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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INVESTORS CALL FOR URGENT ACTION TO ADDRESS THE HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACTS OF AMAZON FIRES

All financial actors urged to review supply chains and business relationships to ensure they are not indirectly contributing to the conflagrations through deforestation as they have direct human rights impacts for local communities.

NEW YORK, NY, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5TH, 2019 - Members of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility issued a [statement](#) today calling on companies with operations and supply chains connected to the Amazon rainforest to take immediate action to safeguard the human rights and ecosystems that are being devastated by fires exacerbated by unchecked deforestation.

Given the scope and vast implications of the Amazon fires, ICCR members believe all relevant stakeholders must conduct due diligence within their own operations and businesses to ensure they are not indirectly contributing to the damage.

The catastrophe currently unfolding in the Amazon is years in the making and largely attributed to a weakening or non-enforcement of environmental protections, resulting in a rapid increase in land-clearing for the purposes of agricultural development.

The climate impacts of these fires have been widely reported. The double tragedy of the current crisis is that, at the same time the fires are destroying millions of carbon-capturing trees, they are generating large amounts of carbon dioxide, exponentially accelerating the greenhouse effect and climate change.

"After several years of model forestry management in Brazil where the needs of economic development and environmental preservation were balanced, we now have a crisis in the Amazon created by short-sighted commercial interests and weak governmental enforcement," said Frank Sherman, Executive Director of Seventh Generation Interfaith Coalition for Responsible Investment. ***"Responsible investors and ethical corporations must voice their outrage to protect this global natural resource before we exceed the 'tipping point' and the climate impacts become irreversible."***

What has been under-reported in the media is the egregious human rights toll the fires are taking on local and indigenous communities. Weak rule of law in Brazil and rampant deforestation have been directly connected to serious human rights abuses including incidents of forced labor, land grabs and egregious attacks on Indigenous communities and human rights defenders.

David Kane, who has worked with the Catholic missionary organization Maryknoll in Brazil for more than two decades said, ***“Attacks on Indigenous and natural reserves here have increased terribly since the election of Jair Bolsonaro in 2016. As his administration abdicates its responsibility for protecting the Amazon and its people, the international business and finance communities must step up and ensure that their revenues do not come from the irresponsible destruction of traditional communities who have long preserved this important part of our planet.”***

Jeff Conant, International Forests Program Manager at Friends of the Earth US said, ***“The Bolsonaro government is making war on the Amazon and the Indigenous Peoples who’ve called it home since before time. Global commodity traders and consumer companies and their financial backers contributed to the conditions for the violence we’re witnessing, and stand to profit from it. Investors need to step up and take responsibility, as ICCR members are doing, or remain complicit.”***

The investors outlined recommended steps stakeholders can take to ensure they are not indirectly contributing to these human rights and environmental impacts including:

Investors:

- Engage their portfolio companies to address the human rights and environmental impacts associated with deforestation;
- Support shareholder resolutions that call for greater transparency around, and respect for, human rights, forest protection, and/or compliance with the Paris Climate Accord.

Companies:

- Make a public statement in support of sustainable forestry including respect for human rights, the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, land tenure standards, and rigorous enforcement of forestry protection of the Amazon, and demand evidence from commodity suppliers that their operations and supply chains are not sourcing from illegally deforested areas of the Amazon;
- Establish and implement a zero-tolerance policy for attacks on environmental and human rights defenders and civil society advocates;
- Strengthen company due diligence, compliance, monitoring and reporting mechanisms, including human rights impact risk assessments, to uphold human rights, prevent land grabs and help resolve long-standing land conflicts, and;

Financial institutions:

- Commit to a zero-deforestation policy including public traceability of supply chains to the point of origin and cease the financing or underwriting of clients complicit in deforestation;
- Require all agribusiness companies with whom you do business to adopt and implement a zero-tolerance policy for violence against environmental and human rights defenders;
- Require agribusiness clients to map all suppliers and to report any investigations, indictments or fines issued for deforestation and/or land grabbing.

Stakeholders are additionally being asked to exert pressure on the Brazilian government to strengthen environmental and human rights protections. ICCR members say they will be reaching out to relevant companies on the above recommendations in the coming weeks.

About the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR)

Celebrating its 49th year, ICCR is the pioneer coalition of shareholder advocates who view the management of their investments as a catalyst for social change. Its 300 member organizations comprise faith communities, socially responsible asset managers, unions, pensions, NGOs and other socially responsible investors with combined assets of over \$500 billion. ICCR members engage hundreds of corporations annually in an effort to foster greater corporate accountability. www.iccr.org