

# UNITED NATIONS **FORESTS FOR PEOPLE** AWARDS



## **ALMIR NARAYAMOGA SURUI, Brazil**

### **Forest Hero | Latin America & The Caribbean**

An environmentalist and political activist, **Almir Narayamoga Surui** caught the eye of tribal elders; at 17 he was elected chief, and is the first member of the Surui to attend college. For more than 20 years he has been fighting to save both his Paiter-Surui tribe and the Amazon rainforest.

Almir successfully lobbied the state government to build schools, wells and medical clinics for the Surui and other tribes in the rainforest preserves. He spearheaded the creation of a "50-year plan" to ensure the economic vitality of the Paiter-Surui. The plan encompasses large-scale conservation efforts, reforestation projects and activities that offer economic alternatives to exploiting the forest. Almir convinced the World Bank to re-structure a regional development program to better benefit local indigenous groups. Almir's efforts are credited with almost single-handedly bringing his tribe back from the brink of extinction.

Almir hopes to generate income for the tribe by selling forest carbon credits. To achieve this goal, he contacted Google Earth to teach the Surui how to use digital technology to monitor and map the forest.

His efforts to build partnerships between indigenous peoples and international actors for sustainable development have earned him accolades around the world. He received the 2008 Human Rights Prize from the International Society for Human Rights in Geneva. In 2011 Almir was named as one of the 100 most creative people in the world by Fast Company, the world's leading progressive media brand which focuses on innovation and leadership.

Almir was born in 1974 in the state of Rondonia, in western Brazil.

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