

Jesuits for Climate Justice Campaign 2026

Turning Hope into Action

Ten years after the Paris Agreement set the main goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 °C, we look back on 2025 as a year that revealed the fragile state of our shared planet. Recent data confirm that 2025 was the third-warmest year on record, following the unprecedented heat of 2023 and 2024. This three-year period marked the first time in history that global temperatures averaged more than 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, underscoring that the Paris Agreement's threshold was consistently surpassed. We are facing increasingly severe impacts, especially for low- and middle-income communities in both developing and developed countries. The urgency of the climate crisis cannot be overstated.

At the 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to be held in Turkey in November 2026, we, Jesuits and partners, are called to promote and defend socio-environmental justice for the benefit of all humanity, especially for the most vulnerable communities and nations. Consequently, in response to the mechanisms currently in place under the UNFCCC, we urge the delegates at COP31 and the governments that are parties to the convention:

- **Establishing a clear path for a just energy transition that ensures no one is left behind, guided by the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.** This involves acknowledging historical responsibilities, respecting human rights, valuing and protecting nature, and prioritizing sustainable livelihoods over profit-driven development models.
- **Increasing funding for countries with higher scores on the Environmental Vulnerability component of the UN Multidimensional Vulnerability Index,** ensuring adequate, primarily grant-based support to address the serious impacts of climate change, while avoiding additional debt burdens for low- and middle-income countries.
- **Setting clear goals to build global food systems focused on food sovereignty and agroecological practices,** encouraging culturally adapted methods for production, processing, distribution, and consumption.

The COP process is crucial to achieving international progress on the climate crisis. Pope Francis stated that this *"is a matter of establishing global and effective rules that can permit 'providing for' this global safeguarding"* ([Laudate Deum n42](#)). Pope Leo XIV emphasizes: *"We must shift from collecting data to caring; and from environmental discourse to an ecological conversion that transforms both personal and communal lifestyles"* (["Raising Hope for Climate Justice" conference, LSM, 1 October 2025](#)).

Let us heed these calls and work together to create a world where everyone can have life and enjoy it to the fullest. (John 10:10)

Policy Brief

2026

Introduction

Ten years after the Paris Agreement, whose primary objective is to limit global warming to 1.5°C, we find ourselves in a precarious position on climate change, as global warming is projected to reach 2.7°C by 2100, and a new wave of apathy is emerging among world leaders on climate matters. Following Pope Francis' analysis in his landmark encyclical '[Laudato Si'](#)', we face "*one complex crisis that is both social and environmental*" (n. 139).

We, Jesuits and collaborators, are called to advocate for Climate Justice, especially for the most vulnerable communities in the Global South, at the critical 31st Conference of the Parties ([COP31](#)) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to be held in Türkiye, November 2026.

Accordingly, in response to the ongoing mechanisms within the UNFCCC, we urge delegates to COP31 and governments to:

- **Establishing a clear path for a just energy transition that ensures no one is left behind, guided by the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.** This involves acknowledging historical responsibilities, respecting human rights, valuing and protecting nature, and prioritizing sustainable livelihoods over profit-driven development models.
- **Increasing funding for countries with higher scores on the Environmental Vulnerability component of the UN Multidimensional Vulnerability Index,** ensuring adequate, primarily grant-based support to address the serious impacts of climate change, while avoiding additional debt burdens for low- and middle-income countries.
- **Setting clear goals to build global food systems focused on food sovereignty and agroecological practices,** encouraging culturally adapted methods for production, processing, distribution, and food consumption.

This Policy Brief outlines the key objectives and policy issues underpinning our calls for action at COP31. It explains each call, providing context on UNFCCC procedures and recommended reading.

The UNFCCC and COP meetings

The Conference of the Parties, or COP, is the primary decision-making body for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). [These annual gatherings began in 1995](#) and convene nations from around the world to review, negotiate, and advance international climate legislation and initiatives. The process is essential for making international progress on the climate crisis, as it allows countries to build upon previous frameworks, such as the legally binding [Paris Agreement of 2015](#), and to strengthen their national climate plans, known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC).

The [30th session of this conference, COP30](#), took place in November 2025 in Belém do

Pará, Brazil. Holding the summit in Belém was particularly significant, as it placed Amazon issues at the center of global discussions and highlighted the urgent need to protect vital ecosystems and the indigenous communities that depend on them. The COP30 presidency conceived that event as a global “[mutirão](#)”: an age-old practice of collective work (“minga” in Spanish), with the dual objective of expanding and consolidating the participation of social groups that have not yet been included in the processes, and of reinforcing shared responsibilities in implementing the Paris Agreement.

COP31 is a crucial opportunity to consolidate that participation, not only to share perspectives and analyses but also to advocate for more decisive climate action, ensuring that everyone’s voice is heard and that governments fulfill their commitments under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.

FIRST CALL

Establishing a clear path for a just energy transition that ensures no one is left behind, guided by the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. This involves acknowledging historical responsibilities, respecting human rights, valuing and protecting nature, and prioritizing sustainable livelihoods over profit-driven development models.

At COP31, we advocate for a clear path to phasing out fossil fuels and for the immediate removal of subsidies that undermine the viability of renewable energy. This transition must be just, balancing decarbonization with the protection of human rights, especially for workers in extractive and energy industries, forced migrants and displaced communities, peasants, and indigenous communities whose lands hold more than half of the mineral resources needed for clean energy. We demand clear, time-bound targets to phase out coal, oil, and gas, with developed countries expected to lead the way by 2040.

Outcomes and Discussions at COP30

The outcomes of COP30 in Belém were deeply contradictory, representing both a victory for social inclusion and a defeat for the transition itself. The summit established the [Belém Action Mechanism \(BAM\)](#), the conference’s headline win, which introduces the strongest rights-based language yet seen in a UN process. This mechanism marks a qualitative leap by weaving human rights, labor rights, gender equality, and Indigenous knowledge into a single framework. It explicitly recognizes the rights of vulnerable groups, including Afro-descendants, women, children, migrants, and internally displaced persons, while ensuring that transition efforts do not exacerbate the sovereign debt of Global South nations. Furthermore, the BAM links the energy transition directly to poverty eradication and decent work, marking a significant step toward treating social justice as inseparable from climate action.

However, the summit failed to agree on a roadmap to phase out fossil fuels, a major blow to climate ambition. Progress toward defining and implementing a roadmap was systematically blocked by fossil-fuel-producing nations, such as Saudi Arabia and Russia, while the host nation, Brazil, faced internal divisions over the economic role of petro-states. The final ‘mutirão’ text merely repeated the language of the [Dubai UAE](#)

[Consensus](#), without specifying reduction trajectories or deadlines.

In response to this failure, a new coalition against fossil fuels, led by Colombia and the Netherlands, has already announced plans to push for a global [Conference to phase out fossil fuels](#) (Santa Marta, Colombia, April 2026). This will be the first conference focused on implementation, aimed at supporting practical measures by those who are already ready to move forward. Its goal is not a negotiated outcome, but rather to build a common understanding and guide practices that accelerate a just, orderly, and equitable transition away from fossil fuels.

Strategic Questions

- Rights-based Accountability: How can the Belém Action Mechanism (BAM) be used to hold nations accountable for inclusive, rights-based national transition pathways?
- Overcoming Resistance: What strategies will be used to overcome resistance from fossil-fuel-producing nations and secure a binding phase-out roadmap?
- External Alliances: How can the new coalition led by Colombia and the Netherlands be leveraged to build a "coalition of the willing" outside the formal UNFCCC's inertia?

SECOND CALL

Increasing funding for countries with higher scores on the Environmental Vulnerability component of the UN Multidimensional Vulnerability Index, ensuring adequate, primarily grant-based support to address the serious impacts of climate change, while avoiding additional debt burdens for low- and middle-income countries.

We call for increased funding through various UNFCCC financial mechanisms (particularly the [FRLD](#)) to ensure that countries with high levels of environmental vulnerability, as measured by the [UN's Multidimensional Vulnerability Index](#), can effectively address the impacts of the climate crisis. This request is rooted in the harsh reality of both economic losses and profound non-economic impacts, including the erasure of cultural heritage, displacement, and declines in human well-being. We insist that funds [prioritize non-debt-creating instruments](#), such as grants, to avoid further penalizing low- and middle-income countries.

Countries burdened by high external debt and limited resources often must take on more debt to cope with the impacts of climate-related events. [More than 3.3 billion people](#) live in countries where governments spend more on debt payments than on essential services such as health care and education. The debt crisis and related austerity measures hit women and girls, indigenous communities, minority groups, and most populations in low- and middle-income countries the hardest. Countries struggling with debt should not be forced to choose between paying unsustainable debts and investing in vital areas such as education, health, or climate initiatives. The goal is to establish a UN framework that recognizes the indisputable link between climate vulnerability and sovereign debt, ensuring that financial aid does not worsen existing burdens.

For the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage ([FRLD](#)) to be effective, it must be integrated into the New Collective Quantified Goal ([NCQG](#)) for Climate Finance. We advocate that the fund reflect the genuine needs of frontline communities and ensure that redress for "ecological debt" remains a central pillar of the global climate architecture.

Outcomes and Discussions at COP30

The primary achievement in Belém was the official launch of the [Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage \(FRLD\)](#), which issued its first [\\$250 million](#) call for proposals under the ["Barbados Implementation Modalities."](#) While this marked a significant institutional milestone, formally acknowledging the principle of redress, the funding remained a fraction of the hundreds of billions needed annually. The summit, however, succeeded in [stabilizing the loss and damage architecture](#) around three pillars: the Warsaw International Mechanism ([WIM](#)), the [Santiago Network](#), and the FRLD.

Despite these advances, critical questions about long-term resource mobilization remained largely unresolved. Although Spain pledged an additional EUR 20 million, by the close of the summit, the total pledges amounted to only about [\\$822.06 million](#). Furthermore, while the 'mutirão' decision linked loss and damage support to the broader goal of tripling climate finance by 2030, the [absence of a binding, large-scale replenishment strategy](#) left many frontline communities skeptical.

Strategic Questions

- **Scaling Mechanisms:** What specific mechanisms will be established to scale the FRLD to meet the actual financial needs of frontline communities?
- **Governance and Access:** How will the fund's governance structure ensure that the most vulnerable regions have direct, transparent access to resources?
- **Operational Integrity:** What measures will prevent the FRLD from becoming an "empty purse" if the necessary resources fail to materialize?

THIRD CALL

Setting clear goals to build global food systems focused on food sovereignty and agroecological practices, encouraging culturally adapted methods for production, processing, distribution, and food consumption.

We call for transforming global food systems, grounded in food sovereignty and agroecology, to build healthy, climate-resilient systems that respect human rights and indigenous seeds. Food systems account for approximately one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions, and the nutrition of half the global population is at risk from climate shocks. We urge the mainstreaming of these principles into national climate plans to support small farmers, who feed most of the world's people.

Outcomes and Discussions at COP30

The results for food systems in Belém were contradictory, with some observers describing a literal 'erasure' of the food sector from high-level negotiations. While the

"global mutirão" (collective effort) was the summit's central theme, the word "food" did not appear once in the final high-level decision text, even though 160 countries had previously signed a [declaration on sustainable agriculture](#). Furthermore, formal negotiations under the Sharm El-Sheik Joint Work ([SJWA](#)) ended abruptly without a substantive outcome, [and further discussions were postponed until June 2026](#).

Significant progress was made through parallel initiatives and national commitments. A total of 122 countries included the [Food Systems and Climate Framework for Public Policies](#), adopted at the end of COP38 in their [updated Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\)](#). Brazil furthered this momentum by launching the [Resilient Agriculture Investment for Net-zero land degradation \(RAIZ\)](#), an initiative aimed at mobilizing billions to restore degraded farmland. Despite these initiatives, a massive systemic gap remains; while over \$900 billion is needed annually to overhaul food systems, [the food and agricultural sector currently receives less than 3% of public climate finance](#).

Strategic Questions

- Policy Integration: How can the new Food Systems and Climate Framework be translated into binding commitments in the next round of NDCs?
- Financial Gaps: What specific financial mechanisms will be established to bridge the \$900 billion funding gap for food system transformation?
- Inclusive Participation: How will the active participation of small farmers, displaced communities (including refugee- and migrant-led organizations), and indigenous peoples be ensured in future agricultural policy negotiations?

Further Reading

Agroecology and Food Systems (academic journal)

[Food systems and COP 30: backsliding and bright spots in Belém](#)

Carbon Brief

[COP30: Key outcomes for food, forests, land and nature at the UN climate talks in Belém](#)

Climate Change News

[How Belém launched the Just Transition mechanism](#)

Concern Worldwide

[COP30 Outcomes: Wins, Gaps, and the Road Ahead](#)

Eurodad

[COP30: A win for Just Transition, a loss for climate ambition](#)

European Commission

[What did COP30 achieve?](#)

World Resources Institute (WRI)

[Beyond the Headlines: COP30's Outcomes and Disappointments](#)

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