



ALLIANCE OF RELIGIONS AND CONSERVATION

launched in 1995 by HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh KG KT

28th May, 2013

Your Holiness,

We, WWF and the Alliance of Religions and Conservation, thank you for your leadership and wisdom in teaching that we should protect those in the most need, as well as your messages about the importance of nature. The two great missionary texts of the Gospels in Matthew 28:18 - 20 and John 3: 16 - 17 put our concern for nature within its widest context. The mission to the disciples to go and teach every nation is complemented by the statement in John 3:16 that God so loved the whole cosmos - the entire world, He sent His only begotten Son. As Matthew 28: 18 says, Jesus is then given authority over all on earth and in heaven - the whole cosmos. This is why we approach you today with confidence.

Your Holiness, we trust that as a son of South America, you know first-hand that it is a continent rich in biodiversity and natural resources, and yet plagued with many social problems and development needs. We trust that you believe it is a continent where a new sustainable development model can be achieved and be an example for the world. We offer our services to you and the Catholic Church towards such a vision. As you come to the great event of World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro this July, WWF and ARC are honoured to be working with the Vatican through the kind offices of Father Eric Jacquinet, the Catholic Church in Brazil, and with religious orders such as the Benedictines, Franciscans, and the Jesuits in promoting environmental protection and sustainable stewardship at the event.

The Amazon is a region where God's love for life sings from all corners. It is a vast region that spans across Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana. There are over 500 million hectares of dense forests, teeming with life and over 6500 kilometres of life-giving rivers. Home to 33 million people, the Amazon provides its resources for all peoples of the region to thrive upon. The Amazon is also crucial in providing ecosystem services locally and across South America, including the regulation of rainfall (the basis for food production in the southern parts of the continent), biodiversity for pharmaceuticals, and many industries. There is a clear link between the health of the Amazon and the health of the Earth. The Amazon rainforests, which contain 90-140 billion metric tons of carbon, help stabilize local and global climates. Today, however, rampant deforestation and river destruction are leading us to catastrophic climatic consequences and food insecurity in the region and around the world.

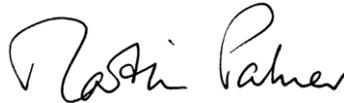
Your Holiness, as St. Paul says in Romans 8: 18 - 25, creation is crying out in agony because of human neglect. We appeal to you to include a special Message in your teaching during the Rio World Youth Day calling for young Catholics to help turn the tide of destruction in the Amazon, erosion of the ecology, and poverty which is the main result for the poor and indigenous peoples of the Amazon, who are least able to bear the consequences of ecological destruction. If you, the one who is the leading light for one billion people around the world, would raise this issue, we believe that it would have a profound impact on how people perceive and care for the Amazon. The future of the Amazon and the message of compassion and care that your statements or prayers for its wellbeing would evoke will be of historic importance.

We hope this action would be the first of many in the spirit of collaboration to build a vision for the future of the Amazon, with the Amazon peoples and beyond. We, WWF and ARC stand ready to be of service to Your Holiness at any time and we are grateful for the wonderful help and support we have in our partnership with the Franciscans through Father Eric, we are delighted to be sending you this humble suggestion.

Yours sincerely,



Jim Leape
Director General
WWF International



Martin Palmer
Secretary General
The Alliance of Religions and
Conservation (ARC)



Maria Cecília Wey de Brito
Chair, WWF Living Amazon
Initiative
CEO, WWF Brazil

WWF International
Avenue du Mont-Blanc, 27
1196 Gland,
Switzerland
www.panda.org

**Alliance of Religions and
Conservation**
The House
Kelston Park
Bath, BA1 9AE
UK
www.arcworld.org

WWF Brazil
Rua SHIS EQ QL 6/8 - Conjunto E - Lt S2
Brasília - DF, 71620-430,
Brazil
www.wwf.org.br