

Amazon at heart - The first World Assembly for the Amazon

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The first World Assembly for the Amazon, held on 18 and 19 July, was a remarkable success. Because of the importance of the Amazon for the future of the planet (climate, biodiversity...) and the symbolic power of the struggles and alternatives defended by the inhabitants of this massive ecosystem, the success of the Assembly could be a strategic trigger for a new phase of international mobilisation.



The aim of the Assembly was to analyse the many challenges that threaten the Amazon and to discuss the resistances and alternatives that are essential to its survival and protection. There were more than 3000 pre-registrations for the Assembly on 18 July, with 800 participants on zoom and 125 000 views on Facebook (87 000 in Spanish, 27 000 in Portuguese, 10 000 in French and 1 000 in English). Three working groups met on 19 July - on the resistances against COVID, the campaign to boycott products linked to deforestation, and regional and international mobilizations — in which more than 500 people participated. The overwhelming majority of participants came from the Amazon countries — Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Surinam and French Guyana — but there were also activists from other North and South American and European countries. Unfortunately, the timing - in the afternoon for the Amazon countries - did not allow for Asia-Pacific participation.

Originally discussed in the Global Dialogue network, which was created at the beginning of the COVID pandemic, the idea of the Assembly was based on the success of virtual assemblies held in Bolivia to mobilise against the fires in the Amazon region. Very quickly, the most important movements and networks in the region, in particular COICA, the network of indigenous peoples, REPAM, a network close to the Catholic Church, and the Pan-Amazonic Forum that emerged from the World Social Forum in Belem in 2009, took up the idea and made it possible. Many social movements from the Amazonian countries have joined this initiative, as well as representatives of international networks such as Fridays for the Future or Extinction Rebellion. All these movements and networks come together in a preparation committee which is open to all. This committee has been meeting every week for almost two months and has set up several working groups, such as communications and mobilization. Movements from the Amazon believed the first Assembly for the Amazon should be global from the outset, even though it was clear that the first stage would first and foremost bring together activists from the countries of the region. For this reason, translation was provided in four languages, Spanish, Portuguese, English and French. You can find recordings of the assembly in these languages here.

Several important documents came out of the assembly: the “Amazon Cry for Life” which summarizes the issues of this first assembly, the declaration of the assembly, “Amazonize Yourself!” and a presentation of the upcoming mobilizations, especially on August 14 and September 22.

The activists of the Amazon region are already fully engaged in the preparation of these mobilizations. We now need to make this initiative known more widely and to involve the many movements and networks around the world that recognize themselves in this struggle and want, in this moment of major crises, to defend a radical change to end a system that is destructive for humanity and the planet!

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P.S.

- CADTM. 1 September 2020:
<http://cadtm.org/Amazon-at-heart>
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