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COP30: was it the “implementation COP” we expected?

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COP30 closed after intense negotiations that underscored both the enduring unity around the Paris Climate Agreement’s (PA) goals and the growing fragility of multilateralism. Parties reaffirmed the PA as the central framework for global climate action, but the talks also exposed geopolitical tensions, mistrust, and divergent national interests. Still, countries showed a shared resolve to move from agreeing on what needs to be done toward figuring out how to deliver it. This blog post examines whether that shift is truly embedded in COP30’s outcome, whether it can endure, and how today’s geopolitical tensions will shape future international cooperation and the role of key actors.

COP30 took place in Belém from 10-22 November, following a modestly attended World Leaders Summit where Brazilian President Lula set a high-ambition tone, calling for a “COP of Truth” and for roadmaps to transition away from fossil fuels and halt deforestation by 2030.

Unlike many previous COPs, this one was marked by an unprecedented year-long mobilization under the “Mutirão” spirit of collective effort and solidarity—bringing together Circles of Finance Ministers, Former Presidents, Peoples, the Global Ethical Stocktake, [7 Envoys for Strategic Regions and 22 Sectoral Envoys](#), and extensive preparatory work on the [COP30 Climate Action Agenda](#). With the highest participation of Indigenous Peoples ever recorded at a COP, the Presidency championed transparency and inclusion, though not without criticism as negotiations grew tight and several countries and observers expressed their need for more collective deliberation.

The conference ultimately delivered a series of technical decisions and a political package known as the [Mutirão Decision](#). Among the many outcomes, three stand out: a diagnosis of the state of multilateralism, the emergence of new alliances, and a new approach for accelerating implementation.

Multilateralism at a crossroads

COP30 underscored an unbroken collective commitment to delivering on the Paris Agreement’s (PA) goals, including striving for limiting global warming to 1.5C. Despite sustained sabotage and political pressure from Trump’s Administration since his election—such as Trump’s attacks on climate at the UN General Assembly in September—no other country has chosen to exit the Agreement.

Moreover, Belém showed consensus over the achievements over the last 10-year period: bending of the emissions curve, declining costs of technologies and record levels of global renewable energy capacities and clean energy investments, as well as the economic and social benefits and opportunities that climate action has delivered. COP30’s final Decision acknowledges that the global transition towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development is irreversible, and that the PA is working and resolves to go further and faster to address critical ambition and implementation gaps. The Decision refers to the ‘urgency’ of accelerating progress, without explicitly acknowledging the reality of a temporary overshoot of the 1.5C global average or the fact that a new [economy is emerging, but rather than fully replacing the fossil fuel economy, it is largely being added on top of it](#). In fact, the Mutirão Decision reflects the mood in many countries, particularly in the Global South, to first negotiate how to concretely build the ‘new’—and who will pay for it—before committing to phase out the ‘old’.

At the same time, COP30’s negotiations revealed the growing fragility of multilateralism and the difficulty of securing ambitious outcomes. Reluctance to reaffirm past commitments, stalled dialogues that fuel perceptions of the process as a ‘talking shop,’ negotiating positions inconsistent with countries’ real-economy actions, reiterative isolated blockers preventing consensus or non-compliance with limited peer pressure: all illustrated this fragility. The failure of Parties to agree on a roadmap to transition away from fossil fuels exemplified the limits of the multilateral system—making a symbolic setback, even if its practical implications are uncertain.

Taken together, these dynamics reveal unprecedented geopolitical tensions while underscoring the need for governance reforms that can strengthen the international climate regime and improve enforcement of Paris Agreement provisions. The transition is already underway, meaning the task is not to start from scratch but to shape, steer, and accelerate existing efforts. COPs remain pivotal forums for mobilizing a wide constellation of actors—as demonstrated by the 50,000+ participants at COP30 despite high costs and logistical hurdles. Yet the imperative to more effectively catalyze action, grounded in a [sharper understanding of implementation challenges and leverage points](#), combined with evolving geopolitical realities, calls for new forms of international coordination and cooperation and enhanced diplomatic engagement.

Rise of new coalitions

As the global transition advances and the geopolitical order evolves, national interests and stakes are also shifting. COP30 revealed a new configuration of actor dynamics. Some Global North–Global South tensions remained prominent—especially around finance. For instance, trust between the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Northern countries was on the brink of collapse, and was saved by a goodwill statement to triple adaptation finance by 2035, and a two-year work programme on climate finance and a high-level ministerial roundtable on the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on Climate Finance.

But beyond the North-South divide, industrialized and large emerging economies often aligned to defend COP30's core political outcomes. This, however, left many smaller countries across different groupings feeling sidelined. Large emerging powers like Brazil, China, South Africa or India could all be considered to have an interest in the dynamism of climate multilateralism: Brazil with its leadership position in last year's G20 and this year's COP30 presidency, China having an interest in deploying its low-carbon technologies worldwide, South Africa with its G20 presidency, and India having made application to preside over the next Global Stocktake COP in 2028. The expectation that these countries would act as brokers did materialize at COP30—though not formally as a BASIC group—and while they did not clearly assume a leadership role, they nonetheless exerted significant influence by helping to broker compromises.

Meanwhile, oil-producing nations and allies of President Trump formed a powerful and coordinated bloc opposing progress. In response, coalitions of the willing emerged to counter this resistance and to advance practical collaborations—mainly through the Action Agenda.

The Transition Away from Fossil Fuels (TAFF) roadmap debate exemplified the urge for mobilizing a "coalition of the willing" to support the delivery of an explicit signal. In a few hours, over 80 countries showed interest in the coalition, and by the end of the COP, after failing to reach consensus, the Brazilian Presidency offered to lead efforts in developing this [roadmap](#) (together with a roadmap on deforestation) and partnering with Colombia who will host a dedicated TAFF conference in April 2026. There were no objections to the Presidency's proposal.

A new era of implementation

COP30 prioritized a strategic shift into a new phase—[often described as the 'post-negotiation era'](#)—focused on translating pledges into action, grounding the climate regime in real-economy dynamics, and [anchoring solutions in country realities](#). To a large extent, it delivered on this ambition. Four areas of progress stand out:

First, **COP30 stood out for Parties' growing interest in the distribution of the social and economic opportunities generated by the ecological transition**, and in how trade, industrial policy, investment, and international cooperation must align with global climate goals. This reflects a broader recognition that climate policy today is fundamentally economic and development policy—an evolution that shifts the conversation from burden-sharing toward equitable access to opportunities and from abstract goals to the drivers and barriers shaping real-world action. A clear illustration of this shift is the emergence of trade discussions within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), moving beyond concerns about unilateral trade measures to a deeper exploration of the systemic links between trade and climate. COP30 underscored the need for countries to coordinate internationally so that national trade and industrial strategies reinforce, rather than undermine, the Paris Agreement's objectives. Its Final Decision calls for enhanced cooperation and establishes a dedicated three-year dialogue—with participation of the International Trade Centre, UN Trade and Development, and the World Trade Organisation—to identify challenges and opportunities for strengthening trade-related climate collaboration.

Second, COP30 responded to the latest Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) submissions, with a clear determination to work on **accelerating implementation** and highlighted the role of existing PA provisions—such as

transparency reports, NDCs, National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and Long-Term Low-Emission Development Strategies (LT-LEDS)—as key tools to steer implementation-focused discussions. The Mutirão Decision urges countries to develop broader net-zero development strategies and to prepare implementation and investment plans for their NDCs, emphasizing the need for strengthened international cooperation—on finance, but not only. Concrete finance outcomes remain limited, but the Baku-to-Belém Roadmap—with its detailed options to mobilize USD1.3 trillion per year for Southern countries—provides a critical foundation that now needs to be taken up in other fora to advance action on these options. Overall, COP30 reaffirmed the potential of the Paris framework, but its impact will depend on how effectively Parties use these instruments domestically, the quality of dialogue and learning at the international level and the capacity to provide incentive and instructions to actors outside the climate regime.

Third, even with strong political will, the climate regime cannot deliver its objectives alone. Dedicated **cooperation** is needed to address specific challenges that existing platforms are not equipped to handle. In Belém, new processes were launched to bridge efforts inside and outside the UNFCCC and to better orchestrate and mobilize key actors: the Implementation Accelerator, the Belém Mission to 1.5, and the Belém Action Mechanism on Just Transition. Though different in nature, all three target implementation gaps and aim at strengthening learning and coordination by engaging non-state actors and the broader international cooperation ecosystem in support for whole-economy and whole-society approaches. The Accelerator—focused on implementation on NDCs and NAPs—and Mission 1.5—focused on enabling conditions such as international cooperation—processes both function as political platforms designed to maximize non-state participation. Anchored in the Paris Agreement's long-term goals, they may become *de facto* spaces for advancing implementation of the first Global Stocktake (GST)—including fossil fuel transition, deforestation, and adaptation priorities. The Belém Action Mechanism will operate within the UNFCCC to support countries in delivering just transitions, by strengthening international cooperation, technical assistance, capacity-building, and knowledge-sharing. With this mechanism, COP30 seized the opportunity to affirm that transitions must be just—not as a subsidiary element of climate policy, but as a foundational principle for sustained and ambitious action. In doing so, it elevates a critical enabler of effective implementation.

Fourth, a priority for this Presidency was the **reform of the Global Climate Action Agenda (GCAA)**, responding to a growing recognition that it was not delivering its full potential. It was fundamentally reorganized from its previous partnership structure into a unified framework built on 6 thematic axes that reflect the outcomes of the first GST. It rolled out 117 collective Plans to Accelerate Solutions and a six-fold increase in initiatives reporting measurable outcomes, proving that commitments are translating into real-world action. To secure long-lasting effects of these efforts, a five-year work programme was presented. Several new initiatives were also launched, such as Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF), the Belém Declaration for Green Industrialization, the Open Coalition for Carbon Markets or the Country Platform Hub, to name a few.

From Belém to Antalya

After much deliberation, COP31 will take place in Antalya (Turkey), with Australia having a shared role in the presidency and securing a pre-COP in the Pacific. Brazil, however, will play a role until November 2026, when the baton will be passed to the Turkish-Australian duo. Half-way, during the UNFCCC intersessions in Bonn in June 2026, negotiators will need to continue their work to finalize the metrics to assess the Global Goal on Adaptation (IDDRI, 2025) and agreeing on the exact functions and governance structure for the newly established Just Transition Mechanism.

From today, and with the 11-month period ahead—which President Andrea Corrado Lago has affirmed Brazil intends to use well—several priorities emerge from the COP30 outcomes: leading the development of the TAFF and deforestation roadmaps; setting in motion the Accelerator and the Roadmap to Mission 1.5; accompanying the Baku to Belém Roadmap into the appropriate fora; and advancing governance reforms, including the the Action Agenda's.

These tasks will be driven by the Brazilian Presidency but, to be effective, will require deep engagement with Parties—through the UNFCCC, coalitions, or other fora—as well as with non-state actors and international organizations to ensure ownership and durability of the results. Progress across these areas will be essential to nurture the seeds planted at COP30 and demonstrate that the process has truly shifted toward accelerating implementation—and therefore ambition—to keep the Paris Agreement goals within reach.

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