeche, Chiapas, Jalisco, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, Yucatán  
**NIGERIA** Cross River State | **PERU** Amazonas, Huánuco, Loreto, Madre de Dios, Piura, San Martín, Ucayali | **SPAIN** Catalonia | **USA** California, Illinois

Manaus, April 29 2020

Mr. António Guterres  
Secretary General of the United Nations  
New York, USA

REF. Joint action to protect vulnerable populations against COVID19 in Tropical Forest regions

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

Aware of the enormous and unprecedented challenges to the health and socioeconomic well-being of the communities of our planet, and on behalf of the 38 Subnational Governments and Provinces that constitute the Governors Task Force for Climate and Forests, I submit a request for support from the UN in order to strengthen our local efforts to combat COVID19 and to protect human lives. We are part of a platform that, over its more than ten years of existence, has focused its actions on the search for alternatives for sustainable development and low emissions; the preservation of life aligned with social development has been one of our main pillars. Although our focus is not on addressing public health, the size of the challenge we face requires reorienting our actions in order to preserve the lives of our populations, especially those in situations of vulnerability, including indigenous peoples, traditional and riverside communities, as well as in peripheral locations in poor or developing cities. We are aware that, without its populations, the forest does not make sense.

Our forest areas are inhabited by indigenous and other traditional populations, with particularities that make them much more vulnerable to the threat of epidemics and pandemics. Since the earliest contacts with Western Civilization, our indigenous populations have been almost decimated by outbreaks of flu and measles. We have no scientific projections or concrete estimates, but based on the historical process of contact with these original groups, there is an imminent risk of a major catastrophe caused by this deadly virus. We cannot run the risk of losing the human and cultural values that we hold, which moves us to call for a global and specific effort to combat COVID19 in tropical forest regions, towards the preservation of our native and traditional communities.

Additionally, illegal economic activities in our regions, intensified by the social isolation measures that have limited State control, have resulted in projections for increased deforestation and environmental crimes, already identified by remote systems based on technology satellite. The increase in deforestation leads to the dismantlement of traditional communities, who in some cases



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might move deeper into remote areas of the forest or, as has frequently been the case, to areas closer to urban centers in the peripheries of our cities, greatly increasing the risk of contracting the virus, and putting additional pressure on the already limited local health systems.

The conditions and responsiveness of each member in our platform are different, and somewhat related to the conditions in each of our countries. There are, however, features that all of us share with regards to public health in the most remote rural areas and in urban areas as a result of the disorderly growth of our cities: we share significant limitations in transport and communication logistics; our health services are insufficient to meet the challenges of distance and population density; and we have limited availability of specialized human resources. Specifically in relation to coping with the coronavirus, the availability of ventilators is well below the average of other regions in our countries.

We are aware that only a combined effort will allow us to face the pandemic, and we urgently need to take measures to leverage financial resources, medical materials and equipment, tests for virus identification, and specialized medical assistance for the forest areas inhabited by traditional communities. It is essential to supplement the efforts of our National Governments to face the virus, and the solutions adopted require a wide participation and integrated effort between the different sectors of society. The leadership of the United Nations and its related bodies is certainly the way to mobilize the resources that our 38-member-platform in 10 countries needs, and is certainly an important sign in the search for more egalitarian, inclusive, and sustainable societies.

In appreciation of your good efforts and commitment towards mediating global challenges, I make myself available towards planning and implementing the appropriate actions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Wilson Lima'. The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Wilson Miranda Lima

GCF Task Force President 2020  
Governor of Amazonas State, Brazil