



State of Amazonas: Promises and Challenges

CU Denver's Institute for International Business (IIB) and Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) hosted an IIB Distinguished Lecture on March 8th, 2022 featuring Brazil's State of Amazonas governor, the Honorable Wilson Miranda Lima. The State of Amazonas is an emerging business frontier rich in natural resources and diversity. Poised to become a key player in Brazil's global green and innovation economy, the region's leadership is thoughtfully and strategically balancing the sometimes-competing priorities of environmental sustainability and economic growth.

The Amazon, the largest tropical forest in the world, has an essential, regulatory influence on the stability of the planet's ecosystem, climate, and well-being of its inhabitants. The State of Amazonas encompasses an area of 600K+ square miles—roughly equivalent to the area of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California—and is one of the most preserved tropical forests in Brazil, with 97% of its rainforests protected. The Amazon River, one of the world's largest and most biodiverse rivers, flows through the region. The State of Amazonas is home to 4.2M people and is Brazil's largest export processing zone. Approximately 500 multinational corporations are located in the state's city of Manaus; among them, Microsoft, LG, Panasonic, Samsung, Toshiba, Sony, Phillips, Honda, Suzuki, Ducati, Dafra, and 3M.



Governor Lima, elected in 2018, spoke about region's progress, opportunities, and challenges in executing his mission to promote economic development and provide jobs for the people who live there in alignment with environment preservation goals.

The governor is directing policy improvements and ambitious multiple, concurrent projects. These include 150 infrastructure projects currently under way with 100 more planned for this year. Among the many other projects are those improving the region's communications capacity (some cities have no internet), promoting technical literacy, upgrading the quality of education, providing free transportation for students, addressing poverty and improving inequality through high-impact social institutions, building a sustainable bio-agro economy, expanding locally grown food agriculture, increasing eco-tourism, and doubling health care capacity, jobs, and the GDP. There are environmental preservations projects specific to the area of the state most

affected by deforestation and burning, where 70% of the state's population resides. Many of the sustainable development initiatives will be carried out by indigenous and riverine people.

Governor Lima is also collaborating with eight other Brazilian governors on the Amazon Interstate Consortium for Sustainable Development and the comprehensive Green Recovery Plan for the Amazon.

One of the important emerging industries in the region is natural gas and clean energy. With an eye on replacing the area's environmentally detrimental dependence on diesel fuel, the State of Amazonas is in the process of planning for developing this lower-cost fuel source projected to generate \$800M for the region while concurrently reducing pollution. One of the aims is to have all the region's boats fueled by natural gas.

Exporting food is another area of opportunity for the State of Amazonas. The governor is exploring options to address current production, food preservation, and long-distance delivery logistics challenges. Governor Lima has the intention that farm owners will one day be able to say, "I live entirely off of carbon credits."

There exist several potential areas for collaboration between the State of Amazonas and CU Denver, CU CIBER, Colorado companies, and US companies. For example, as a technology hub, Colorado can provide expertise in leveraging technology to help the region achieve its goals. Companies in Colorado and the US can collaborate on gas, solar, and other clean energy projects. CU Denver and CIBER can offer research and innovation in addressing issues and scaling solutions for the future.

Dr. Constancio Nakuma, CU Denver's Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs welcomed and introduced Governor Lima. Participants in the lecture discussion were: Dr. Raul Gouvea, Professor (Emeritus) of International Business, University of New Mexico; Atty. Flávio Antony Filho, Chief of Staff, State of Amazonas; Mr. Luis Fabian Pereira Barbosa, State Secretary for Administration, State of Amazonas, and Dr. Manuel G. Serapio, Faculty Director of the Institute for International Business, University of Colorado Denver.

■ Carolyn Cott, writer and Global Forum Report contributor