

2. FÓRUM • BRASILEIRO DOS DIREITOS DA NATUREZA

Second Brazilian Forum
on the Rights of Nature



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

06-07 October 2023

Introduction

The National Articulation for the Rights of Nature, Mother Earth, in the realization of the Second Brazilian Forum on the Rights of Nature, held on 6 and 7 October 2023, in Ilhéus (Bahia), promoted the sharing of knowledge and listening to indigenous and traditional communities, academia, and civil society to reflect on the necessary actions at various levels and sectors to ensure the Rights of Nature. The Forum, recognized by the United Nations (UN), is a landmark in the beginning of the construction of the UN Earth Assembly, which will be implemented in April 2024, therefore contributing to the definition of the universal rights of Mother Earth, which should be debated globally and internalized in the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Nature, Mother Earth.

Principles of Nature

The Second Brazilian Forum on the Rights of Nature was guided by the principles of Nature that underpin the ecocentric vision: complementarity, reciprocity, and cooperation.

Indigenous peoples, quilombolas, riverside dwellers, and other protectors and guardians of Mother Earth understand that we are all integrated parts of Nature. Waters, Forests, and the Earth are essential living subjects connected to our lives. They live in struggle and have a history of strength and resistance for their survival, considering that we live in a world where relationships have been turned into commodities by the white man and the market-driven vision prevails as a result of the imposed neoliberal capitalist system.

This struggle is collective: The unity between different indigenous peoples and different populations who resist (non-indigenous, traditional, quilombola, riverside dwellers, and grassroots movements) is materialized in the protection of Nature and resistance against a portion of the population that disregards the existence of these peoples. Thus, the process of listening to the understandings and knowledge of these communities through practices of sharing and care is the path to reforesting what has been destroyed by the white man, who caused Nature to harm Nature and excluded indigenous peoples from spaces such as universities and the State itself.

The involvement of the Enchanted is another crucial pillar to unite forces for common goals since spirituality and rituals are an essential part of the lives of those living in harmony with Nature.

Recommendations for the Brazilian government

Demarcation of indigenous and other traditional peoples' territories

The struggle for the demarcation of indigenous territories is surrounded by violence, primarily driven by the interests of large landowners who, over time, have appropriated part of the territory of indigenous peoples and other traditional communities. Even today, amidst considerable struggle and resistance, indigenous territories still need to be fully demarcated and recognized, as the Brazilian State - for the most part - does not actively act to recognize the rights of Mother Earth and the peoples who inhabit Her. Therefore, it is necessary to enforce what is written in the Constitution and protect indigenous and other traditional peoples' territories through demarcation.

It is also urgent to create a protocol that serves as reference material to ensure indigenous peoples' rights to their territory. Finally, the Federal Public Service and the Ministry of Justice - through a letter addressed to Minister Flávio Dino - should expedite the declaratory ordinance aimed at recognizing the demarcation of the territory of the indigenous people Tupinambá of Olivença and all indigenous and traditional peoples, the same way the Pataxó people had their territories recognized.

Recognition of the Rights of Mother Earth

Recognizing the Rights of Mother Earth is crucial to reestablishing the connection of life in harmony with Nature, in contrast to the Western thinking that separated humans from the natural world. The recognition of the rights of the Waters is urgent. For indigenous communities, Water is more than a survival element; it is an ancestral Being and life. Therefore, Water was of central importance in the discussions of the Forum. After all, without Water, there is no existence. However, indigenous communities - such as the Tupinambá of Olivença and Pataxó - have their access to and protection of Water violently threatened by agribusiness, the energy market, and the mining market. The Pataxó people, besides no longer having access to the River that is part of their territory, now depend on purchasing Water from tanker trucks. The lack of Water prevents the Pataxó people from properly cultivating their food and forcibly severs the ancestral ties within their culture and understanding of the world.

The Pataxós are not the only ones facing Water-related complications. The extractive activities located around the Tupinambá of Olivença territory have impaired the Water levels and the quality of their River. Unfortunately, the ancestral relationship with the Water bodies established by the indigenous peoples, Pataxós and Tupinambás, is neither respected nor valued by individuals, companies, and even the government, which supposedly ensures their rights.

This rampant violation is repeated in several Brazilian indigenous communities. It must be confronted in all its aspects, both legally and politically, through public policies that effectively recognize the rights of Nature, such as agroecology. There is also a need to recognize the rights of the Rivers and their biodiversity, emphasizing the importance of the São Francisco River as a representative of all Rivers.

Education: Nature is the most outstanding teacher

Education is a means to seek, resort to, and fight for the guarantee of indigenous peoples' territories alongside the rights of Nature. Nature must be the main teacher in the process of a non-anthropocentric education.

All socio-cultural practices, whether in food, health, or education, require that the Earth is healthy to continue teaching us and strengthening our culture. The peoples who resist, such as indigenous and quilombola communities, and who fight daily for the preservation of Nature are those born in the forest and who possess the ability to learn from Her, developing a wisdom of well-living together (Bem Conviver).

In this sense, it is essential to find ways to recognize, legitimize, and respect such knowledge learned only in these spaces and to democratically expand this foundation to all social spheres of various territories and cultures. Through education, all indigenous peoples in Brazil strengthen themselves, become informed, and seek partnerships with various organizations to ensure, in the future, a protected territory capable of welcoming everyone. In other words, resistance is created through the sharing of knowledge.

Interdisciplinarity plays a central role in this process because the recognition of the rights of Nature depends on the integration among different areas of knowledge, as well as dialogue and education stemming from Nature herself and her guardians, to promote decolonized and integrated ways of fostering education and other social and political systems.

Abandoning the capital-centered development vision

It is necessary to abandon and transform the vision of economic development that governs public policies and decision-makers across different spheres. Many major infrastructure projects, such as hydroelectric power, wind energy, mining, real estate speculation, and sustainable tourism, claim to be sustainable or green. In practice, however, these projects maintain the same vision of colonial capitalist development - exploitative and predatory - that views Nature as a deposit of natural resources.

The current exploitative system daily harms Mother Earth, under the justification of needing to achieve development in neoliberal terms. Deforestation, mineral extraction, production and disposal of waste, and the encouragement of competition are significant examples of this systematic aggression stemming from the current neoliberal vision of development, legitimized by the stance of policymakers and the omission of the judiciary system.



Circle of listening

Photographer: Camila Ferri

Therefore, it is necessary to question, combat, and reverse the model of agro-hydro-mineral business that commodifies Nature in order to build another vision leading to a different economic paradigm of development aligned with the ways of life of indigenous peoples and the inherent dynamics of non-human Nature, such as Ecological Economics. Indeed, sustainable development can only be achieved when striving for cooperation and respect, not only among peoples - especially the guardians of Nature - but also between humanity and the Nature of which we are a part. Therefore, it is essential to ensure the indigenous territories as part of development so that future generations have the right to life in line with their beliefs, cultures, and traditions.

Recommendations for the United Nations

Towards an Earth Assembly

Regarding the scope of the United Nations (UN), the UN Harmony with Nature Programme is the leading actor in showing resistance to the agendas of UN Member States and Secretariat, as it is the main responsible for placing the recognition and assurance of the Rights of Nature in the organization's agenda and fostering discussions about new worldviews to rethink the system in which we live.

The UN Harmony with Nature Programme understands the necessity to restore a healthy relationship between humanity and Mother Earth for sustainability to be achievable.

The recognition of Nature as a subject of rights is the primary pathway in this direction, understanding that human rights and the rights of Nature are interdependent. These rights should be acknowledged alongside indigenous and traditional peoples' rights, considering their knowledge and worldviews as guardians of Nature. With this goal in mind, the UN Harmony with Nature Programme has established a network of experts and compiled documents on laws and policies related to Nature. It is the basis for various research and initiatives, primarily from civil society and academia.

In addition to the continued strengthening of the UN Harmony with Nature Programme, it is necessary for the UN General Assembly to definitively adopt the creation of the Earth Assembly, establishing a multilateral space for discussing alternative holistic approaches based on different perspectives that contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and beyond.

In this sense, the Earth Assembly will go beyond the vision of Member States, fostering a process of listening to indigenous peoples, traditional communities, academia, and civil society.

Photographer: Marina Spieth



Indigenous leader Cacica Nádia Akawã during the circle of listening



Photographer: Camila Ferri

Unity between indigenous, quilombola, and traditional peoples

2.º FÓRUM • BRASILEIRO DOS DIREITOS DA NATUREZA

FACAMP CERI CENTRO DE ESTUDOS E PESQUISAS
EM RELAÇÕES INTERNACIONAIS



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**

In support of the UN Harmony
with Nature Programme

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2. FÓRUM • BRASILEIRO DOS DIREITOS DA NATUREZA

Second Brazilian Forum
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NEWSLETTER I

❧ Tukum Village ❧

06 October 2023 ❧

♦ Opening Mystic ♦

Union for Mother Earth – Body, Mind and Spirit

Camila Ferri and Marina Spieth

Revision: Isabele Moraes

Photographer: Camila Ferri



The Forum began with the Poransym Ritual

With all participants united in a circle, the great meeting begins with a prayer to the Great Spirit. In the following moments, children, young people, seniors, women, and men pulse the energy of the Poransym Ritual, side by side, echoing multiple songs and prayers. They asked permission to step on sacred ground, honoring the ancestors, the elders, the matriarchs, and the Great Spirit. This circle is also grateful for being alive, breathing the fresh air, and being there to share their knowledge and listen to one another.

Thus, around the flame that sustains the fire, this gratitude extends to the invisible, to the sacred ones, the enchanted ones, that go beyond the material. One by one, indigenous leaders deliver their statements and sing to call all the forces to that place. It is a moment to bring peace, healing, and love to all, guaranteeing that we will have respectful exchanges and that the listening and sharing flow like Water moistens the soil, allowing knowledge to flourish from different realities and ideas. By the rattle of the maracas, the energy pulses stronger and stronger. The sun does not burn but embraces those who dance beneath it; the wind blows, connecting and flowing the vibration, and the sacred ground receives the pulsation of the feet that, in the rhythm of one heart, build the unity of the great Mother Nature.

This opening mystique ends with the statement delivered by the indigenous leader Cacique Ramon Tupinambá: "Despite the evil and cruelty, we are here resisting, believing that our planet can be different, based on the practice of each



The Great Circle

one of us". In this way, together with all the leaders present there, the Second Brazilian Forum on the Rights of Nature officially begins, opening space for the dialogue of lives, which is always plurality and never individuality. Cacique Ramon guides everyone to the welcoming place where, freely, they can express themselves, amplifying "the struggle that only tends to grow in awareness, understanding, sharing, care, and respect for others", adds the indigenous leader.

After the Ritual, it was time to listen. Unity marked the circular sharing of the leaders of the peoples and communities that are the guardians of the Earth. As Cacica Valdelice of the Tupinambá of Olivença people pointed out: "A stick breaks, a bundle is more difficult [to break]. We are a bundle!" The idea that we are one people, one community, one Nature, unified by caring for Mother Earth, echoed in a resilient and sensitive way, in a single sound.

The listening process had the goal of building bridges and creating links between people. The result was a unity for action, materializing the force anchored and invoked by the Enchanted of the most diverse beliefs, religions, and understandings.

This principle guided the work of the National Articulation for the Rights of Nature/Mother Earth in organizing the event. In the words of Ms. Vanessa Hasson, representing this Articulation: "It is about building bridges. Bridges that begin with the mixing of our blood and can reach the entire planet. It is our commitment".

Photographer: Messias Tavares (Cárítas Brasileira)

United in unison, resilient warriors of Great Mother Earth claimed for a voice. The struggle for survival and reconnection with the territory are the major issues. Good Living (Buen Vivir) is only possible if there is a connection with the ancestry of the territory. The great aggregator for indigenous peoples' collective resistance is the struggle to reconquest original territories. Their exchange and dialogue stitch together thoughts, feelings, and practices, expressing warmly and insistently the urgency for broad recognition of their cosmovision. Action is necessary. To listen, change, transform, and co-create a future of harmonious, loving, peaceful, and respectful coexistence with Mother Nature. To cooperate, abandoning little differences and uniting people and communities for a common purpose: Life.

The exchange of experiences and knowledge is an engine for change and a fuel for resistance. To resist the model of life that does not slow down, listen, and respect. It is urgent that we, as a collective, dialogue and converge, validating our words into practice. To resist the imposed system that erases the existence of everything that has always been here and has defended the advancement of progress that destroys Nature and, consequently, humanity as part of Her. The fight is full of hope and cries for advancement.

Thus, the morning of 6 October 2023 continued in a spirit of communion, sharing, and listening to a lunch prepared by the cooks from the Tupinambá of Olivença people, filled with affection that nourished our bodies to continue the dialogue.

A bath in the River that coexists with the Tukum Village, refreshing bodies, minds, and spirits also made part of this moment. Then, there was a second moment in the circle, where we could listen to the complaints and the experiences of resistance and struggle based on the particularities of each group. This moment showed that great understandings converged on a common objective: Thinking about resistance and change in harmony with Nature.

In the following articles of this publication, we reported the main agendas and demands shared by different groups and peoples during the listening session, focusing on the points of convergence expressed by the participants: demarcation of territories, violent mining practices, and the urgency of recognizing the rights of Water. With this, we seek – albeit briefly – to record what has united the experiences we were able to hear, remembering that much more was shared and needs to be considered.



♦ The union for territorial demarcation ♦

Listening to the people who struggle for territory

Kamilla Miasso

Revision: Alessandra Sousa

The demarcation of indigenous and traditional peoples' territories dominated much of the discussions among leaders who participated in the conversation circles on the first day of the Second Brazilian Forum on the Rights of Nature. Currently, 20% of the Tupinambá of Olivença territory is linked to large landowners who do not engage in dialogue with local communities and do not recognize the daily struggle for these lands to belong to their true owners legally. After all, indigenous peoples have been in these territories long before non-indigenous people arrived, and their survival depends on this recognition: "We are the ones who know how to enter the forests and the names of all the rivers", said the indigenous leader Naiara Tukano of the Yepã Masã people in the Alto Rio Negro region, Amazonas.

The fight for the demarcation of territories is not recent. In the statements of indigenous leaders, we could hear that the struggle has been rooted in their blood, sweat, and tears. Brazilian indigenous communities face daily threats and systematic violent attacks. Countless deaths within their communities go uninvestigated, demonstrating both the aggressive actions of large landowners and the authorities' passivity before these crimes.

The importance of establishing a dialogue with decision-makers who do not follow the guidelines of the Brazilian Constitution was also emphasized during the discussions. The lack of dialogue hinders advancements in issues related to the recognition and demarcation of indigenous and traditional territories by the designated authorities. That is the case for the Tupinambá of Olivença people, who eagerly await the

signing of the declaratory ordinance - a process currently in progress at the Ministry of Justice - to have their territory officially recognized and demarcated by authorities. In order to address the urgency of this signature, the indigenous leader Cacique Sussuarana of the Tupinambá people highlights that it is necessary to have "a space to dialogue with the government's secretariats beyond the international institutions".

Political pressure from both indigenous and non-indigenous peoples to expedite the demarcation of indigenous territories is crucial, and the Forum showed unity among indigenous, quilombola, and riverside communities from across Brazil in the pursuit of returning territories to their true guardians. It is essential to highlight that the struggle for land demarcation is not isolated to one community. The Pataxó Hã Hã Hãe people, whose territory has already been demarcated, were present at the Forum to support the demarcation of the Tupinambá people's territory.

All the participating communities in the Forum addressed a universal theme: The appreciation of Nature for its own sake, treating it as a subject of rights. In this sense, the desire for justice in returning territories to their rightful protectors represents the fight of communities that understand Nature as their family - the River as a grandfather or the Trees as sisters. The separation between humanity and Nature hinders a harmonious and respectful relationship with all beings, human and non-human. During the first day of the Forum, it became evident that the demarcation of indigenous and traditional territories was an essential step toward establishing this reconnection.

Photographer: Kamilla Miasso



Leaders discuss the struggle for territory demarcation

Photographer: Laís Samezima



The Tupinambá people's demand for demarcation

✦ Mining as an instrument of violence ✦

The silencing of the tragedy experienced by Brazilian indigenous peoples

Laís Samezima

Revision: Isabele Moraes



Disrespect, invasion, expropriation, and violation. These are some of the characteristics attributed to mining, a centuries-old extractive practice highly prevalent in Brazil. Regardless of its location, mining represents violence that manifests voraciously, carrying away all possibilities of life in Nature. During the listening process, traditional communities, indigenous people, quilombolas, riverside dwellers, and fishing communities denounced mining companies' numerous and repetitive actions in their territories, often leading to irreversible consequences for Mother Earth. When contaminated by residues released during ore extraction, rivers lose their potential to sustain and generate life. The existence of aquatic animals and the possibility of cultivating food on the land are severely impaired by water contamination.

Beyond the physical impact on Nature, the damages caused by mining assault the ancestry, culture, and beliefs of indigenous and traditional communities, which hold an extremely connected relationship with Mother Earth. In certain cases, members of these communities have resorted to medication precisely because they no longer have their right to connect with their own territory. Ms. Barbara Flores, an indigenous representative of the Borum Krem people, shared that she moved to Bahia seeking Good Living (Buen Vivir) with her children due to mining activities. Mining companies took over her original territory, Ouro Preto, in Minas Gerais. There, the violence against Nature persists through numerous forms of moral harassment, such as armed security that mining companies hire to oppress traditional families that are trying to resist.

Ore exploitation has a deep-rooted history in Brazil, and the violence experienced by the Borum Krem people reflects the persistence and triumph of the mining sector over the rights of Nature and, consequently, the indigenous peoples. Crime events like the collapse of dams, which are constructed from mining facilities, occur with alarming frequency,

and often, the role and responsibility of these companies are not adequately addressed in news and reports.

Nature is undergoing a moment where its commodification is increasingly predatory. According to Mr. Ruben Siqueira, from the Pastoral Land Commission, the issue goes beyond the agribusiness model; it involves the agro-hydro-mining-business model, which assigns an economic function and a price to each element of Mother Earth. Countless businesses operate like this across Brazil, devastating the Earth limitlessly.

In the case of Ilhéus, the sand extraction operations by the company Areal Guanabara, located on the Ilhéus/Oliveira highway at Km 11 within indigenous territory, have impacted not only the health of Nature and the indigenous peoples living nearby but also residents of residential complexes and tourists at nearby guesthouses. The pollution is due to the airborne residue from sand extraction, which affects the air quality in the region. The impact extends beyond this: Video footage has shown deadly deforestation of the Atlantic Forest. Alarmingly, news about these violations is rarely or not at all communicated to the public. With this silencing, the operations of these companies persist in indigenous territories and have even expanded into urban areas. If the commodification of Nature has advanced to the point of affecting privileged urban spaces, one can imagine its impact on territories of indigenous communities, which, as much as they are exploited, are also silenced.

The stories shared during the listening process reinforced how the demarcation of indigenous and traditional communities' territories is fundamental and urgent, especially to prosecute extractive companies for their violent actions. However, it is equally urgent to promote changes in the Brazilian legislation to favor and prioritize the protection of these people and the rights of Nature instead of the victory and profit of mining companies.

Photographer: Camila Ferri



Complaints shared within the circle formed by allies of the anti-mining struggle



Listening to representatives of the organization 'Save Mário Campos,' which denounces mining projects

Photographer: Camila Ferri

♦ Water, an Ancestral Being ♦

Listening through Water

Giulia Feijó

Revision: Alessandra Sousa

The recognition of the rights of the Bodies of Water is a topic of extreme importance for the indigenous peoples, quilombolas, and riverside communities. This relevance became evident during the listening sessions at the Second Brazilian Forum on the Rights of Nature when leaders demonstrated that their cultural experiences are connected to Mother Earth.

In this sense, it is clear that Water is an Ancestral Being, as said by the indigenous leader Cacica Nádia Akawã Tupinambá, licensed in Arts and Languages and with an Intercultural Degree in Indigenous School Education at the State University of Bahia. According to Ms. Akawã: "The water that falls from your tap is ancestral Water. One day, she joined the sweat and the rain of other people who walked this planet. And today, she falls into our home".

Recognizing of the rights of Rivers, Lakes, Oceans, and all Bodies of Water is crucial, as Water constitutes the base for sustaining life on Earth. However, many indigenous people lost this connection with the Ancestral Being due to activities, such as agribusiness, surrounding the territories where these communities live and obligating them to purchase Water trucks to supply their needs. This sad scenario of Water commodification was evident when the indigenous leaders of the Pataxó Hã Hã Hãe people shared the emotion

they felt at Tukum Village, a territory where their relatives maintain a connection with Nature when it comes to Water.

During the listening session on Water conservation, the issue of real estate and large infrastructure works was also discussed, as these activities are justified for seeking "development", above all, economic development. But, after all, for what and for whom is such development? Today, the idea of commodifying fauna and flora is widely accepted by the so-called modern society, due to the feeling of not belonging to Nature. However, it is necessary to recognize that these accelerated advances that the world has been experiencing, of unbridled exploitation that does not listen to or feel the ecosystem, have caused a series of genocides and the death of Bodies of Water. Modern society needs to learn how to listen to the call of Mother Earth. This is a transformation process of finding oneself as part of Nature instead of infinitely exploring Her in the name of a supposed development.

The demands of these people who are resisting are not contemplated in current development plans and policies that are killing the Water Bodies on behalf of economic growth. Thus, there is a need for modern society to learn to listen to indigenous and traditional knowledge and reconnect with Nature, mainly with Water, as She is an ancestral and vital Being.

Photographer: Laís Samezima



Cacique José Antônio Pataxó Hã Hã Hãe denounces the commodification of Water



Listening moment on the ancestry of Water

Photographer: Camila Ferri

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NEWSLETTER II

State University of
Santa Cruz

♦ The Dawn ♦

Opening our hearts to feeling, thinking, and acting

Camila Ferri and Marina Spieth

Revision: Isabele Moraes



Photographer: Camila Ferri

Opening Ceremony - Day Two of the Second Brazilian Forum on the Rights of Nature

Day two of the Second Brazilian Forum on the Rights of Nature started in the morning in the Paulo Souza auditorium at the State University of Santa Cruz (UESC). Mr. Iremar Ferreira, coordinator of the Instituto Madeira Vivo (IMV), was the MC of the Ceremony and warmly conducted the event opening with an experience rich in music, mysticism, and solemnity. In his words: "Mother Earth, Nature, invites us and urges us to take the initiative. Welcome! Rights of Nature!". Mr. Ferreira saluted all human and non-human life and, to awaken the body and soul of everyone present at the event, he led the "pisa-ligeiro" (step quickly) song, inviting all participants to sing and do a little dance.

Then, Ana Diniz, a member of the Maracatu Estrela da Serra group, gave us another incredible experience. She performed a song with her "maracá" (a percussion instrument) and, with the help of the audience, who clapped their hands to the rhythm of the music, Ms. Diniz ended up leaving a phrase in our heads almost like a prophecy - "it's time to find ourselves and just be love". Next, the indigenous leaders Cacique Ramon Tupinambá of Olivença and Cacica Jesuína thanked the Great Spirit for another gathering day. They proposed a moment of reflection with a prayer of thanks to Mother Earth and the ancestors, followed by a Tupinambá song.

The Opening Ceremony proceeded with the statements from the representatives of academia. UESC's Pro-Rector of Extension, Mr. Cristiano de Santanna Bahia, highlighted the importance of 294 extension projects conducted by the university to support indigenous communities. Mr. Bahia emphasized the importance of not only listening to

but also acting to defend territories and territorialities. Ms. Joana Angelica Guimarães da Luz, Rector of the Federal University of Southern Bahia (UFSB), discussed the importance of questioning the current economic model and understanding that, despite individual actions, current living patterns are unsustainable and incompatible with the limits and socio-environmental cycles. In other words, the Environment, Social Justice, and Economic Development equation does not work. The Rector believes that everything is Nature and, in this sense, academia needs to get off its sacred pedestal and question its impacts on the world and the usefulness of its productions.

Another important guest speaker in the Opening Ceremony was the Coordinator of the United Nations (UN) Harmony with Nature Programme, Ms. Maria Mercedes Sanchez. She reported on the progress of the Rights of Nature around the world and highlighted the importance of truly overcoming the Anthropocene, detailing that recognizing the Rights of Nature can be done from different sociocultural and constitutional contexts. She emphasized the importance of coordinated action between academia, communities, and governments, as well as multilateral international cooperation arrangements in order to recognize the rights of Nature. Ms. Sanchez also recalled the 14th Resolution on Harmony with Nature, 77/169, adopted in 2022 by the UN General Assembly, which, in its third operative paragraph, requested the President of the General Assembly to discuss the possibility of creating an Earth Assembly within the scope of the UN, to be held on 22 April 2024. Finally, she highlighted the importance of choosing the words we use to transform reality.

Mr. Ivo Poletto, from the Forum on Climate Change and Socio-Environmental Justice (FMCJS), pointed out that the rights of Nature have two dimensions, one of the heart and one of the law, and that these need to go hand in hand if there is to be a real transformation. Ms. Vanessa Hasson, in her capacity as an articulator for the Rights of Nature and Mother Earth, spoke about the principles of Nature that are inspired by non-human Nature itself, in which the basis is cooperation. She shared personal experiences that have led her until this moment and allowed her to build this web of embraces for Mother Earth.

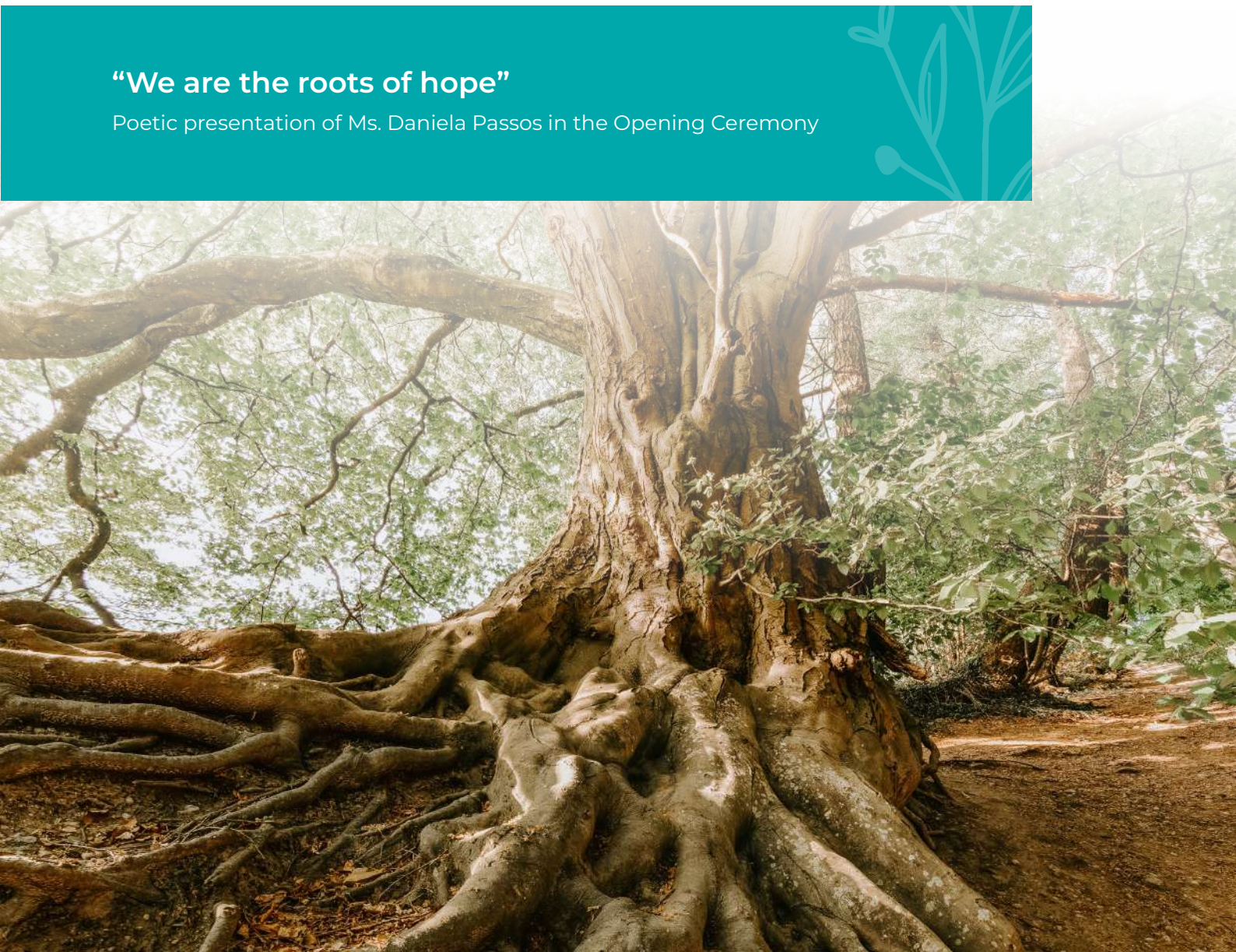
At the end of the Opening Ceremony, Cacique Ramon pointed out that indigenous communities al-

ready have their own understanding of the world: "It is very simple to defend Nature, you just have to feel part of it, that is what we do (...). We can only discuss Nature from the moment we understand ourselves as being part of Her". He, therefore, called on Brazilian universities to recognize the structures of thought and knowledge of indigenous peoples, especially considering the persistent academic erasure of the actions of indigenous communities in the protection of Life.

Finally, he denounced the violent mining activities that deforest and kill the Ilhéus region. He concluded his speech with a collective chant that led the discussions toward what, in his words, was the goal of the day: "We are rebuilding dialogues to rewrite life".

"We are the roots of hope"

Poetic presentation of Ms. Daniela Passos in the Opening Ceremony



Circles and Workshops

✦ Law and research on the rights of Nature ✦

The academic and legislative struggle for recognition

Giulia Feijó

Revision: Alessandra Sousa

The circle on “Law proposals for the recognition of the rights of Nature and related public policies” and “Research presentation on the rights of Nature” was facilitated by Mr. Fernando Dantas, Ms. Mariza Rios, and Ms. Flávia Soto Maior and had the presence of city councilors Ms. Karine Roza and Ms. Henny Freitas. The discussions began with an icebreaker: stating who you are and a word that expressed what it meant to be in that space and what the rights of Nature meant to you. Some of the chosen words were struggle, resistance, attention, and delay.

With these words in mind, the circle discussed the crisis in science, which objectifies Nature as a social understanding that is considered true. Then, participants discussed that the rights of Nature stem from cosmogonies (a process of construction) of indigenous peoples, who hold a non-anthropocentric perspective. The group debated the need to create a common understanding that makes people feel like part of Nature. It is essential to open up spaces for new generations, starting from childhood, to perceive themselves as a part of a large ecosystem.

In practical terms, the circle highlighted initiatives for creating and continuing laws to protect Nature. The cases of the Rio Laje, presented by Mr. Iremar Ferreira, and the cerrado in Serro (Minas Gerais), presented by Ms. Karine Roza, illustrated the incorporation of the rights of Nature into municipal law. On the other hand, there is still much struggle, as in the regions of Paraná, Alto Paraíso (Goiás), and in Cárceles, in the Pantanal region of Mato Grosso, where, unfortunately, the organic law has been revoked.



Photographer: Giulia Feijó

A time for sharing experiences

✦ Good Living (*Buen Vivir*) and harmony with Nature ✦

Theory and practice

Camila Ferri

Revision: Alessandra Sousa

The circle facilitated by Ms. Vera Catalão and the indigenous leader Cacica Nádia Tupinambá of Olivença began with everyone standing in a circle listening to a song. The song lyrics expressed how Earth is sacred and that those who work on the land have the right to it. From then on, we sat down and introduced ourselves, reporting our name, which was repeated by everyone out loud, followed by a “welcome” in unison. This way of presentation honored the importance of chanting a person’s name, recognizing the value of each person for the strengthening of the Good Living (*Buen Vivir*). This moment was relevant because Good Living (*Buen Vivir*) is done collectively when we come together.

The circle flowed in a way that allowed each person to share what Good Living (*Buen Vivir*) meant for them. Personal and collective life experiences, as well as struggles, came to the surface in the speeches, highlighting the important role of subjectivity in understanding, living, and constructing Good Living (*Buen Vivir*), in addition to the interconnection among all beings. The common being in unity and life experiences in communities were practical examples of Good Living (*Buen Vivir*).

The circle highlighted the experiences of fighting for Good Living (*Buen Vivir*) and the (r)existence of the ancestral connection with Nature. This moment showed the importance of Good Living (*Buen Vivir*) made in a collective, not just with other human beings but also with non-human beings and the inner self. The circle ended with singing and prayer, guided by the educator Cacica Nádia Akawã Tupinambá of Olivença, creating an environment of unity and love.



Photographer: Patrícia Rinaldi

Listening circle to the chant of the sacred land

♦ Agroecology for a new economy and food security ♦

The seeds of Life, exchange, and connection

Kamilla Miasso

Revision: Isabele Moraes

The circle was held in an atmosphere of dialogue between institutions, projects, and people who, in some cases, had never heard of the practice of agroecology. The circle was also an exchange of seeds. Ms. Luciene Luz, one of the leaders of the circle, shared her project with the institution Acamares, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) originally from Sarzedo which, in partnership with the Mário Campos Institute, both from Minas Gerais, aims to bring agroecology agendas into schools for children.

The initiative values the practice of “planting seeds, not just saving them”, by reconnecting with Nature when planting and growing food. The institution has a seed bank to plant and harvest natural food without pesticides and using recyclable materials collected by Acamares Mário Campos.

The project needs the approval of the Association of Families of the Victims affected by the dam collapse in Brumadinho in 2019 (AVABRUM). This approval depends on the Public Labor Prosecution Office in Brazil, which is withholding the money that the company Vale paid as compensation for the lives taken in the Brumadinho disaster.

Agroecology is about caring for and respecting the soil, food, and recycling, which means more natural and pesticide-free food. In the end, Ms. Luz let the participants take the seeds home, putting exchange and sharing into practice.



Photographer: Kamilla Miasso

Acamares seed bank project

♦ Human and beyond-human interrelations in the Common Home ♦

“The future is ancestral”: Genuine concern about how to defend Nature

Kamilla Miasso

Revision: Alessandra Sousa

Ancestry, re-enchantment, spirituality and love. These were some of the words that came out of the question: “What does it mean to (re)connect with Nature?”. One point discussed in this circle, mediated by Mr. Mika Peck and Ms. Erika Fernandes, was the fact that our conception of what Nature is is related to our past. Not the ancestral past, which is passed down from generation to generation, such as the traditions of indigenous peoples, but the colonial and slavery past, which violently disrupted the relationship between human beings and Nature in Brazil.

“The future is ancestral”, stated Mr. Peck, a representative from the University of Sussex. In this case, we are embracing the issue of ancestry because understanding how to relate to Rivers, Seas, Lagoons, Trees, and Forests requires listening to and learning from the peoples who were here before but were silenced during the construction of the institutions that make up the modern political and economic system. Historically, indigenous and traditional peoples’ knowledge, culture, and survival have not been taken into account.

The circle demonstrated that through education, especially based on the perspective of the Good Living (*Buen Vivir*), we can progress in recognizing Nature as a subject of rights. From this perspective, education allows us to build other relationships with Nature and, from this, to understand our obligations, making it clear that, before protecting Her, we must understand Her.



Photographer: Kamilla Miasso

Circle on the human and beyond-human interrelations

♦ From Rivers to Oceans ♦

Internal and external Waters that sustain life

Marina Spieth

Revision: Alessandra Sousa

During a few hours, the Water Circle was an encounter filled with an exchange guided by Mr. Rafael Langella, Ms. Diulie Tavares, Ms. Rozaneide Gomes, Ms. Andrea Rocha, and Mr. Litercilio Peba. The dynamic was a merge of different groups that created a unique, improvised, and fluid movement of sharing by the Fishermen's Pastoral Council (CPP), the Movement of Artisanal Fishmen and Fishwomen (MPP), and the project "We are from the Sea" (Somos do Mar).

It was an afternoon for sharing the daily difficulties suffered by the traditional communities with ancestral wisdom and knowledge of living in symbiosis with Nature. The movements and organizations that work in defense of Water-related rights shared their fights and challenges with many topics, such as environmental impacts, pollution, "clean" energy, environmental racism, challenges to promote food sovereignty, among many others.

At the same time, the "We are from the Sea" (Somos do Mar) project initially provided a meditative practice that brought awareness of unity, that we are all Water of the ancient ocean. Then, during the afternoon, every one, one by one and in silence, blindfolded their eyes and placed their hands in buckets to have different contact with Water. This was a sensory experience that, in the end, made it possible to share a moment of affective memories and ancestral feelings. A simple moment of contact with this element brought the sacred with a lot of energy and connection.



Flowing like Water

Photographer: Isadora Armani / International Rivers

♦ Socioterritorial conflicts in Brazil ♦

The loneliness of original and traditional peoples and communities in guaranteeing their existence

Kamilla Miasso and Laís Samezima

Revision: Isabele Moraes

This workshop, facilitated by Ms. Mariana Estevo from Cáritas, discussed how the right to demarcate the territories of original and traditional communities has historically been recognized through struggle and resistance. However, in the name of urban development, demarcation has been completely neglected, given that such development is protected and prioritized by legal parameters in Brazilian society and its legal instruments.

The document that ensures the demarcation of the territory of the indigenous people Tupinambá of Olivença was issued over ninety years ago and is still being processed. At the workshop, the indigenous leader Cacique Ramon Tupinambá of Olivença stated the need to persist in the fight for demarcation, especially given the lack of protection from the Brazilian State itself. We see and experience a scenario in which these communities are violated and excluded from decisions that directly impact their right to exist.

Cacique Ramon denounced that, between 2008 and 2023, around 23 leaders from the people Tupinambá of Olivença were murdered while trying to claim their territorial rights and that there are not even any investigations being carried out. This story represents many others that emphasize the loneliness of the people who are fighting, completely abandoned by the State, for their fundamental rights. Thus, the workshop ended by demonstrating the need for indigenous and non-indigenous peoples to defend the demarcation of territories.



The great circle in union with the socio-territorial struggle

Photographer: Kamilla Miasso

♦ The Rights of Nature and the energy transition ♦

Practical transformations to fight climate change

Laís Samezima

Revision: Isabele Moraes

The scientific community points out that the current climate crisis is caused by human action, resulting in countless natural disasters that are increasingly recurring. The workshop came up with solutions to the climate crisis resulting from the human use of fossil fuels, such as oil, coal, and natural gas.

Mr. Joilson da Costa, from the Forum on Climate Change and Social Justice, and Mr. Renan Andrade, a social ecologist at 350.org, an institution that works for climate justice and system change, facilitated the workshop and addressed the urgency of a fair, popular and inclusive energy transition.

Departing from such concerns, Mr. Costa presented the main pillars for a fair, popular, and inclusive energy transition: Decentralized energy generation through the use of more than one energy source to reduce dependence on a single source; and that this transition makes an effort to embrace not only the generation of electrical energy, but also the generation of heat and daily transportation.

Finally, the participants emphasized the importance of energy qualification, as well as a way to adapt energy consumption and production based on people's needs, which implies overcoming the current supply system, in which energy supply is exaggerated and highly profitable for companies that have a monopoly on energy production.



Photographer: Laís Samezima

Mr. Joilson Costa leading the discussions on popular energy transition

♦ Earth Listening Room ♦

A space to reconnect with Mother Earth

Kamilla Miasso

Revision: Alessandra Sousa

Have you ever talked to a Waterfall? Or listened to a Plant? With these questions, Mr. Danilo Lessa, an independent researcher, presented his work at the Earth Listening Room. This project uses computers, programming languages, and artificial intelligence to open up the possibility of talking to a Waterfall or listening to the sound of a Plant.

This initiative is something new, as it brings together digital technology and Nature in a very unexpected way. The conversation with the Waterfall is based on an artificial intelligence system supplied with various academic texts to represent the Salto do Sagrado Waterfall, located in the state of Paraná, in the Rio Sagrado region in Morretes. Mr. Lessa emphasized the importance of giving Nature a voice in this context in which "the local community is fighting for the Waterfall to be recognized as a subject of rights", which has been threatened with destruction due to the construction of a railroad.

The possibility of listening to a Plant is achieved by converting the magnetic waves of plants into a system with musical notes. Mr. Lessa proposes enabling people to interact with the Plant by making music since all the signals are transmitted in sound waves. The idea of using technology to reconnect us with Nature in a light and fun way is music to our ears.



Photographer: Kamilla Miasso

Poster - "Have you ever heard a Plant?"



Photographer: Laís Samezima

The youth handing over the Open Letter
Voices of Ilhéus to Ms. Maria Mercedes Sanchez

♦ The nightfall ♦

Closing Ceremony and final considerations

Giulia Feijó and Laís Samezima

Revision: Alessandra Sousa e Isabele Moraes

The Closing Ceremony of the Second Brazilian Forum on the Rights of Nature was marked by many rhythms and prayers of protection and gratitude. But it was also a moment of a significant political force led by the words of the indigenous leader Cacique Ramon Tupinambá of Olivença, who spoke about a petition regarding the demarcation of the Tupinambá of Olivença indigenous territory in the city of Ilhéus, state of Bahia, in Brazil. The document states that, despite the unanimous recognition by the government that the territory belongs to the community, there has been a long delay in its regularization, which has been going on for 15 years. This slowness has resulted in the deforestation of Nature and violence against the original people located there. Thus, with the signature of all participants, the petition will be forwarded to the Brazilian Ministry of Justice, reinforcing the demand for demarcation.

After this important political moment, the group Afro-liberarte gave an inspiring and ritualistic performance, an experience enriched with rhythm, interpretation, and cultural diversity. Both the dancers and the percussionists were responsible for enchanting the audience with much originality.

Then, the group of students from the CERI-FACAMP Harmony with Nature Study Group, who also work as research volunteers in the United Nations (UN) Harmony with Nature Programme, took the stage to present the Executive Summary carried out during those two days of the event. This document will be handed over to the UN as evidence of the beginning of the construction of the Brazilian Earth Assembly and in contribution to the convening of the global Earth Assembly in April 2024.

Through this report, the Forum consolidates its international contribution to the adoption of the universal rights of Nature, which should be debated globally and promulgated in the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth within the scope of the UN.

After the Forum, a series of documents will be prepared by the group of research volunteers, aiming to record the Forum Proceedings for publication both nationally and internationally.

Another milestone of the Closing Ceremony was the delivery of the Open Letter "For the Rights of Nature - Voices of Ilhéus to the Mother Earth Assembly and the Peoples of the Earth" to Ms. Maria Mercedes Sanchez, coordinator of the UN Harmony with Nature Programme. The youth of Ilhéus was responsible for handing over the Open Letter in a very symbolic ceremony. The young people who participated in this moment were Mr. Caíque Andrade, a student at UESC; Ms. Giovanna Oliveira, from the Forum's organization team; and Ms. Maria Eloísa and Ms. Regiane Santos, both young women representing traditional communities.

Before handing it over, the group of young people read the Open Letter to everyone present in the auditorium, denouncing the urgency for climate action, which must be above economic interests, as well as the need for the protection of original communities who, in addition to being seen and protected, must be respected and listened to as guides to a future that is not based on greenwashing, but that is aligned with harmony between human beings and Nature. Ms. Sanchez committed to forwarding the Open Letter to the UN as an important contribution to the Earth Assembly to be held in 2024.

After all the considerations and thanks to the participants of the Second Brazilian Forum on the Rights of Nature, the group Maracatu Estrela da Serra entered the auditorium with their music beat resonant together with the hearts of each person present at that moment. This music performance with dancing and singing was the perfect way to end this event marked by exchange, learning, and sharing, also by the hope that one day the listening of original and traditional communities will be recognized by the majority as the only way of thinking and creating relationships that we establish as human beings and, mainly, as part of Nature.

♦ HA ´EVEte - Thank You! ♦



Team of researchers of the CERi-FACAMP Harmony with Nature Study Group

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<http://www.harmonywithnatureun.org/>

2. FÓRUM • BRASILEIRO DOS DIREITOS DA NATUREZA

Second Brazilian Forum
on the Rights of Nature



FACAMP CERI CENTRO DE ESTUDOS E PESQUISAS
EM RELAÇÕES INTERNACIONAIS



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
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In support of the UN Harmony
with Nature Programme

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2. FÓRUM BRASILEIRO DOS DIREITOS DA NATUREZA

Second Brazilian Forum
on the Rights of Nature

Voices of Youth in defense of the Earth Assembly

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Camila Ferri Luciano
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Isabele Moraes de Oliveira
Kamilla Miasso da Silva
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Executive summary

As young students of International Relations, we presented the voices of the youth at the Second Brazilian Forum on the Rights of Nature – Brazilian Earth Assembly, held in Ilhéus-Bahia on 6-7 October 2023. The National Articulation for the Rights of Nature - Mother Earth (*Articulação Nacional pelos Direitos da Natureza - a Mãe Terra*) hosted the event, which was also a landmark in the beginning of the construction of the Brazilian Earth Assembly in defense and support of the implementation of a future Earth Assembly within the scope of the United Nations (UN).

In this document, we summarize the demands of the youth present at the Forum to the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which aims to foster concrete efforts to hold the UN Earth Assembly and strengthen the United Nations Harmony with Nature Programme. The Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations must conduct such efforts in order to consolidate Brazilian leadership in discussions centered on Nature and the recognition of the rights of Nature.

Our main recommendation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is to foster the active participation and cooperation between Member States, civil society, academia, and, fundamentally, traditional and indigenous communities in the development of biocentric global policies that corroborate in practical and effective terms with tackling climate change and bringing humanity closer to Nature.

The urgency for an Earth Assembly and Brazil's Role as Global South leader

Although new in the vocabulary of many, the Harmony with Nature paradigm is a worldview of traditional peoples from the Amazon, Andeans, and other regions of the planet. This paradigm is based on the understanding that human beings are not above Nature but are part of her and her biological cycles, and they need to live more harmoniously with all life on the planet. Therefore, Nature and her animals, plants, and ecosystems are endowed with intrinsic value that needs to be protected by rights, in the same way human rights protect human value. Harmony with Nature proposes a systemic organization not exclusively centered on people but centered on the harmonious relationship between people and the entire Nature, enlarging the range

of tools that society and the State have to seek truly sustainable solutions to the catastrophic environmental and climate conditions we live in today.

The paradigm of Harmony with Nature gained notoriety after its inclusion in the Ecuadorian Constitution in 2008, which is based on the worldview of Good Living (Buen Vivir), and since then has been increasingly debated, defended, and included in the national policy of many countries. In the last 15 years, several social and political movements have been changing laws, researching and producing academically, and creating new spaces for dialogue to promote life in harmony with Nature in the whole world. The platform published at the United Nations Harmony with Nature Programme's official website counts around 171 laws, including judicial decisions, and 66 policies that guarantee the rights of Nature around the world. Both science and the traditional worldviews of indigenous peoples and other knowledge systems have been combined to bring life to these actions.

National advancements quickly made it possible to articulate a debate at an international level. Since 2009, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has annually approved a resolution on Harmony with Nature, discussed by Member States in the UNGA Second Committee. Furthermore, since 2011, the UNGA Interactive Dialogues on Harmony with Nature have been held in celebration of International Mother Earth Day on 22 April, bringing together Member States, civil society, and academia.

The UNGA Interactive Dialogues have been a fundamental space for discussing ways to promote a holistic approach to sustainable development and sharing national experiences on criteria and indicators to measure sustainable development in harmony with Nature. In this sense, they have been central to strengthening multilateralism and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The annual dialogues allow decision-makers to become familiar with methodologies that promote a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental.

After a decade of multilateral experience between Member States, civil society, and academia, the current format of the UNGA Interactive Dialogues on Harmony with Nature appears limited to the advances achieved worldwide concerning the rights of Nature and to provide a more relevant global

response to the current environmental and climate catastrophe. Multilateral debates on the scope of the Harmony with Nature paradigm must move from the Interactive Dialogue model, which does not generate a final document nor have mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing annual debates, to an Earth Assembly within the scope of the UNGA.

Brazil, as the most biodiverse country in the world, with six terrestrial and three marine biomes, rich in life and fundamental to maintaining balance on the planet, holds a privileged place to lead the construction of a future Earth Assembly at the UNGA. This leadership can be consolidated in convergence with the domestic legal advancement in recognition of the rights of Nature, the principles of Brazilian foreign policy, and Brazil's historic global leadership in the environmental and climate agendas at the UN.

The legal process for recognizing the rights of Nature in Brazil began in 2017, with an amendment to the organic law approved in the municipality of Bonito in Pernambuco. Currently, Brazil has nine approved laws spread across the territory. These laws represent local struggles in the defense of biodiversity, often arising from indigenous and traditional movements that now have a legal tool to defend Nature. The latest achievement in this regard was the law recognizing the right to the Laje River in Guajará-Mirim municipality, in Rondônia, in 2023. It was the first River in the Amazonian territory to receive legal support in the country. Regarding policies, Brazil has three cases in progress, one being a legal action in Florianópolis, and two organic law proposals are still in progress in São Paulo and Fortaleza. In this sense, there is a clear legal advance in Brazil for guaranteeing the protection of Nature based on language and instruments that recognize the rights of Nature.

Brazil also adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Framework for Biological Diversity at the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-15), held in December 2022 in Montreal (Canada). The Global Framework strongly recognized the Rights of Nature and established, in Target 19.f, the use of ecocentric approaches in harmony with Nature in the implementation of this Framework.

Furthermore, Brazil is one of the few countries with a Ministry of Indigenous Peoples, who are protectors of biodiversity and essential for obtaining effective responses to handling contemporary environmental and climate challenges. The existence of many indigenous, quilombola, riverside dwellers, and fishing communities means that Brazil has a respectable

speaking place for indigenous and traditional leaders who must be protagonists in facing these challenges and be heard internationally.

In this sense, as a country with a privileged position of regional influence and great international recognition, Brazil has the opportunity to lead the process of building a future Earth Assembly at the UNGA, together with Bolivia and other interested States. Based on South-South cooperation, Brazilian leadership in the Harmony with Nature agenda will encourage multilateral action to build a sustainable future that encompasses all fundamental cycles and natural elements to the continuity of Life on Earth.

Nature in Brazilian Foreign Policy and rapprochement with indigenous people

A Brazilian leadership based on defending the rights of Nature will require the mobilization of both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples, in addition to the necessary dialogue with indigenous communities, civil society, and academia, reinforcing Brazil's commitment to democracy. In this regard, we identify two political advantages for the country in leading the process of building the Earth Assembly.

The first political advantage refers to how the Earth-centered approach can strengthen the people-centered approach of Brazilian foreign policy at the UN by advancing the fight against hunger and poverty through human rights based on the rights of Nature.

The second political advantage is to promote greater democratization of Brazilian foreign policy and global governance itself, establishing a link between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples to listen to the demands of indigenous peoples, civil society, and academia, by encompassing the different views and opinions of domestic stakeholders based on the rights of Nature agenda.

1. Strengthening Brazilian leadership at the UN through an Earth-centered approach

The people-centered approach promoted by the Brazilian foreign policy at the UN is crucial as it values social issues - especially the fight against poverty and hunger - as essential pillars of multilateralism and the global agenda for sustainable development.

However, if detached from an ecocentric vision, the people-centered approach risks reinforcing a utilitarian view of fauna and flora rooted in an anthropocentric perspective. This perspective sees humanity as separate from the ecosystem, in a position of superiority over Nature, resulting in the supposed right to exploit the environment extractively.

Therefore, Brazilian foreign policy must incorporate an Earth-centered approach to guide its people-centered approach. Recognizing Nature as a subject of rights means placing all living beings on the same level of importance, strengthening Brazil's priority in combating poverty and hunger by considering humans as part of the ecosystem. Assuming that humanity inhabits and is part of the Earth, any climatic or environmental collapse would leave all species vulnerable. Thus, Brazil would present a holistic approach to environmental issues at the UN by including present and future generations (both human and non-human) and promoting a balance between social, economic, and developmental issues with ecosystem protection.

2. Democratization of Brazilian Foreign Policy through the Rights of Nature agenda

Brazilian democracy faced profound threats in the last government, with violence and the silencing of legitimate social demands that deeply affected Brazil's international commitments regarding the environmental and climate agenda. Aligning Brazilian foreign policy with the Harmony with Nature paradigm and advocating for the rights of Nature will further democratize Brazil's international agenda by establishing a connection between the demands of indigenous and traditional peoples, civil society, and academia.

A closer relationship between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples is crucial to fulfilling Brazil's international obligations, ensuring genuine responsibility and commitment to environmental protection, and guaranteeing Nature's rights as instruments to address the current climate crisis. Indigenous peoples serve as Nature defenders and guardians of forests, rivers, and other natural ecosystems. Therefore, strengthening these relations is important in the environmental debate, given that indigenous cultural traditions are deeply rooted in Harmony with Nature.

This relationship can be achieved through collaborative actions involving continuous dialogue

and consultations with indigenous leaders and representatives. Regular meetings and discussion forums are effective means to listen to and understand the needs and concerns of indigenous peoples. Additionally, it is crucial to involve indigenous representatives in international negotiations, especially those related to the environmental and climate agendas, which can directly impact their territories and ways of life.

It is necessary to prioritize their experiences as a fundamental factor in environmental discussions, considering potential solutions or ways to mitigate the effects of climate change. In this regard, we also emphasize the need to expand the dialogue between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, civil society, and academia in order to promote training and knowledge exchange initiatives on the rights of Nature.

Furthermore, it is necessary to establish a preparation mechanism for Brazilian participation in the Interactive Dialogues held at the UNGA related to the agenda item on Harmony with Nature. This preparation mechanism would ensure an alignment among all stakeholders, considering the involvement of Brazilian civil society and academia during these dialogues. Such actions would contribute to democratizing Brazilian foreign policy through the rights of Nature agenda.

Recommendations towards Brazilian leadership in the construction of the future Earth Assembly

In 2023, the Second Brazilian Forum on the Rights of Nature - Brazilian Earth Assembly established a process of listening and dialogue between indigenous and traditional peoples, civil society, academia, and municipal, state, and federal bodies of the Brazilian government to advance the rights of Nature in Brazil. The event was built around efforts to democratize dialogue and prioritize the Earth-centered approach in this process. In this sense, the successful format and experience of the Second Brazilian Forum on the Rights of Nature can be replicated in the organization of the future Earth Assembly at the UNGA, which would allow for promoting greater inclusion and participation of other actors in decision-making on the rights of Nature, in contrast to the traditional model of the UNGA or the UN Environment Assembly, in which only Member States have a voice and their decisions do not entail a Nature-centered approach.

Thus, the following recommendations highlight the main motivations for the creation of an Earth Assembly organized in a new format within the United Nations:

1. Brazil must recover and advance its global leadership in environmental and climate issues, with adherence to the Earth-centered approach and the paradigm of Harmony with Nature being essential strategies in this recovery.

President Lula's statement at the 78th UNGA Opening Plenary emphasized the centrality of the environmental agenda for Brazilian foreign policy. However, the context of urgency highlighted by the climate crisis demands bolder strategies. It is necessary to incorporate the Earth-centered perspective in the actions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the UN. In this sense, by resuming its global leadership role based on the promotion of the rights of Nature, the Brazilian State can contribute significantly to addressing global challenges, promoting the protection of indigenous peoples and the conservation of Nature while strengthening its position on the global diplomatic stage.

The Harmony of Nature movement needs its own space of debate, the Earth Assembly, which would also respond to the important demand of Brazilian foreign policy for reform and democratization of international institutions, in line with the agenda of the current Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres. The Earth Assembly meets this demand, as it would recognize indigenous peoples as fundamental actors in protecting Nature and would strengthen Brazil's important position in preserving the Amazon.

2. The second recommendation concerns Brazil's environmental and climate agenda commitments at the UN. Advocating for an Earth Assembly is essential for greater commitment to ecocentric and holistic solutions in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This new space of debate will guarantee the democratization of the decision-making process on environmental issues, being the most appropriate way to promote a concrete commitment between Member States and traditional communities and peoples, the scientific community, civil society, and academia about the non-anthropocentric paradigm and the recognition of the rights of Nature. The Second

Brazilian Forum on the Rights of Nature defined itself as the first Brazilian Earth Assembly by building a space to listen to the demands of these communities at the national level. However, an international event could take these demands and knowledge beyond this space, thus promoting the joint participation of multiple national and international actors to expand the rights of Nature to new instances. After all, the challenges related to climate and environmental collapse require global coordination between all these actors and levels based on a Nature-centered approach.

3. Finally, Brazilian leadership in consolidating the Earth Assembly must emphasize the biocentric paradigm and the fundamental principles of equity and inclusion, which is necessary for the biocentric paradigm to be possible.

Incorporating these principles will require equal representation of multiple stakeholders at national, regional, and local levels so that the Earth Assembly would be composed of representatives not only from Member States but also from indigenous and traditional peoples from all countries, local communities such as quilombolas and riverside dwellers communities, academia, the scientific community and civil society.

The high-level international meeting of the future Earth Assembly would involve an exchange between different realities and be committed to the protection and conservation of Nature through multilateralism and democratic relations. In this sense, the future UNGA Earth Assembly will strengthen the cultural and social positioning of many people from countries in the Global South whose knowledge is often overlooked in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Given these recommendations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the UN have a unique opportunity to restore Brazil's international credibility regarding the environmental agenda by leading efforts to create an Earth Assembly that promotes effective global dialogue between indigenous communities, civil society, academia, and Member States. This strategy is bold but necessary for the implementation of a new biocentric paradigm, combined with the recognition of Brazilian leadership in protecting the Amazon forest and indigenous peoples. This will contribute decisively to facing global challenges related to the current environmental and climate crises, promoting the preservation of Nature, and guaranteeing future life.



Team of researchers of the CERI-FACAMP Harmony with Nature Study Group

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2. FÓRUM BRASILEIRO DOS DIREITOS DA NATUREZA

Second Brazilian Forum
on the Rights of Nature

Pathways to an Earth-centered Brazilian global leadership



Patrícia Nogueira Rinaldi and Patricia Capelini Borelli



A new strategy

The year 2023 and the subsequent three years will be decisive for reshaping the profile of Brazilian global leadership related to the environment and climate agenda. The last government significantly compromised the Brazilian position on these agendas, making successive attacks against science and Nature. This scenario presents a dual challenge for the current government in restructuring the country's global leadership: There is a need to take action to restore Brazilian responsibility in these matters and regain its credibility with the international community; at the same time, the intensification of the environmental and climate crisis has made Brazil's foreign policy traditional strategies to deal with the environmental agenda obsolete.

A new strategy is necessary to reshape the profile of Brazilian global leadership related to the environment and climate agenda, and it must be ambitious. The ambition is justified not only by the urgency of the triple planetary crisis (which involves pollution, global warming, and biodiversity loss) but also by the responsibility that Brazil has before the international community, considering the Amazon Forest and the diversity of biomes, flora, and fauna present in its territory.

This policy brief presents recommendations for the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations to reshape Brazil's global leadership profile on these matters, as we believe the country can play a more incisive role in advocating for the international agenda on Harmony with Nature and the rights of Nature. This new role could not only broaden Brazil's international protagonism, regaining the credibility necessary for this position but also shed light on a crucial tool for the international community to tackle the current environmental and climate crisis and its consequences. After all, Harmony with Nature offers a new development paradigm, which is Earth-centered and based on ecological economics and the holistic relationship between human rights and the rights of Nature.

Our recommendations focus on three international opportunities for Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Relations to implement this ambitious strategy aimed at reshaping Brazilian global leadership based on an Earth-centered approach: The G-20 presidency, starting in December 2023; the participation in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Summit of the Future, in September 2024; and the 30th Conference of the Parties (COP-30) to the United

Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) that will take place in Belém do Pará-Brazil, in 2025.

Bringing the Earth-centered approach to the G-20

While in the presidency of the G-20, Brazil has a great opportunity to reshape its leadership profile regarding the environmental agenda. When taking over the group presidency in September 2023, President Lula da Silva pointed out three priorities for Brazil: social inclusion and the fight against hunger; energy transition and sustainable development; and reform of the global governance institutions.

Promoting sustainable development requires a significant change in how humanity deals with the environment, leaving behind the Anthropocene worldview towards an Earth-centered approach. For that, it is fundamental to recognize the rights of Nature. This recognition is a crucial mechanism to end hunger as it drives sustainable initiatives, such as agroecology, that enable food production in harmony with Nature and Her rights. As a result, while protecting and respecting Nature, agroecology also produces a great variety of food, allowing more nutritious meals for all.

Considering this, encouraging an Earth-centered approach within the G-20 will strengthen Brazil's historical commitment to focus on people (people-centered approach), guaranteeing the country's priorities of social inclusion and hunger eradication to be allied with a harmonic relation with Nature.

The strategy of promoting an Earth-centered approach also addresses the priority of reforming global governance institutions, as it calls for fundamental changes in current institutions. An Earth-centered approach requires global governance to be more democratic, to include the voices that are truly committed to protecting Nature and that are broadly concentrated in the Global South, as is the case of indigenous peoples and traditional communities who are the main guardians of Nature.

The future is now, and the solutions lie in Nature as long as Her rights are recognized

The United Nations Summit of the Future, to be held in September 2024, represents another opportunity for Brazil to reshape its leadership profile. The summit's goal is to follow up and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development. For that, it also aims to review the current development paradigm, especially assessing how humanity deals with Nature.

Noteworthy is that one of the main objectives of the summit is to review the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as an indicator of progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Current indicators based on GDP do not consider important factors for sustainable development, such as environmental preservation, as they encourage environmental degradation associated with the productive process.

Brazil has the chance to sponsor the Harmony with Nature paradigm and, mainly, the rights of Nature, as indicators to measure the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By doing so, respect for life and the planet will be an integral part of the follow-up and review processes of the 2030 Agenda. Moving away from GDP as an indicator by legally recognizing the rights of Nature will allow the development process to be truly sustainable for present and future generations.

Global North's interest already dominates the Summit of the Future's agenda. So, the opportunity is open for Brazil to lead developing countries by proposing an ambitious agenda to prioritize Nature within the multilateral system and emphasizing the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, drawing from the Harmony with Nature paradigm.

Brazil can reclaim the relevance of the Summit of the Future for the Global South by defending the recognition of the rights of Nature as a path to guaranteeing human rights, an agenda that, historically, constitutes a Brazilian priority in international negotiations.

COP-30 is the definitive moment for Brazil to lead in Harmony with Nature

2025 will be the decisive year for Brazil to determine its international leadership profile on the global climate and environment agenda, considering that the country will host COP-30. The choice of hosting the conference in Pará, an Amazonian state, was strategic to provide further visibility to the region and, as a consequence, advance the commitments of the Parties regarding already established but often neglected goals.

The Brazilian international position must be ambitious and coherent with such a strategy and bring Harmony

with Nature to the center of discussions as a paradigm for the development of the Amazon and the Amazonian peoples, leaving behind the extractive paradigm that marks – and tarnishes – the international image of the country. The Amazon Dialogues within the scope of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) in August 2023 opened the path towards this strategy, and the fact that nine Brazilian municipalities have recognized entities of Nature as subjects of rights, the most recent one being an Amazon river, the Laje River - Komi Memen – in the municipality of Guajará-Mirim (Rondônia).

Brazilian leadership is also strategic for countries in the Global South, especially for Amazonian countries, to take the lead in proposing a paradigm shift that includes the people who suffer most from the consequences of the current development paradigm. At the regional level, Brazil must continue to strengthen ties with other Amazonian countries, especially within the scope of ACTO.

At the domestic level, the rapprochement and cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples is essential in this process since the new paradigm depends on the knowledge and active participation of indigenous and traditional peoples as true guardians of Nature. With such dialogue, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will contribute to strengthening the institutional position of the newly created Ministry of Indigenous Peoples and putting into practice Brazil's international commitment to guaranteeing human rights, now integrated with the rights of Nature.

Recommendations towards an Earth Assembly

Considering the opportunities discussed, we present three recommendations for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to implement the Earth-centered Brazilian global leadership.

1. To lead efforts to create the Earth Assembly, within the scope of the United Nations General Assembly, as a high-level meeting that reinforces multilateralism and the search for holistic approaches as paths to implementing the 2030 Agenda. The mandate of the future Earth Assembly would be to build an Earth-centered development paradigm that can guide the UN's

future agendas toward truly sustainable development. The Earth Assembly will differentiate itself from other decision-making bodies within the UN by being an exclusive space for non-anthropocentric proposals and composed of representatives beyond Member States. In this double sense – agenda and composition – the Earth Assembly fills a gap left by the United Nations Environment Assembly under the scope of UNEP.

2. To democratize Brazil's global environmental and climate leadership by strengthening and bringing to the center of discussions the perspectives and knowledge of indigenous and traditional peoples (quilombolas, riverside dwellers communities, among others), who act as guardians of Nature. Such democratization is crucial to prevent this new paradigm from being co-opted by countries that have imposed the current extractive pattern responsible for the current crisis.

To this end, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must establish institutional dialogues between indigenous and traditional peoples, the scientific community, civil society, and academia regarding the non-anthropocentric paradigm and the recognition of the rights of Nature. In this sense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs needs to strengthen dialogue with the National Articulation for the Rights of Nature - Mother Earth, responsible for organizing the Brazilian Forum on the Rights of Nature, whose second edition was recognized as the first edition of the Brazilian Earth Assembly. It is also essential that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs participates in the following forums and events organized by the Articulation.



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3. To increase visibility and provide more significant support to the United Nations Harmony with Nature Programme item “Harmony with Nature” allocated under the agenda item “Sustainable Development” of the Second Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. Brazil's participation in this agenda sub-item is timid: It generally follows the guidelines of the Group of 77, on the one hand, and the Bolivian leadership, on the other. This timid participation does not reflect the broad engagement of Brazilian civil society and academia on the topic, as demonstrated by Brazilian participation in the 12th Interactive Dialogue of the General Assembly on Harmony with Nature, held on 24 April 2023. The Permanent Mission of Brazil to the UN did not know in advance about the twenty Brazilian participants from academia and civil society at the event, which generated some organizational problems and prevented Brazil from being more prominent in the discussions. In contrast, European Union countries showed great coordination, and the Permanent Missions previously aligned with participants from civil society and academia. The result was that initiatives from the Global North on Harmony with Nature gained more prominence. Preparatory meetings for the Interactive Dialogues are crucial to raising Brazil's diplomatic profile on this agenda item.

Brazilian global leadership on the climate and environment agenda is urgent and necessary so that the response to the triple planetary crisis considers the needs and demands of the peoples of the Global South. Therefore, Brazilian leadership can only be centered on the principles of Nature, which will allow Brazil to build truly holistic, cooperative, and multilateral solutions that respect and promote human rights and the rights of Nature.



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