

IANAS and ABC present the Manaus Letter with recommendations for heads of state gathered at the Amazon Summit

Science Academies of the Americas defend the immediate cessation of the destruction of the biome and the transition to new development models for the region

Preceding the Amazon Summit, which brought together the heads of state of the Amazonian countries in Belém do Pará, Brazil, the Inter-American Network of Academies of Sciences (IANAS) and the Brazilian Academy of Sciences (ABC) organized the meeting “Science By and For the Amazon” in Manaus, in the state of Amazonas, on the 2nd and 3rd of August. The event brought together representatives of the network's Academies of Sciences for a discussion on sustainable alternatives for the Amazon biome.

The result of the discussions was the **Manaus Letter**, in which the organizations reinforced the need to end deforestation by 2030 and to transform the economic bases of the region by sustainable activities to keep the forest standing and the rivers flowing. The letter was delivered to the Minister of Science, Technology & Innovation of Brazil, Luciana Santos, during the Amazonian Dialogues, which preceded the Summit in Belém and provided a forum for discussions across civil society organizations and the governments of countries in the region.

According to the president of ABC and co-president of IANAS, Helena Nader, the Academies of Sciences can significantly contribute to ensuring that scientific knowledge is not restricted to the shelf. “Although studies and diagnoses are available, these do not reach public policy makers and managers. Through the IANAS Amazon Initiative, we intend to build bridges that narrow the gap between science and management, strengthening sustainable development alternatives for the region. In this exercise, it is fundamental that scientists from the Amazon region are directly involved, developing ‘Science by and for the Amazon’”.

Karen Strier, a member of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States and co-president of IANAS, emphasized that the endorsement of the Manaus Letter by all of the Academies of Sciences in the Americas “is significant because it reflects a shared understanding that science is essential to sustainable conservation and development solutions for the Amazon and that protecting this biome is a regional and global responsibility.”

Ambassador Antonio Ricarte, representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Brazil) and responsible for organizing the Amazon Summit, opened the discussions in Manaus by highlighting the importance of the biome not only for the planet, but also for the national sovereignty of countries. He pointed out that the Manaus Letter “should subsidize the formulation of adequate public policies to combat deforestation, monitor the biome and create conditions to improve the living conditions of the Amazonian peoples”.

Indigenous leader André Baniwa, director of the Territorial Demarcation Department of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples (Brazil), said he was hopeful. “The impression I have is that scientists are very interested in this dialogue with traditional knowledge. It is time to move forward in this direction. I hope that in the near future we can see things happening in practice”, he said.

Along the same lines, the secretary general of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), María Alexandra López, stated that it is time for researchers to also be concerned with the practical part. “Scientists, whether we like it or not, have become political actors. It is time to face the problem directly and immediately”, she warned.

The biologist Andrea Encalada, who represented the Academy of Ecuador and the Scientific Panel for the Amazon, highlighted the diversity of actions being taken. “It was very important to see how the different academies can present solutions for the Amazon. The letter we wrote together reflects how we can collaborate in different areas”, she said.

At the Amazonian Dialogues held in Belém, the Brazilian Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Luciana Santos, was impressed with the ability of IANAS to bring together the Academies of Sciences in the region around a document and announced that the government plans to create an "IPCC of the Amazon" to bring together data and generate periodic reports. “We want to contribute even more so that the implementation of public policies in favor of the Amazon generates results for the populations that live here”, said the minister.