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Brazil Appoints Luiz Alberto Figueiredo as Ambassador for Climate Change

March 14, 2023



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On February 17, the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs **appointed** Luiz Alberto Figueiredo as the Brazilian Ambassador for Climate Change. Figueiredo is an experienced diplomat who previously served as Brazil's permanent representative to the UN and as the Brazilian ambassador to the United States, Portugal, and Qatar. He also served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the administration of former-president, Dilma Rousseff, between August 2013 and December 2014.

As the Ambassador for Climate Change, Figueiredo will be responsible for ensuring that Brazil has high-level representation at international events and that the country is globally engaged in discussions regarding climate change. He will also promote Brazil's candidacy to host the 30th UN Climate Change Conference (COP30) in the Amazonian city of Belém in 2025.

Figueiredo's appointment is an additional signal by President Lula's new administration that it intends to make environmental protection and climate-related initiatives a key priority. As we **previously reported** in January, Lula's Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Marina Silva, made significant changes to the structure of the Ministry of the Environment, foreshadowing a reactivation of federal environmental protection agencies. Soon after, the Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (Ibama), carried out the **first significant environmental enforcement activity** under the new administration, targeting illegal deforestation in the Amazon region. In February, the Brazilian Federal Police, Ibama, and the National Indigenous People Foundation (FUNAI), carried out **raids and enforcement activity** targeting wildcat gold mining enterprises that have illegally invaded Brazil's largest indigenous reservation. The activity of more than 20,000 illegal miners in the protected Amazon reserve has led to armed violence, infant mortality, and disease among the native Yanomami population and was declared a public health emergency by the Brazilian government and international publications such as the *Lancet*.

Taking the Temperature: The first months of Lula's new administration have presented a mixed picture for international investors. Lula **provoked alarm** by criticizing Brazil's central bank and questioning whether it should remain independent. His government also recently amended the Brazilian State-Owned Companies Act by reversing an anti-corruption measure that prohibited in-office politicians or political appointees from directing state-owned companies.

On environmental policy, however, the administration appears to be taking steps to fulfill its ambitious reform agenda designed to position Brazil as a leader in global environmental policy. Brazil requires significant international investment in order to fund programs to protect the Amazon region. On February 10, following a meeting between President Biden and Lula at the White House, the U.S. **announced** its intention to contribute to the Amazon Fund, starting with an initial contribution of \$50 million. The U.S.'s commitment is a positive step in bolstering the international credibility of Lula's environmental agenda, but funds committed to date only represent a small fraction of the estimated \$1 billion required. As we have **previously discussed**, there are potentially significant long-term adverse effects on Brazil's economy as a result of Amazonian deforestation, and the protection of the Amazon, in turn, is crucial to efforts to address rising temperatures and global deforestation. As Lula stated at COP27 last year, there "is no climate security for the world without a protected Amazon."