

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024*

## **Remarks on Rainforest Conservation Efforts in Manaus, Brazil**

*November 17, 2024*

Thanks for all being here.

Back in the late eighties, Chico Mendes, a Brazilian rubber tapper who turned environmental activist, said the following, I quote: "At first, I thought I was fighting to save rubber trees. Then I thought I was fighting to save the Amazon rainforest. Now I realize I was fighting for humanity."

At the time, I was a United States Senator, working with a great Republican Senator named Dick Lugar, from Indiana, to enact a new law: The United States would relieve other countries of debts owed to us if they commit to protecting their own forest. These debt-for-nature swaps have since protected nearly 70 million acres of forests worldwide.

And today I'm proud to be here, the first sitting U.S. President to visit the Amazon rainforest, to recommit to protecting the rainforests, like this one.

The most powerful solutions we have to fight climate change is all around us: the world's forests. Trees breathe carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. And yet, each minute, the world is chopping down the equivalent of 10 soccer fields worth of forests—each minute.

That's why we've been a leader internationally in the fight to end and reverse deforestation by twenty-twenty—by 2030. That's why we've led by example at home, conserving an area of the U.S. lands and waters larger—larger than the state of—the nation of Uruguay.

We've done it by fighting for Tribal partners—lifting them up; Indigenous communities; and the most impacted by deforestation and climate change. Today's announcement will support Indigenous communities to do some—the same here in the Amazon.

We all know there's much more we can do and must do at home and abroad. That's why today I issued an official proclamation to support the conservation of nature around the world, because the fight to protect our planet is literally a fight for humanity for generations to come. It may be the only existential threat to all our nations and to all humanity that exists.

With today's proclamation, I am proud to announce, first, the United States Development Finance Corporation will mobilize hundreds of millions of dollars in partnership with a Brazilian company to reforest the Amazon.

Second, we're launching a Brazil Restoration and Bioeconomy Finance Coalition to mobilize at least \$10 billion by 2030 to restore and protect 20,000 square miles of land.

And third, I'm announcing an additional \$50 million to the Amazon Fund that's already—we've already given \$50 million.

Fourth, we'll provide the funding to help launch President Lula's important new initiative, the Tropical Forest Forever Fund. It's in the interest of all of us. The United States benefits from that as much as any other country does, including here in Brazil.

I'm also so proud to support bipartisan legislation to launch a new foundation for international conservation that would leverage public funds to mobilize billions more in private capital.

The fight against climate change has been a defining cause of my Presidency.

My administration first rejoined the Paris Agreement on climate change. We've launched a 150-nation-strong Global Methane Pledge. We've delivered a record climate financing to developing countries. And we've pledged that we would deliver \$11 billion per year by 2024. I'm pleased to announce today that we not only kept that promise, we've surpassed it.

Back home, I signed the most significant climate change law in history, a law that positioned us to cut carbon emissions in half by 2030. This generated \$450 billion in new clean energy investments, and that's created hundreds of thousands of good-paying jobs and a manufacturing boom as well.

Folks, we don't have to choose between the environment and the economy. We can do both. We've proven it back home.

It's no secret that I'm leaving office in January. I will have my—I will leave my successor and my country in a strong foundation to build on if they choose to do so.

It's true some may seek to deny or delay the clean energy revolution that's underway in America, but nobody—nobody—can reverse it. Nobody. Not when so many people, regardless of party or politics, are enjoying its benefits. Not when countries around the world are harnessing the clean energy revolution to pull ahead themselves.

The question now is: Which government will stand in the way, and which will seize the enormous economic opportunity?

Let me close with this. It's often said that the Amazon is the lungs of the world—the Amazon is the lungs of the world. But, in my view, our forests and national wonders are the heart and soul of the world.

They unite us. They inspire us. They make us proud of our countries and heritage, a bridge to the past and to our future, a birthright we pass down from generation to generation.

The Amazon rainforest was built up over 50 million years—50 million years. History is literally watching us now. So let's preserve this sacred place, for our time and forever, for the benefit of all humanity.

Thank you very, very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:39 p.m. at the Museu da Amazônia. In his remarks, he referred to President-elect Donald J. Trump. He also referred to Proclamation 10861—International Conservation Day, 2024.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Rainforest conservation efforts in Manaus, Brazil.

*Locations:* Manaus, Brazil.

*Names:* Lula da Silva, Luiz Inácio; Trump, Donald J.

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