

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, indicating that the world has likely entered a period in which the Paris Agreement [threshold is consistently being exceeded](#). The urgency of the [climate crisis](#) cannot be overstated. We are facing increasingly severe impacts, especially affecting low- and middle-income communities in both developing and developed countries.

At the 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to be held in Türkiye in November 2026, we, Jesuits and partners, are called to promote and defend socio-environmental justice for the benefit of all Creation, 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 to:

- **Establish 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.
- **Increase funding for countries with higher environmental and socioeconomic vulnerability,** 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.
- **Set 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 Conference of the Parties (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 n°42](#)). 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"* ([address to the participants in the "Raising Hope" 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, with its primary objective of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, we find ourselves in a precarious position regarding climate change. Global warming is now projected to reach [2.3-2.5°C with full NDC implementation and 2.8°C under current policies](#); meanwhile, a wave of apathy is emerging among world leaders on climate matters. Furthermore, the wars ravaging various parts of the world have revealed, among other things, the world's still enormous dependence on fossil fuels. As clearly articulated by Pope Francis 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, at the critical 31st Conference of the Parties ([COP31](#)) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)), to be held in Türkiye in November 2026.

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

- **Establish 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.
- **Increase funding for countries with higher environmental and socioeconomic vulnerability,** 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.
- **Set 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: it allows countries to build on previous frameworks, such as the legally binding [Paris Agreement of 2015](#), and it strengthens their national climate plans, known as Nationally Determined

Contributions (NDCs).

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 the event as a global “[mutirão](#)”: an age-old practice of collective work, 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

Establish 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, Colombia and the Netherlands organized the first Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels from 24 to 29 April 2026. The conference, hosted in Santa Marta (Colombia), convened 57 countries and more than 1000 stakeholders to advance global commitments made under the Paris Agreement. Based on the input from all participants before and during the conference, they developed a [‘Santa Marta Vision’ for Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels](#). It contains ten key points, among which we highlight: transitioning away from Fossil Fuels is one of the defining priorities of our time (a), favorable conditions exist, but accelerated progress requires stronger governance and action across multiple policy domains (b); It is not simply about substituting one energy source for another (c); success in this challenge requires action both within and beyond the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), among other efforts (d). Tuvalu and Ireland have committed to organizing the Second Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels in 2027.

SECOND CALL

Increase funding for countries with higher environmental and socioeconomic vulnerability, 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, predictable, and accessible funding through the UNFCCC financial mechanisms to ensure that countries facing high levels of environmental and social vulnerability can effectively respond to the impacts of the climate crisis. The persistent adaptation finance gap must be urgently addressed, in line with the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance ([NCQG](#)) and the COP30 call to scale up adaptation finance, including efforts to triple it by 2035. The Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage ([FRLD](#)) should also be significantly strengthened and regularly replenished, so that it can respond to both economic and non-economic losses and damages in countries particularly vulnerable to climate change. This request is rooted in the harsh reality of economic losses and profound non-economic impacts, including the erosion of cultural heritage, displacement, loss of livelihoods, and an overall decline in human well-being. We insist that climate finance [prioritize grant-based and other non-debt-creating instruments](#), especially for vulnerable low- and middle-income countries, to avoid exacerbating existing debt burdens.

Countries burdened by high external debt and limited resources often must take on additional 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 particularly burden women and girls, indigenous communities, minority groups, and most populations in low- and middle-income countries. 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 FRLD to be effective, it must be integrated into the 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 [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 mere fraction of the hundreds of billions needed annually. The summit did, however, succeed in [stabilizing the loss and damage architecture](#) around three pillars: the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM), the Santiago Network, and the FRLD. The second achievement was [the TFFF](#), an initiative that encouraged the conservation and expansion of tropical forests through annual payments to countries that keep their forests standing.

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.

THIRD CALL

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

Transforming food systems is essential for climate action because it can deliver both mitigation and adaptation benefits: it helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions from land-use change, deforestation, unsustainable farming, food loss and waste; and it increases carbon storage through agroecology, agroforestry, soil restoration, and ecosystem protection. At the same time, more diverse, resilient, and locally adapted food systems strengthen communities' capacity to face droughts, floods, rising temperatures, and changing rainfall patterns, protecting livelihoods and food security—especially for smallholder farmers, Indigenous Peoples, women, pastoralists, fishers, and vulnerable communities. For this reason, food system transformation should be treated as a central pillar of just climate action, linking emission reduction, resilience, biodiversity protection, and the right to food.

We call for the transformation of 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-Sheikh Joint Work ([SJWA](#)) ended abruptly without a substantive outcome.

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 COP28, 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](#).

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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