Policy Brief:

NDC TO DRIVE CLIMATE ACTION IN THE AMAZON

CIENCIA Y SABER INDÍGENA

POR LA AMAZONÍA

CONTENT

ACRONYMS

ACTO	Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization
CANCC	Comisión de Alto Nivel de Cambio Climático High-Level Commission on Climate Change
COA	Código Orgánico del Ambiente Organic Environmental Code
EICDGB	Estrategia Integral de Control a la Deforestación y Gestión de los Bosques Comprehensive Strategy for Controlling Deforestation and Forest Management
ENCC	Estrategia Nacional de Cambio Climático National Climate Change Strategy
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
LMCC	Ley Marco sobre Cambio Climático Framework Law on Climate Change
LULUCF	Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry
PIGCCS	Planes Integrales de Gestión de Cambio Climático Sectorial Comprehensive Sectoral Climate Change Management Plans
PIGCCT	Planes Integrales de Gestión de Cambio Climático Territorial Comprehensive Territorial Climate Change Management Plans
REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
SMByC	Sistema de Monitoreo de Bosques y Carbono Forest and Carbon Monitoring System

CREDITS

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01. SUMMARY

In the region, updates to Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) highlight a common challenge: the need to recognize Indigenous peoples as key actors in climate change mitigation and adaptation. Despite the high carbon sequestration capacity and rich biodiversity found in Indigenous territories, their inhabitants face significant challenges, including pressure from illegal activities, land conflicts, and limited financial and technical resources. These barriers hinder the full contribution of Amazonian forests to national climate commitments.

Key recommendations underscore the urgency of strengthening the protection of Indigenous territories by effectively recognizing the collective rights of the Indigenous peoples who live there. This includes formalizing Indigenous territorial entities, as in Colombia, and providing technical and financial support. Equally important is the integration of traditional knowledge into climate strategies and the recognition of Indigenous peoples as public authorities in decision-making processes. These measures would not only safeguard critical ecosystems but also preserve cultural systems that are essential for environmental sustainability.

Implementing these recommendations could significantly influence regional public policy by fostering a more inclusive and sustainable approach. This would reinforce the role of Indigenous peoples as strategic allies in climate action and biodiversity conservation, encourage cross-border collaboration, and strengthen environmental governance models that prioritize social and ecological justice in Latin America.

02. KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are climate commitments made by countries under the Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015 at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21).
- These commitments outline each country's specific efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adapt to climate change, aiming to limit global temperature rise to well below 2°C - preferably 1.5°C - above pre-industrial levels.
- NDCs are regularly updated to strengthen commitment and effectiveness, allowing countries to refine their strategies based on technological advancements, socioeconomic shifts, and emerging scientific data.
- NDCs include sector-specific targets and strategies in areas such as energy, agriculture, transportation, land use, and ecosystem conservation, aiming to balance sustainable development with climate action.
- Countries in the region face shared challenges in implementing their NDCs, particularly in recognizing and integrating the role of Indigenous peoples.
- Indigenous communities, who steward high-biodiversity areas and play a critical role in ecosystem conservation and carbon sequestration, face significant barriers. These include the lack of legal recognition and protection of their territorial rights, the impacts of extractive activities on their lands, and their limited inclusion in climate policy development.
- Despite these challenges, Indigenous peoples in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela have proven their capacity to manage and conserve ecosystems, highlighting the need for their meaningful inclusion in decision-making processes and climate governance.

INTRODUCTION

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03. INTRODUCTION

Under the Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015, countries are required to submit periodic commitments for climate change mitigation and adaptation, aligned with their national capacities and circumstances. NDCs are a key tool for limiting global temperature rise to below 2°C - preferably 1.5°C - above pre-industrial levels[1]. To achieve these goals, national commitments must be ambitious, inclusive, and adaptive, continuously evolving with scientific advancements and changing socioeconomic conditions. Successfully meeting these global targets depends on recognizing the deep interconnection between biodiversity protection, social justice, and climate resilience[2].

With their traditional knowledge and deep connection to the land, Indigenous peoples protect a large share of forests and high-biodiversity areas in Latin America, playing a vital role in advancing NDC goals. Their sustainable management practices are proven to contribute to both greenhouse gas mitigation and climate adaptation. Studies show that Indigenous-managed territories often have lower deforestation rates and higher biodiversity conservation levels[3].. However, Indigenous peoples face major challenges in implementing NDCs due to external pressures such as extractive activities, land conflicts, and weak legal protections. Moreover, climate policies often fail to integrate Indigenous knowledge and rights, limiting their participation and contributions.

With their traditional knowledge and deep connection to the land, Indigenous peoples are key stewards of forests and high-biodiversity areas in Latin America, playing a vital role in advancing NDC goals. Their sustainable management practices are proven to contribute to both greenhouse gas mitigation and climate adaptation. Studies show that Indigenous-managed territories often have lower deforestation rates and higher biodiversity conservation levels[3]. However, Indigenous peoples face major challenges in implementing NDCs due to external pressures such as extractive activities, land conflicts, and weak legal protections. Moreover, climate policies often fail to integrate Indigenous knowledge and rights, limiting their participation and contributions.

In this context, countries must embrace a climate justice approach that safeguards Indigenous territorial rights and recognizes their role as key partners in climate action. Beyond being an ethical obligation, this approach is essential for the effectiveness of mitigation and adaptation policies.

The following pages provide an in-depth analysis, beginning with regional challenges and then presenting findings from five countries - Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela - in alphabetical order. The report examines each country's context, the challenges Indigenous peoples face in advancing NDC commitments, lessons learned, and key achievements. It concludes with policy recommendations for the region.

[1] Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Article 2, Paragraph 1, Subparagraph (a).

[2] Guidelines for NDCs 3.0: Delivering on the GST outcome and beyond
https://climatenetwork.org/resource/guidelines-for-ndcs-3-0delivering-on-the-gst-outcome-and-beyond/

[3] A NDC do Brasil e os Desafios para Impulsionar a Ação Climática na Amazônia.

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CHALLENGES

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04. CHALLENGES

The Amazon region faces major challenges in achieving its NDC targets, particularly in preserving ecosystems and recognizing the critical role of Indigenous peoples in territorial management. While each country has its own specific context, shared obstacles limit the ability of Amazonian nations to implement effective mitigation and adaptation measures.

A major challenge is the expansion of extractive activities, such as mining and hydrocarbon exploitation, which directly affect the Amazon across all countries in the region. These activities contribute to deforestation, soil degradation, and water contamination, endangering ecosystems vital for carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation.

The lack of effective protection and recognition of Indigenous territorial rights remains a significant barrier to their participation in climate mitigation and adaptation efforts. In Brazil, Ecuador, and Colombia, strengthening climate governance by integrating Indigenous peoples into policy development has been increasingly emphasized. Their traditional knowledge and sustainable practices are essential for preserving Amazonian forests and reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

The Amazon region is highly vulnerable to rising temperatures and shifting precipitation patterns, which threaten biodiversity and endanger the food security of Indigenous peoples and local communities. These changes also contribute to the loss of ancestral knowledge due to the displacement and abandonment of sacred sites, exacerbating socioeconomic challenges in remote and hard-to-reach areas. For example, droughts significantly reduce river flow, the region's primary means of transportation, which in turn limits access to essential public services such as health care, education, and more.The implementation of adaptation measures - such as ecosystem restoration and the development of climate-resilient infrastructure - is severely constrained by limited financial resources and inadequate technical support, further intensifying community vulnerability.

Droughts, for instance, lower river levels, restricting access to essential public services such as healthcare and education, as rivers serve as the region's primary transportation routes. The implementation of adaptation measures - such as ecosystem restoration and the development of climate-resilient infrastructure - is severely constrained by limited financial resources and inadequate technical support, further intensifying community vulnerability.

Another major challenge is fostering regional and international cooperation to address the complexities of climate action in the Amazon. Conserving this biome goes beyond national borders and demands coordinated efforts to finance conservation projects and develop inclusive policies that uphold and strengthen the role of Indigenous communities. However, financial constraints and dependence on external resources continue to impede progress in advancing these commitments across the region.

FINDINGS

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05. FINDINGS

Despite their distinct national contexts, Amazonian countries share a key group of actors in ecosystem conservation and climate action: Indigenous peoples. However, these communities face common challenges that limit their ability to meaningfully contribute to climate goals.

5.1. BRAZIL

Brazil faces major challenges in fulfilling its climate commitments under the NDCs, particularly in preserving the Amazon and Cerrado. Indigenous peoples, quilombolas, and traditional communities play a vital role in this effort, managing territories that account for over 30%[4] of the country's forest cover and store approximately 45% of the Amazon's carbon. In its updated NDC, Brazil reaffirmed its commitment to reducing emissions by 2030 and curbing deforestation in these ecosystems. However, persistent threats such as illegal logging and mining continue to put Indigenous territories at risk, creating tensions that hinder progress.

Brazil has also implemented a robust legal framework to support its climate commitments. A key pillar is the National Climate Change Law (Law 12,187/2009), which establishes the foundation for the country's climate policy, setting emission reduction targets and guiding mitigation and adaptation strategies. The law's overarching goals include cutting greenhouse gas emissions and strengthening the resilience of vulnerable sectors.

The Forest Code (Law 12,651/2012) is a key component of Brazil's strategy for ecosystem conservation and NDC implementation. It regulates the use and protection of forested lands, establishing a framework to curb deforestation, particularly in the Amazon. By mandating the preservation of native forests, the Forest Code directly supports Brazil's efforts to reduce emissions from land-use change and deforestation.

In 2020, the Brazilian government faced international criticism for revising the emissions baseline in its national inventory, effectively increasing allowable emissions and weakening its climate commitments. This adjustment undermined progress in key areas such as the Amazon[5], where emission reductions are critical. In response, young activists and environmental advocates filed a lawsuit, highlighting the disproportionate impact of these weakened environmental policies on Indigenous communities.

[4] Indigenous-managed areas have significantly lower deforestation rates, underscoring the critical role of Indigenous peoples as forest guardians in achieving climate mitigation goals. Strengthening their role is essential for the success of conservation and emissions reduction efforts.

Oviedo, A. F. P.; Doblas, J. As florestas precisam das pessoas. Nota técnica. Instituto Socioambiental, 2022, p. 22.

[5] A NDC do Brasil e os Desafios para Impulsionar a Ação Climática na Amazônia.

The National System of Protected Areas Law (Law 9,985/2000) is crucial for the establishment and management of protected areas, which act as carbon sinks and play a key role in biodiversity conservation. Its implementation has enabled Brazil to build a strong network of protected areas that support both conservation objectives and climate commitments, contributing to emissions reduction and enhancing ecosystem resilience.

These regulatory frameworks are further supported by the Low Carbon Agriculture Program (Programa ABC, in Portuguese), which promotes sustainable agricultural practices and reduces emissions in the agricultural sector through the restoration of degraded lands and the promotion of integrated farming systems. Programa ABC is crucial for advancing resilient and sustainable agriculture, in line with Brazil's mitigation commitments under its NDC.

KEY FINDINGS

In Brazil, the NDCs have been updated multiple times, with a commitment to reduce emissions by 50% by 2030 compared to 2005 levels. However, adjustments to the calculation methods and intermediate targets have been viewed as a reduction in climate goals.

Indigenous peoples, quilombolas, and traditional communities play a vital role in ecosystem conservation, especially in the Amazon, where preserving their territories contributes to carbon sequestration and deforestation reduction.

It is crucial that climate policies respect and include Indigenous communities to enhance the effectiveness of the NDCs.

The implementation of instruments such as the Brazilian Emissions Trading System and the National Commission for Emission Reduction in the Amazon highlights the importance of inclusive climate governance that both limits emissions and supports NDC implementation. It also emphasizes the need to include Indigenous peoples and traditional communities in decision-making processes.

5.2. COLOMBIA

According to the document Contributions of Indigenous Governments to Achieving NDCs: A Case Study of Colombia by the Fundación Gaia Amazonas, one of the major challenges is protecting these territories from deforestation and the expansion of mining, both of which directly threaten Indigenous communities and the conservation of critical ecosystems.

Colombia has developed a regulatory framework to support the implementation of its NDCs, integrating policies that address both emission mitigation and climate adaptation. The National Climate Change Policy (2017), the Climate Change Law (2018), and Law 2169 on Climate Action (2021) serve as the foundation for the country's climate governance. These policies position the National Climate Change System (SISCLIMA) as the central hub for coordination among sectors and key stakeholders. The system aims to institutionalize and strengthen climate action, facilitating effective governance across all levels.

As part of implementing this policy, Colombia has developed sectoral and territorial planning instruments, such as the Comprehensive Sectoral Climate Change Management Plans (PIGCCS) and the Comprehensive Territorial Climate Change Management Plans (PIGCCT). These plans allow sectors, departmental territorial entities, and environmental authorities to develop specific mitigation and adaptation actions suited to their needs and capacities. They strengthen Colombia's ability to integrate climate change into development policies, support emission reduction targets, and promote adaptation in vulnerable areas.

Finally, the National Circular Economy Strategy (2019) encourages sustainable production and consumption practices, such as waste reduction and material reuse, to minimize greenhouse gas emissions. While still in the development phase, this strategy is regarded as a crucial tool for meeting NDC targets, as it promotes a resilient, low-carbon economy.

In addition, the Comprehensive Strategy for Deforestation Control and Forest Management (EICDGB) was adopted as part of the 2017 Biodiversity Action Plan, aiming to reduce deforestation and achieve a rate of zero hectares per year by 2030. This goal is crucial for reducing national greenhouse gas emissions. The strategy includes the Forest and Carbon Monitoring System (SMByC), which enables precise tracking of deforestation and monitoring of progress in emissions reductions in this sector. These efforts are further supported by Colombia's commitment to limit deforestation to 50,000 hectares per year by 2030, along with policies such as CONPES 4021 of 2020, which provides guidelines for controlling deforestation and managing forests sustainably.

In Colombia, Indigenous peoples are recognized for managing vast, ecologically significant territories, including the Amazon and the páramos, which are vital for carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation. The Colombian Constitution also recognizes Indigenous territories as entities that are part of the country's political-administrative structure.

However, fully realizing this constitutional promise remains a work in progress. Through Decree Law 632 of 2018 and later Decree Law 0488 of 2025, Indigenous peoples seek to formally establish the territorial management and governance they have long practiced, even before State recognition. Establishing these Indigenous territorial entities is crucial, not only to protect the cultural systems that preserve the Amazon but also to empower Indigenous peoples as decision-making authorities, rather than simply viewing them as beneficiaries or minorities[6].

Colombia has shown its commitment to the Paris Agreement by setting emission reduction targets for 2030. However, achieving these goals depends on coordination between Indigenous peoples and their authorities with other national government institutions, recognizing the value of their knowledge systems and their management of territories as the most effective measure for climate resilience.

KEY FINDINGS

In Colombia, the focus of the NDCs is on conserving biodiversity and protecting ecosystems, particularly in the Amazon and other ecologically important areas.

Indigenous peoples have proven to be effective defenders and stewards of forests, preserving vital areas for climate mitigation and adaptation. However, their involvement in climate policy needs to be further strengthened and fully acknowledged.

To maximize their contribution to the NDCs, climate policies must strengthen their territorial rights and recognize them as public and environmental authorities.

It is also recommended to increase funding, technical assistance, and recognition of their own systems of territorial management and governance, enabling Indigenous peoples to expand their conservation projects, particularly in areas vulnerable to deforestation and resource extraction.

[6] Macroterritory of the Jaguars of Yuruparí in the Colombian Amazon

5.3. ECUADOR

In Ecuador, Indigenous peoples have the potential to play a critical role in implementing the NDCs, particularly in areas such as the Amazon, where their territories are crucial for carbon sequestration and biodiversity preservation. Indigenous communities have long practiced sustainable land management, contributing significantly to climate change mitigation and ecosystem resilience. However, they face challenges in the recognition and protection of their territorial rights.

The lack of effective participation in the development and implementation of environmental policies restricts their ability to continue these vital conservation practices, which are key to fulfilling Ecuador's climate commitments.

Despite these challenges, Indigenous peoples in Ecuador remain committed to conserving natural resources and continue to play a vital role in protecting standing forests[8].The evidence that areas managed by Indigenous peoples and nationalities typically have lower deforestation rates[9] emphasizes the need to actively include these communities in the country's climate change policies. Strengthening their role in environmental and climate policies[10] would not only support Ecuador's NDCs but also foster a climate justice model that recognizes and respects the rights and traditional knowledge of these communities.

In Ecuador, several regulatory frameworks and policies support the implementation of its NDCs within the context of the Paris Agreement. The National Climate Change Strategy (ENCC) 2012-2025 establishes a comprehensive framework for the country's climate action, encompassing both greenhouse gas emission mitigation and adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

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[7] https://ecociencia.org/la-amazonia-pierde-mas-carbono-del-que-gana/

[8] The agreement through which landowners commit to conserving the area registered in Socio Bosque has a duration of twenty years (MAATE 2023). This project operates under the REDD+ compensation scheme.

[9] Of the total 1.3 billion tons of carbon stored, 82% corresponds to the combined carbon reserves of protected areas (13%), Indigenous territories (52%), and the overlap between these two (17%). Areas without any protection experienced a greater loss of carbon (17.29 million tons of forest carbon) compared to areas with protection systems (Indigenous territories and protected areas). Between 2003 and 2020, protected areas lost 5.64 million tons of carbon, while Indigenous territories lost 12.91 million tons. As a result, in 2003, Indigenous territories stored 697.35 million tons of carbon, which decreased to 693.39 million tons by 2020.

[10] Four lines of action are proposed: 1) energy, productive and strategic sectors, industrial processes; 2) water and natural heritage; 3) waste, human settlements, and health; 4) agriculture, SAG, USCUSS (MAATE 2023).

In this context, the ProAmazonía[11] program has been a key pillar in advancing Ecuador's environmental policies. It has played a critical role in implementing flagship projects that aim to reduce emissions and promote sustainable land-use practices in the Amazon, a sector prioritized in Ecuador's climate action plan.

Furthermore, the program has supported the Integrated Amazon Plan, which unites territorial units to address issues such as urban development, population growth, and territorial challenges. The implementation of this plan is in line with Executive Decree 1840, which establishes the NDCs for the 2020-2025 period as a policy of the State.

Ecuador's comprehensive approach to its NDCs is also evident in the development of NDC 2.0 for the 2026-2035 period, which integrates cross-cutting strategies such as the gender and intersectionality action plan, while emphasizing the rights and participation of Indigenous peoples in climate objectives. This plan includes a focus on quantifying losses and damages and aims to encourage the participation of local governments and communities.

Among the key instruments for implementing the NDCs, the REDD+ Action Plan stands out as a mechanism that significantly involves Indigenous peoples and nationalities in both its first and second phases. This strengthens their role in conserving natural resources and reducing deforestation in Amazonian territories.

Ecuador has committed to reducing its emissions through sector-specific approaches, focusing on energy, agriculture, industrial processes, waste, land use, land-use change, and forestry (LULUCF). For the LULUCF sector, Ecuador applies methodologies based on the guidelines of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which enables the development of both unconditional and conditional mitigation scenarios[12]. This technical framework supports the monitoring and evaluation of emission reduction targets to ensure the achievement of its NDCs.

[11] https://www.proamazonia.org/inicio/que-es-proamazonia/

[12] In the NDCs, the unconditional scenario refers to the emissions reduction target that a country can achieve with its own resources, while the conditional scenario reflects the additional level of ambition possible with international support (financial, technical, or technological). Ministry of the Environment of Ecuador (MAE), 2019.

Additionally, Ecuador has the Organic Environmental Code (COA), which provides guidelines for environmental management, biodiversity conservation, and the mitigation of environmental impacts - key components for achieving the country's climate goals. The code also regulates activities that directly or indirectly affect emissions, such as waste management and the protection of natural areas, reinforcing the country's climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

KEY FINDINGS

In Ecuador, Indigenous territories in the Amazon are a vital resource for biodiversity conservation and carbon storage - both critical to achieving the country's climate goals outlined in the National Climate Change Strategy.

The presence of Indigenous peoples in these territories is instrumental in meeting NDC objectives and ensuring long-term conservation.

Indigenous peoples and nationalities do not directly benefit from climate policies and financing, with only around 30% of funds reaching Indigenous territories[13].

Protecting these territories from extractive activities is essential to ensuring the success of climate commitments. Moreover, including Indigenous peoples and nationalities in the formulation of climate policies could strengthen Ecuador's NDCs by incorporating traditional knowledge into ecosystem management and conservation.

5.4. PERU

Indigenous peoples play a critical role in protecting vast areas of the Peruvian Amazon, which are essential for carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation[14] According to the NDC document, Indigenous territories are key to meeting climate goals, as they engage in traditional forest management practices that significantly

[12] In Peru, Indigenous territories represent more than 30% of the country's land area.

[13] Funding Rainforest Protection in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

[14] In Peru, Indigenous territories represent more than 30% of the country's land area.

contribute to ecosystem conservation and climate change mitigation[15]. However, activities such as mining, illegal logging, and drug trafficking present major threats to the integrity of these territories, undermining Indigenous communities' ability to contribute to the country's climate commitments.

Peru's regulatory framework[16] aims to strengthen environmental governance and adapt to the impacts of climate change, in line with the country's commitments under the Paris Agreement. However, significant challenges remain, particularly the lack of adequate legal protection for Indigenous territories. This undermines the ability of Indigenous communities to manage their lands autonomously and sustainably, hindering the implementation of the NDCs in key areas, especially in the Amazon.

To support the implementation of the NDCs, Peru has established a set of regulations and management instruments for climate action, including the Framework Law on Climate Change (LMCC), enacted in 2018 and regulated in 2019. This law sets principles and guidelines for climate governance at the national, regional, and local levels, promoting a participatory and transparent approach that involves all relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, the High-Level Commission on Climate Change (CANCC) plays a vital role in developing adaptation and mitigation strategies by overseeing emission reduction projections and fostering the participation of subnational governments, Indigenous peoples, and the private sector.

Furthermore, the High-Level Commission on Climate Change (CANCC) plays a vital role in developing adaptation and mitigation strategies by overseeing emission reduction projections and fostering the participation of subnational governments, Indigenous peoples, and the private sector.

It is worth noting that in 2020, the Indigenous Peoples' Platform on Climate Change was established as a space to integrate and share adaptation and mitigation proposals developed by Indigenous communities. On the other hand, the INFOCARBONO system enables government entities to record and track greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and absorptions, helping to create an accurate and transparent national inventory. This system enhances the ability to rigorously monitor climate targets, ensuring that mitigation and adaptation actions are implemented consistently and effectively.

In November 2024, provisions for the operation of the National Mitigation Measures Registry (RENAMI) were approved. As outlined in Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, RENAMI is designed to regulate mitigation measures under the NDCs and carbon markets through cooperative approaches.

[15] Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) of Peru: Updated Report for the 2021–2030 Period.

[16] Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) of Peru – Chapters 3 and 5.

KEY FINDINGS

In Peru, Indigenous peoples play a vital role in the NDCs, especially in the Amazon, where their territories are key to carbon sequestration and the preservation of unique ecosystems.

These include 55 Indigenous peoples (according to the Ministry of Culture's Database of Indigenous or Native Peoples) organized into around 10,285 peasant and native communities, representing more than 30% of the national territory, excluding those that are yet to be titled. However, they face significant challenges that hinder their ability to effectively contribute to the country's climate goals. The primary challenges include illegal mining, deforestation, drug trafficking, the lack of land titling for native communities, and limited access to financial resources.

For Peru to achieve its NDCs, it is crucial to implement policies that protect Indigenous territories and provide financial support to Indigenous peoples. Incorporating their traditional knowledge, which plays a key role in biodiversity conservation and climate adaptation and mitigation efforts, would further strengthen Peru's commitments.

5.5. VENEZUELA

In Venezuela, the Constitution of Venezuela grants Indigenous peoples a prominent role, guarantees their rights, and encourages their participation in key national development issues, such as the implementation of the NDCs. Article 119 recognizes their right to ancestral lands and territories, as well as their autonomy to manage these resources in accordance with their cultural and social practices.

This constitutional framework serves as a foundation for Indigenous involvement in environmental projects, mandating prior consultations and ensuring that any activity on their lands respects and protects their cultural integrity and collective rights. This constitutional approach promotes stronger alignment between the preservation of Indigenous territories and the achievement of climate mitigation and adaptation goals.

Additionally, Articles 120 and 121 of the Constitution mandate the regulation of natural resource use in Indigenous territories, ensuring

that any initiatives related to sustainability and Venezuela's climate commitments involve consultation and direct participation of the Indigenous communities concerned.

This constitutional recognition is crucial for establishing a participatory environmental governance approach that supports the achievement of Venezuela's NDCs and enhances climate resilience in ecosystems that Indigenous peoples have protected and managed for generations. By aligning with NDC objectives, the constitutional framework creates a strong foundation for including Indigenous peoples as key actors in the country's climate strategies, while respecting their rights and ancestral knowledge throughout the process.

In Venezuela, as in other regions, Indigenous peoples have the potential to play a crucial role in the implementation of the NDCs[17] . There is a strong need to incorporate a Climate Empowerment Action approach that fosters the participation of Indigenous communities and other stakeholders in climate action.

However, these communities face significant challenges, including the lack of recognition of their territorial rights, which limits their ability to sustainably manage and protect their lands and hinders their contribution to Venezuela's climate mitigation and adaptation goals.

The ancestral knowledge and traditional practices of Indigenous peoples in natural resource management and ecosystem conservation are vital for national climate policies. However, their exclusion from climate plans and the lack of financial resources hinder their effective participation and the strengthening of their conservation efforts. Indigenous communities play a crucial role in achieving Venezuela's NDC goals, and a policy that protects their rights and promotes their inclusion could significantly enhance the effectiveness of the country's climate strategies.

The achievement of the NDCs in Venezuela is supported by various regulatory frameworks and strategic plans, with Indigenous participation playing a central role. One key pillar is the Plan de la Patria (Plan of the Homeland) 2019-2025, which outlines a model of comprehensive, humanistic, and ecosocialist development aimed at achieving "buen vivir"[18] in harmony with nature. This plan prioritizes

[17] Updated Nationally Determined Contribution of Venezuela

[18] Translator's Note: "Buen vivir" is rooted in Indigenous Andean philosophy and encompasses a holistic approach to well-being, harmony with nature, and social and community values.

combating climate change and promotes ecosocialist policies that address climate challenges with a focus on social and environmental justice. It acknowledges the importance of including Indigenous peoples in decision-making processes related to environmental protection and climate action.

Venezuela is currently in the process of drafting the Climate Change Law, which is expected to be approved during the 2021-2026 legislative period. The law aims to strengthen national climate governance and incorporate the participation of various sectors and communities, including social movements and Indigenous peoples. Its goal is to create a robust framework to coordinate climate mitigation and adaptation actions across the country.

The General Directorate of Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation within the Ministry of Popular Power for Ecosocialism is responsible for leading efforts to implement the NDCs in Venezuela.

This body coordinates the execution of sectoral policies and encourages the integration of adaptation and mitigation initiatives in key sectors, including energy, transportation, and natural resources, in alignment with the country's climate commitments. Additionally, it acknowledges the crucial role of Indigenous communities in enhancing climate governance and strives to ensure that their traditional knowledge is utilized to promote more effective climate action.

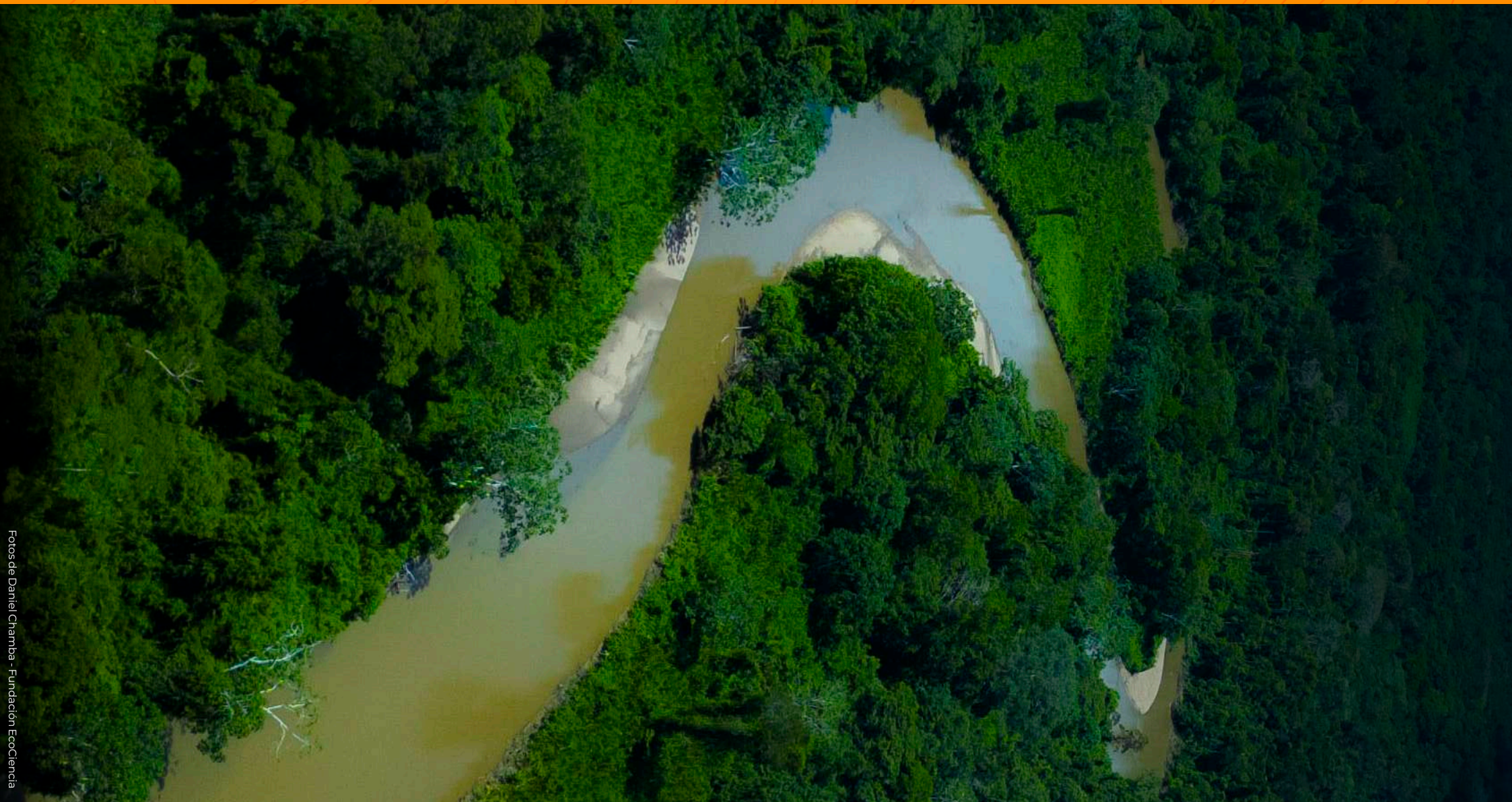
KEY FINDINGS

In Venezuela, Indigenous peoples play a crucial role in preserving ecologically valuable areas, and their involvement in climate policies is key to the success of the NDCs.

The lack of robust recognition of their territorial rights is a significant obstacle to the effective implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation policies.

Ensuring the active participation of Indigenous peoples in climate governance and respecting their rights over natural resources would enhance Venezuela's capacity to meet its climate commitments.

06 RECOMMENDATIONS



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06. RECOMMENDATIONS

In Brazil, Indigenous peoples and traditional communities play a central role in preserving the Amazon and Cerrado. However, they face challenges from extractive activities and climate change, which have affected the country's emission reduction commitments.

Recommendations for Brazil include strengthening the protection of territorial rights, enhancing inclusive governance, and securing funding for sustainable projects led by these communities. Additionally, the recent approval of a bill establishing a regulated carbon market will help the country reduce emissions and fulfill its climate commitments.

In Colombia, Indigenous peoples play a vital role in managing key areas for biodiversity conservation, but they face challenges from land conflicts and mining activities[19]. Although there has been progress in involving Indigenous peoples in climate policies, these measures are still insufficient. It is essential to recognize that Indigenous peoples have legitimate public authorities with the power to make decisions over their territories and to manage environmental planning based on their own instruments and conservation strategies. Therefore, it is recommended to strengthen funding for these communities, peoples, and Indigenous governments, and to promote full recognition of their knowledge in climate decision-making.

It is also crucial to advance the formal recognition of Indigenous territorial entities, so that climate decisions involving their territories are made within a framework of coordination and intercultural dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous public authorities. This approach should uphold their rights to self-governance and self-determination, while making visible their tangible contributions to conservation and environmental sustainability.

In Ecuador, Indigenous peoples protect areas of primary forest in the Amazon that are vital to the country's climate goals. However, pressure from extractive industries and the rise of illegal mining threaten the conservation of these territories. To enhance the effectiveness of the NDCs in Ecuador, it is recommended to strengthen Indigenous governance and establish a robust financial mechanism that ensures climate funds for the country include Indigenous territories as key partners in project implementation.

This mechanism should include a strong capacity-building component, enabling communities to manage these resources efficiently and transparently, thus minimizing the risk of "greenwashing." Additionally,

[19] These issues arise due to the lack of clear regulations that ensure the protection and sustainable use of Indigenous territories, as well as the absence of effective mechanisms to resolve land tenure disputes. While progress has been made in including Indigenous communities in climate policies, these efforts remain limited due to insufficient resources and the lack of robust guarantees to protect their rights.

it is essential to promote the integration of traditional knowledge into environmental and climate policies.

In Peru, Indigenous territories in the Amazon play a vital role in carbon capture and ecosystem conservation. Despite some progress, the lack of institutional support and the growing threat of illegal mining and logging limit these communities' ability to contribute to achieving the NDCs. Recommendations for Peru include strengthening the legal framework that protects territorial rights, addressing the demand for land titling for native communities, providing dedicated funding for conservation initiatives led by Indigenous communities, and integrating their traditional knowledge into climate strategies.

In Venezuela, Indigenous peoples play a crucial role in protecting biodiversity-rich territories, but they face challenges such as resource exploitation and the lack of adequate legal protection. Key recommendations include ensuring the recognition of their territorial rights, establishing financial mechanisms to support conservation projects led by Indigenous communities, and involving their representatives in the formulation of climate policies. These actions are vital for Venezuela to make inclusive and sustainable progress in meeting its climate commitments.

AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

To strengthen the implementation of the NDCs in the Amazon countries - Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela - it is crucial to adopt an integrated approach that encompasses both emission mitigation and adaptation to the impacts of climate change. Regional cooperation and the inclusion of Indigenous peoples are key to the success of these efforts. The following are general recommendations from a regional perspective.

Amazonian countries must recognize and protect the territorial rights of Indigenous peoples and traditional communities, as their sustainable management practices are vital for ecosystem conservation. Protecting these territories from activities that drive deforestation, degrade biodiversity, or cause pollution - such as extractive industries and organized crime - is essential. At the same time, it is important to promote the inclusion of these people's knowledge systems, as well as their territorial management and governance practices, in the formulation of climate policies. This will enhance climate resilience and help achieve NDC targets. Additionally, these countries must establish adequate funding mechanisms for projects led by Indigenous peoples and traditional communities that contribute to biodiversity conservation and emissions reduction.

Regional cooperation is vital for resource management and policy implementation in the Amazon, as ecosystems and threats extend and

beyond national borders. While initiatives like the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) exist, it is crucial to review and strengthen transnational collaboration mechanisms to address current limitations and ensure effective coordination. This will facilitate knowledge sharing and maximize the impact of climate actions.

Finally, beyond existing monitoring systems, Amazonian countries must focus on enhancing the implementation of concrete actions for emissions reduction and establishing reliable measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) systems to ensure compliance with climate safeguards. These systems should strengthen national commitments, such as national communications and the reporting of climate targets, while also building credibility and trust to attract private investments supporting unconditional scenarios. Additionally, it is crucial to coordinate efforts to combat organized crime and other illegal activities, as well as legal activities recognized by states that promote deforestation in Indigenous territories. Traditional knowledge from local communities should be integrated into this plan to assess progress and adjust strategies as necessary.

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