

INTERNATIONAL



Why COP30 matters & how it can succeed

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Coming one year after the guidance to fully operationalize the Paris Agreement was adopted and at the end of the first turn of the Paris ambition cycle, the 30th Conference of Parties (*COP30*) faces the challenge of navigating the transition to a greater focus on cooperation for implementation. The geopolitical context makes that task more formidable and urgent.

A successful outcome to COP30 would include:

- delivering on its technical mandates
- responding robustly, through a consensus outcome, to the likely ambition gap represented by the latest round of nationally determined contributions (*NDC*)
- acknowledging and celebrating all that has been achieved under the Paris Agreement
- centering the importance of action on adaptation
- sending a strong signal of progress on climate finance
- embracing and implementing the transformative vision of the COP30 Presidency to align the action agenda with the outcomes of the global stocktake
- elevating the profile of, and engagement with, countries reporting progress against their climate targets.

With multilateralism in general—and international efforts to combat climate change in particular—under threat, COP30 must demonstrate to people around the world that the Paris Agreement is alive, well, and relevant.

1. Every successive COP is anticipated as the most consequential to date, and the 'last best hope' to address climate change. In the case of COP30, which will take place this month in Brazil, such claims may well be justified.
2. COP30 will take place in the context of: (i) extremely difficult and uncertain geopolitical conditions; (ii) the rise of populism in many countries, with climate action exploited as a divisive rather than unifying issue; (iii) increasingly severe and frequent global climate impacts; (iv) a retreat from globalization and international cooperation, including reduced funding for international development and the United Nations.
3. Added to that, at the time of writing, only 73 countries and only 11 of the G20 members—collectively responsible for around 80 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions—have submitted their new NDCs. Given that NDCs are at the very core of the Paris Agreement, missing the February 10, 2025, deadline by several months is not a great signal of commitment. If this is not rectified by time countries arrive in Belém, it would be even more damaging.
4. The recent NDC synthesis report suggests that global emissions may have finally peaked—that is good news. But the report also points out that the rate of decline is far too slow, and it seems almost

certain that we are now in a scenario where the world will overshoot the 1.5 degrees Celsius limit of the Paris Agreement, before bringing it back down.¹ The 2025 United Nations Environment Programme Emissions Gap Report further says that the Earth will overshoot 1.5 degrees C, likely within this decade.²

5. All this, together with the backdrop of tense and confrontational technical-level negotiations in June, provides plenty of material for those with a vested interest to portray the Paris Agreement as failing. Such a narrative is false, and COP30 must counter it. The truth: Multilateralism in general, and the Paris Agreement in particular, are under threat. If COP21 in 2015 gave birth to the Paris Agreement, COP29 last year adopted the last of the guidance needed for it to finally start walking properly. COP30 can and must set it on a path to run and catch up with achieving its goals.
6. The unified message from various ministerial-level meetings this year has been clear: COP30 needs to both show progress toward achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and show that multilateralism remains the best way to address humanity's common challenges. Doing so requires demonstrating the positive benefits of international cooperation on climate action to the lives, concerns, and priorities of people around the world. Such a message would fall on fertile ground. Polls suggest that globally some 80 percent of people want their leaders to take stronger action to address climate change.³
7. The greatest achievement of COP30 would be to clearly demonstrate that the Paris Agreement is alive, well, and relevant. In that context, a successful COP30 requires the following:
 - **Delivering against its mandates**, such as on the indicators for the global goal on adaptation (*GGA*), the just transition work programme, and the UAE Dialogue. While agreement on these is unlikely to make the front page of newspapers, confrontation that leads to failing to agree on them will. Countries need to show that they can cooperatively deliver on the day-to-day technical work required to implement the Paris Agreement. To paraphrase a senior developing country representative at a recent meeting, negotiators need to see the wider picture and keep their eyes on the prize of safeguarding the Paris Agreement. COP30 is not the moment to adopt entrenched technical positions. At a moment when multilateralism is under unprecedented attack, nothing would be a worse signal from COP30 than introspective procedural delays or a big confrontation in the final plenary. Clear political instructions to negotiators will be critical.
 - **All countries that have not yet done so, led by the G20, urgently coming forward with new and more ambitious NDCs**, in line with what the science says is required to stay within the 1.5-degree-C limit of the Paris Agreement.
 - **Delivering a robust response, through a consensus outcome, to the gap on collective ambition and implementation of NDCs**. This must include a clear commitment by Parties to continue to close the gap, in accordance with the provisions of the Paris Agreement and the mechanisms and procedures established under it. The temptation to explicitly or implicitly seek to renegotiate or accelerate the ambition cycle of Paris Agreement through the COP30 outcome will at best fail—as all attempts to date have—and at worst will be counterproductive by forcing some countries into a defensive posture. COP30 must set a solid foundation for the second GST, starting a year later at COP31. As part of that, COP30 must reach agreement on whether and how to refine the GST process and operationalize a dialogue on implementing the GST outcomes (the *UAE Dialogue*).
 - **Acknowledging and celebrating all that has been achieved to date under the Paris Agreement**. At a time when the relevance of international efforts to tackle climate change are being increasingly questioned, COP30 outcomes that highlight only what more needs to be done—and by implication what we have failed to do so far—would be counterproductive. No political campaign would take such an approach. In the context of the ten-year anniversary of the Paris Agreement, progress and success must be acknowledged and celebrated. And there is a lot to celebrate,⁴ including projections for global temperature increase by the end of the century

declining from 3.7 – 4.8 degrees Celsius to 2.3 – 2.5 degrees C.⁵ The necessity to limit global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees C and aim for net-zero global emissions by 2050 has become globally normalized as the guiding star, and countries have completed the first five-year ambition cycle of the Paris Agreement. Countries have also: established the loss & damage fund and put money into it; fully operationalized the international carbon market mechanisms; agreed to a new collective quantified goal on climate finance; and submitted their first biennial transparency reports, to name a few.

- **Centering the importance of action on adaptation**, given increasingly frequent and severe climate impacts around the world. COP30 has several adaptation mandates it must deliver on that will define the future of the adaptation agenda, including on GGA indicators and the modalities of the Baku Adaptation Roadmap. Finalizing the indicators will be a critical milestone, essential to effectively include adaptation in the second GST. Belém must also set the scene for post-COP30 action to address gaps in means of implementation, data availability, and capacity for developing countries. A strong signal on adaptation would be boosted by developing countries submitting their national adaptation plans ahead of COP30.
- **Sending a strong signal of progress on climate finance**. With the new collective quantified goal on climate finance agreed at COP29, this year the main finance deliverable is the Baku to Belém Roadmap to 1.3T, which was announced by the COP Presidencies ahead of COP30.⁶ This charts a path forward to deliver at least U.S. \$1.3 trillion by outlining: five action fronts to strengthen supply, make demand more strategic, and accelerate access and transparency; key thematic action fronts of the 2035 sustainable development pathways; and short-term deliverables to guide immediate implementation and inform follow-up.⁷ Equally important will be for COP30 to send a clear signal on adaptation finance, with many developing countries calling for a new goal in light of the expiry of the doubling goal agreed at COP26. COP30 is also set to take a decision on whether the Sharm el-Sheikh Dialogue should continue and how discussions would be taken forward after 2025. COP30 needs to take a step toward operationalizing the Paris Agreement's long-term goal of making finance flows consistent with a pathway toward low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development.
- **Embracing and implementing the COP30 Presidency vision of aligning the action agenda with the outcomes of the global stocktake**. This potentially transformational innovation is a clear response from the Presidency to increasing calls for a focus on implementation through enhanced cooperation (as mandated by the GST). It must form a recognized part of the overall 'response' of COP30 to the ambition and implementation gap. The impacts of the six organizing themes ('axes') should be aggregated and announced on the last day of the COP to send a clear message of progress. This is not to shift responsibility for action away from governments, but rather to increase the political space for more ambition by generating momentum through real world action. The action agenda remains an under-utilized but vital tool to demonstrate the value of the international process to addressing the concerns and priorities of people around the world. The COP30 Presidency vision goes a long way to addressing this. COP30 could usefully stabilize the approach across successive COP Presidencies, including through the five-year plan of the Climate High Level Champions, while allowing for prioritization of certain aspects as the circumstances demand. In a context where the Paris Agreement is now fully operational, demonstrating implementation including through the action agenda must take center stage.
- **Elevating the profile of, and engagement with, the facilitative multilateral consideration of progress (FMCP)** which is a key element of the Paris Agreement's enhanced transparency framework. The FMCP is a showcase of a Party's progress toward achieving its NDC. By centering implementation, the FMCP can highlight existing examples and opportunities for enhanced international cooperation and has the potential to accelerate climate action.

¹ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [hereinafter UNFCCC], *Nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement: Synthesis report by the Secretariat*, FCCC/PA/CMA/2025/8 (October 28, 2025), http://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2025_08.pdf.

² United Nations Environment Programme [hereinafter UNEP], *Emissions Gap Report 2025* (Nairobi, Kenya: UNEP, November 2025), <https://www.unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2025>.

³ United Nations Development Programme, *The Peoples Climate Vote 2024* (2024), <https://peoplesclimate.vote/>.

⁴ Center for Climate and Energy Solutions [hereinafter C2ES], *10 Years of the Paris Agreement: Progress Toward Achieving its Goals* (Washington, DC: C2ES, November 2025), <https://www.c2es.org/document/10-years-of-the-paris-agreement-progress-toward-achieving-key-goals/>.

⁵ UNEP, *Emissions Gap Report 2025*.

⁶ UNFCCC, *Report on the Baku to Belém Roadmap to 1.3T*, (November 5, 2025), <https://unfccc.int/documents/650953>.

⁷ UNFCCC, *Report on the Baku to Belém Roadmap to 1.3T*, 9.