Protecting Rainforests as a Moral and Spiritual Responsibility:
Global Faith Leaders Stand Together Against Tropical Deforestation

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Today, on World Environment Day, we, leaders from all faith traditions: indigenous spiritualities, Jewish, Hindu, Zoroastrian, Jain, Buddhist, Christian, Islamic, Sikh, and Bahá’í, stand together and commit to safeguarding our environment, particularly from the growing and urgent threat of tropical deforestation.

The world’s rainforests are a sacred trust, an irreplaceable gift and essential to life on Earth. They contain more than two thirds of plant and animal species on the planet and are a natural solution to climate change. The encroachment into wildlife habitat and the destruction of tropical rainforests is directly resulting in the emergence of zoonotic diseases, such as COVID-19. We also know that indigenous peoples and forest communities are particularly vulnerable to these external diseases.

Now, more than ever before, we recognize the need to join together across faiths to affirm that protecting rainforests is a spiritual imperative of the highest order.

Deeply concerned about the world’s rainforests and understanding that tropical deforestation drives climate change, species loss, disease outbreaks, poverty and human rights violations together, we commit to action.

We call upon faith leaders, faith communities, governments, civil society, the private sector, and all of humanity to unite with us in a commitment to halt and reverse the destruction of our planet’s magnificent rainforests and to stand in solidarity with the indigenous peoples and forest communities that serve as their guardians.

As the leaders of Religions for Peace, we urge all people, organizations and networks of faith to make use of and widely disseminate the educational materials produced by the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative. We hereby endorse the newly launched Resource Guide on Rainforest Protection for Religious Communities.

We invite all people of faith and good will globally to join us in raising awareness about the deforestation crisis within our communities and places of worship as an expression of our care for the Earth. We will advance religious teaching, education and action that reflects a moral commitment to protect rainforests. This is needed for us to create a sustainable and peaceful world where all living beings can exist in harmony with each other.
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