

COP30 Delivers an Awaited Step for Climate Justice But A Weak Overall Outcome

Belém, 22 November 2025 - Ten years after the Paris Agreement, we, European youth-led organisations, note with great concern the **weak overall outcome of COP30**. While this COP acknowledged the climate crisis and strengthened language on just transition and human rights, it did not accelerate a science-backed transition to a post-fossil-fuel era. This comes despite the International Court of Justice (ICJ) Advisory Opinion reaffirming states responsibility under international law to show the highest possible ambition in curtailing global warming to 1.5°C.

COP30 did deliver a major achievement and legacy for climate justice: the decision to develop a global just transition mechanism, called by civil society **BAM - Belém Action Mechanism**. This mechanism serves to establish a long-term, coordinated, cohesive and transparent framework for global cooperation on just transition, something long overdue and critically needed, especially for young workers and marginalized communities. **“For young people facing rising living costs, energy poverty and increasingly precarious employment, this mechanism provides the first concrete tool within the UNFCCC capable of ensuring decent work, sustainable jobs and fair pathways putting people at the center of climate action,”** said Stephanny Ulivieri, Secretary General of Youth and Environment Europe. **“Its operational text includes the strongest human-rights-based and inclusive language ever adopted in a COP outcome, stronger even than Paris, referencing labour rights, human rights, intergenerational equity, the rights of Indigenous Peoples, gender equality, people of African descent, migrants, children and persons with disabilities.”**

Despite this, the rest of the text package called “Global Mutirão”, lacked progress in other negotiation tracks. There can be no transition without **a time-bound phase-out of fossil fuels and other climate harmful subsidies**. We celebrate Colombia’s leadership in building a coalition, including nine European countries, for a clear, just and equitable science-based global roadmap for a fossil fuel-free future. However, none of this ambition reached the final decision text. **“COP30 proved that multilateralism is alive and that a rights-based just transition is taking shape. Ambition is still falling short. Yes, countries reached an agreement and recognised the climate emergency, but without naming and addressing the root cause of this crisis, fossil fuels, it is nowhere near enough,”** said Fidelis Stehle (FIMCAP). **“We urgently need a clear, fast and fair roadmap to phase out fossil fuels, centred on justice. That must be delivered in Antalya at COP31. An accelerator only offers process, not substance.”**

This reflects a wider systemic problem. COP30 hosted around 1,600 fossil fuel lobbyists, including individuals inside European country delegations such as Sweden, France, Italy and Denmark, that currently holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Their presence skewed outcomes away from science and justice, blocking ambition at every step. **“The Global Mutirão text rightfully names intergenerational equity and acknowledges youth, present and future generations - but words without action will not keep a 1.5°C future alive. This text gives recognition, but no commitments. It mentions public finance, but does not deliver it. And most strikingly, it avoids the one fundamental decision that**

science, justice and young people across the world are calling for: a full and fair phase-out of fossil fuels,” said Caillum Hedderman (European Youth Forum). This is not a step forward. He continued; **“At a moment that demanded courage, this outcome largely recycles past language instead of raising ambition. Young people came to Belém for implementation, not repetition. If Parties truly care about future generations, they must match the rhetoric with real commitments - starting with the delivery of public and grant-based finance, equity and a clear transition away from fossil fuels.”** It is a deeply disappointing outcome on the central driver of the climate crisis. **“The solution to the climate crisis is not solely technical, it is a question of political will. While we may leave COP today, young people and youth organisations will continue to place the magnifying glass on the actions of our governments domestically and across Europe”**, concluded Caillum.

There can be no implementation **without sufficient public grant-based climate finance**. While BAM’s finance language rightly points toward additional, grant-based and concessional finance and acknowledges the increasing debt burden faced by many countries, COP30’s broader outcome on finance remains weak. **“The reference to tripling adaptation finance falls dramatically short of real needs as it does not include obligations for developed countries, no baseline, and delivery is delayed to 2035,”** said Erica Martinelli, COP30 Co-coordinator at Generation Climate Europe (GCE). **“Europe must scale up more and better-quality adaptation finance, end all EU-backed international public finance and government subsidies for fossil fuels, and introduce polluter-pays instruments, such as a fossil fuel production levy, a frequent flyer levy, and a European net wealth tax, to ensure that major emitters and high-income groups contribute fairly to climate action.”**

The negotiation process struggled to uphold transparency. Throughout, it was civil society, Indigenous Peoples, youth, and social movements who held the process together. Their mobilisation kept ambition alive when negotiators faltered. **Yet the final decision fails to align with the ICJ Advisory Opinion, which reaffirms that states have a responsibility under international law to exercise stringent due diligence and the highest possible ambition in limiting global warming to 1.5°C. Critically, it leaves a glaring gap on fossil fuels despite clear obligations under international human rights law for states to transition away from them, with developed countries, which have contributed the most to the climate crisis, required to move first and shoulder the greatest responsibility.**

COP30 has proved that multilateralism is still alive and can deliver important progress as in the case of just transition. However, an agreement without ambitious implementation of fossil fuel phase out and increased public finance for adaptation, and without accountability, aligned with ICJ Advisory Opinion, is insufficient in the face of the climate emergency. We must build on the momentum from Belém and ensure that COP31 delivers what youth, science and justice demand: a rapid, fair and comprehensive phase-out of fossil fuels, grounded in justice and backed by real and grants based finance.

Our generation will not stop until words become action, and action becomes justice.

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