

UNFCCC COP30, BELEM



If there is one emoji that symbolised COP30 in Belém, Brazil, it has to be the melting face. Heat was a constant for the 50,000 or so delegates in the capital of the Amazon region. Hundreds of electric fans were quickly brought in to try and cool participants. Rooms with decent air conditioning were identified as refuges from the heat. The ice cream stand fast became a favourite with a 40-minute wait for a scoop or two.

The scale of the venue didn't help. From the entrance security check to the plenary rooms was a straight run of 1.6km. The daily tropical rain showers brought flooding and power outages. This was a climate conference in a visceral climate. And to add to the drama, a group of local community members staged a siege of the security area on day two and the venue was evacuated. On day five a peaceful indigenous group protest blocked the main entrance for several hours. And on day 10 a significant fire broke out in one of the pavilions, causing the entire site to be evacuated and many hours of delays to be added to an already delayed agenda.



Fans and air conditioning were highly sought after across the venue



The venue also flooded a few times...



Amazonian airbridge welcome

But the work went on, lead by COP President the seasoned Brazilian diplomat Ambassador André Corrêa do Lago. During the first week, negotiators dealt with five subsidiary bodies meeting in parallel and covering 145 agenda items.

Unusually for a COP, there was no agenda fight on the first day. Perhaps because the four most contentious items were removed from the official negotiations by the COP Presidency which instead convened open-ended and informal discussions on each of them in a process known as the “global mutirão” (collective community work and an open exchange of ideas). These items included:

1. implementation of Paris Agreement Article 9.1 (developed countries' **finance** obligations);
2. discussions on **trade-restrictive unilateral measures** (which in the past had an interest for aviation as it referred to the EU ETS being extended to international flights. Now, it is mainly related to the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism);

3. responding to the synthesis report on NDCs and **addressing the 1.5°C ambition** and implementation gap (how does the world coordinate to bring the current likely temperature rise of 2.6°C down to the needed goal?); and
4. synthesis of biennial **transparency** reports (opening progress to scrutiny by others).

These items all produced passionate discussions and it was a high-risk strategy removing them from the official agenda before bringing them back into a cover decision which was initially presented to Parties on the Wednesday, then watered down and presented again on Friday before nearly 36 hours of backroom negotiations and coming to the Plenary for adoption after midday on the Saturday.

Outcome

As for the results of the official COP30 negotiations, aside from adopting a new ambition on adaptation financing and a mechanism on just transition, the most that can be said is that the outcomes were at least consistent with the Paris Agreement's objectives. No major advances, but no backsliding either. The outcomes will definitely not solve the climate crisis, but then most of the real progress is taking place outside the formal negotiations which can become mired in geopolitics. When the Paris Agreement was adopted in 2015, the world was on track to a likely 3.6°C of warming. Ten years later that projection is now 2.6°C. Not enough to meet the Paris Agreement goals, but an indication that the pressure of these processes can have an effect.

There was significant dissatisfaction by States with the outcome and with the process. But following the adoption of the Belém Package, the COP President also announced two additional items he would lead over the next year (the Brazilian Presidency runs until COP31 begins):

- A roadmap for the transition away from fossil fuels (see more below).
- A roadmap for halting and reversing deforestation.

- » *The Belém Political Package:*
<https://ataglink.org/44m5FY3>
- » *Summary of COP30 outcomes from The Guardian:* <https://ataglink.org/49wtWhL>

Roadmap on the transition away from fossil fuels

It is ironic that for 27 years of COP meetings, there was almost no mention of fossil fuels in the official decision text from the climate talks. At COP28 in Dubai, for the first time (and after much passionate disagreement from a small number of energy-rich States), the phrase “transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner” was included.

COP29 did not touch this sensitive issue and COP30 was not expected to either, but in a surprise addition to his COP30 opening speech, President Lula said the world needed to “overcome its dependence on fossil fuels”. This was the signal needed for a series of back-room discussions by Parties and growing calls for a COP30 outcome to deliver a global plan for the transition away from fossil fuels.

The second Monday saw a hastily convened press conference of Ministers with more than 80 countries urging that roadmap to be a central outcome of the Belém talks. The Arab Group and other States such as Russia refused to budge and fossil fuels once again failed to be explicitly mentioned in the COP outcomes.

In its absence, a group of countries are planning to launch what could become a parallel process. Led by Colombia and co-hosted by the Netherlands, the first International Conference on the Transition Away from Fossil Fuels is planned for Santa Marta, Colombia, on 28-29 April 2026. Its announcement was supported by Australia, Austria, Belgium, Cambodia, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, Ireland, Jamaica, Kenya, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia, Nepal, Panama, Spain, Slovenia, Vanuatu and Tuvalu.

Brazil holds the Presidency until the next COP and has promised to help drive the roadmap discussions alongside Colombia and the Netherlands.

Bunkers (international aviation and shipping)

Aviation's only official part of the climate negotiations – the international transport item in the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) – was, as always in recent years, dealt with smoothly.

At the SBSTA opening plenary, the SBSTA Chair tried to get the agenda item closed without discussion, simply using a procedural conclusion. China objected and asked for a session to be held. That discussion took 50 minutes and aside from reports provided by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and International Maritime Organisation (IMO), there were just a small number of interventions. On aviation, China asked the only questions which, compared with previous COPs, were constructive and positive about the ICAO process. All other interventions (from Paraguay, the Arab Group, Saudi Arabia, European Union and Australia) focused on the troubled IMO talks in October.

Once those short interventions took place, the group chair proposed a procedural conclusion calling for updates at the next session. All States agreed and the meeting closed. That procedural conclusion was adopted by the SBSTA closing plenary on Saturday.

The SBSTA conclusion for international transport reads:

“The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) continued consideration of this agenda item. The SBSTA agreed to continue consideration of this matter at SBSTA 64 (June 2026).”

» The ICAO report to SBSTA at COP30 is available here: <https://ataglink.org/4r3v4Qh>

» ICAO web page on COP30 activities: <https://ataglink.org/4oPflgM>

Article 6

On the carbon markets side, Article 6 discussions continue on technical elements and some operational challenges. There are concerns from some in the carbon markets that the very strict guidance given by the supervisory body of the Paris Agreement Crediting Mechanism (PACM) has constrained the mechanism's use significantly. In lieu of providing more prescriptive guidance, however, Parties have seemingly opted to encourage the body to consider the need for developing country participation and benefits. There have also been issues with the supervisory body itself, with some current members trying to usurp the term limits and stay in place. Parties are reluctant to revisit term limits until the 2028 review of the mechanism.



Regarding the contentious issue of when to close-out the Kyoto Protocol-era Clean Development Mechanism (and what to do with the nearly \$27m remaining in the CDM Trust Fund), Parties decided to hold over any decision until the next negotiating session in June 2026. It also grants CDM projects an extension for some transition procedures until that same date.

The IATA team on the ground in Belém made sure that there was attention paid to the question of availability of CORSIA Emissions Units and the need for States to publish letters of authorisation to release more units into the markets. IATA held a side event with IETA on the subject, as well as engaged in bilaterals with promising host countries. The good news for CORSIA is that more States are starting to realise the importance of this, including as more projects are being approved by the ICAO Council to supply eligible compliance credits for CORSIA.

The team also followed negotiations related to Article 6.2 implementation, flagging for countries any proposed decisions that could prevent or delay authorisations of CORSIA-eligible units. One draft decision on these aspects included a proposal that could potentially stall CORSIA eligibility for credits from some currently-eligible emissions unit programmes. Negotiators were made aware of the issue but cautioned that this version of text may be presented on a take-it-or-leave-it basis to discourage further revision. Discussions will continue in June 2026.



The temporary COP30 site was an impressive 'home' for delegates for two weeks.

Finance

Finance was another significant area of the negotiations. At COP29 in Baku last year, the world's governments agreed on a new target for climate finance: \$1.3 trillion a year by 2035 to fund climate mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage, predominantly in the developing world. Around \$300 billion will come from public sources (direct contributions from mainly the developed economies). The rest would be a mix of private investment in green projects, multilateral development banks and so-called 'innovative sources' such as taxes on billionaires, oil and gas company profits, financial transactions, the shipping sector and aviation.

Identifying and unlocking this financial flow has been a core part of the work of the Presidencies of COP29 and COP30 and the Baku to Belém Roadmap was launched ahead of COP30 trying to identify where that \$1.3 trillion could be mobilised. The report itself does not actually focus much on innovative sources, with the more pressing issue being how the public money can be used as a catalyst for unlocking private capital. However, developing nations point out that grants are always preferable to loans or debt-based finance options.

- » *Baku to Belém Roadmap:* <https://ataglink.org/3MaRkYc>
- » *Circle of Finance Ministers report:* <https://ataglink.org/3X58Qj8>
- » *Independent High Level Expert Group (IHLEG) report:* <https://ataglink.org/43DnSQM>

Global Solidarity Levies Task Force / aviation levy

Despite a number of headlines outside the COP, the GSLTF inputs are not part of the official COP negotiations, but a sideline that happens to take place alongside the UNFCCC process as input to the finance discussions on how to provide additional resources towards that \$1.3 trillion total. The GSLTF gave a briefing on the middle Saturday providing an update on their activities and encouraging more States to join their coalition.

After two years of work, the only real proposal (with surprisingly few details) has been the Premium Flyers Coalition which launched in June 2025 with a group of eight countries proposing a levy on business class, first class and private jet passengers. Based on the latest advice, that coalition seems to have lost two of the original members (Barbados and Antigua & Barbuda) but gained three others. The full list now includes: Benin, Djibouti, France, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, and Spain. Notably, five of the nine members are least developed countries.

Early details of a cryptocurrency levy and a financial transactions tax were brought up in passing – the real focus seems to be bringing more States on board the Premium Flyers Coalition. There were comments about a tax on fossil fuel profits, but that was discounted as being too politically challenging. The briefing session was the venue for the launch of a new report, *The Untapped Potential of Solidarity Levies* which outlines the possible future of GSLTF work post-COP30 and provides recommendations on the future agenda for solidarity levies on topics including fossil fuels, financial transactions, aviation, shipping, and cryptocurrencies.

The GSLTF has spent a lot of time over the past few months lobbying States to join the Premium Flyers Coalition, but seems to be struggling to gain support. There is very little detail in the proposals. Almost all the backing (including the research and analysis) is coming from the European Climate Foundation. Still, the big hole in climate finance is causing issues and all options are on the table. During COP30, a group of aviation associations produced a paper looking at the role of aviation in climate negotiations and the importance of using the ICAO process, and ATAG published a series of questions about the GSLTF process.

- » *GLSTF paper The Untapped Potential of Solidarity Levies:* <https://ataglink.org/4i8FFFv>
- » *The GLSTF event at COP30:* <https://ataglink.org/47NXVjV>
- » *The ATAG blog post:* <https://ataglink.org/47YKGNz>
- » *The aviation industry joint paper:* <https://ataglink.org/4i4YkSs>
- » *The IATA press release:* <https://ataglink.org/4a0L2o0>

Belém 4X Pledge

A key announcement which was previewed in the lead up to COP30 but somewhat buried in the leaders' Climate Action Summit was the "Belém 4X Pledge". It is a global commitment launched ahead of COP30 by Brazil, Italy and Japan (and now backed by 23 countries) to quadruple the use of sustainable fuels (biofuels, biogas, synthetic fuels, hydrogen) by 2035, from 2024 levels. It does not relate specifically to aviation, although SAF is included in the overall amount. The quadrupling is based on how much sustainable fuel is needed to meet existing ambitious policy commitments (no additional commitments) and is based on recent analysis by the International Energy Agency.

- » *The Belém 4X Pledge:* <https://ataglink.org/4oiSdL>
- » *Underlying IEA analysis:* <https://ataglink.org/3Xz6RUj>
- » *The 4X Pledge was rejected by the environmental groups:* <https://ataglink.org/49sRunl>

For aviation, actually, we require far more of an increase in SAF to meet even the 2030 CAAF/3 Vision (shifting from 2024's 1Mt of SAF to between 14 and 23Mt by 2030, depending on the scope of the Vision), but the 4X Pledge is an average across all users and was not intended to interfere with CAAF/3 or other existing commitments. By the end of COP30, the 4X Pledge included support from Andorra, Armenia, Belarus, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Guatemala, Guinea, India, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Maldives, Mexico, Mozambique, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Panama, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Sudan, UAE, and Zambia.



Other matters

Just transition is the process of moving from fossil fuels to cleaner energy in a way that is fair to workers and communities. It ensures those people and countries which depend on old industries get new opportunities, training, and support, so the shift to a greener economy doesn't leave anyone behind. It is becoming more important in the official negotiations and at the Belém COP a specific mechanism has been established for permanent consideration of just transition.

Another area of increased activity is **adaptation** (or climate resilience), with a Global Goal on Adaptation being a key topic for discussion – specifically related to increasing finance for adaptation in developing nations. In fact, this is one of the key areas the GSLTF has identified as a potential use of the aviation levy revenues. The COP30 decision adopted a goal of tripling of adaptation financing – to around \$120bn a year – but this is within the scope of the \$1.3 trillion in climate financing agreed to at COP29 last year, rather than in addition. The proposed list of indicators for the Global Goal on Adaptation was the one part of the Belém Package that drew much criticism from States after the decision was gavelled through.

Announced at COP28 but launched officially at Belém, the **Tropical Forest Forever Facility** (TFFF) is a new Brazil-led, blended-finance fund that rewards tropical forest countries for keeping their forests intact. It plans to eventually raise \$125 billion, investing in bonds to generate returns, which are then paid out to nations preserving their forest, with at least 20% of payments going to indigenous peoples and local communities. Pledges of \$9.5bn were made by countries including Norway, Brazil, Indonesia and Germany during COP30.

Aviation side events

Despite a small aviation delegation, there were some 23 side events with a specific focus on air transport (mainly on SAF scale-up and opportunities), and an additional 31 events with some relevance to air transport activities. Representatives from Abra Group, Air France, ALTA, ATAG, IATA and LATAM joined ICAO at COP30 and were kept very busy with side events and bilateral discussions with governments, other business groups and other sectors. Not many of the side events at COP30 had live feeds or recordings.

- ICAO Side event on capacity building in the SDGs Pavilion (starts at hour 4:35): <https://ataglink.org/4ibNCK0>
- Jet Zero Australia side event in the Australian Pavilion: From the Regions to the Runway with SAF: <https://ataglink.org/470BQSf>
- Building trust in hydrogen panel: From GHG accounting to market credibility side event in the Standards Pavilion: <https://ataglink.org/4o7OGjo>
- AFRY launched a report on SAF at its *Fueling the Future: Brazil's leadership in SAF* event: <https://ataglink.org/43Kuz3v>
- ASAFA launched the *Asia-Pacific SAF Outlook 2025* at its side event: <https://ataglink.org/3LXiDW0>
- The Global Biofuels Alliance launched its SAF whitepaper *Green Fuel for Blue Skies Charting the Course for Sustainable Aviation Fuels* at its side event: <https://ataglink.org/43LzjG8>

The next COP

After some very fractious competition between Australia and Türkiye over which country host of COP31 in 2026, it was finally decided that it would be physically held in Antalya, Türkiye, but that Australia would run negotiations. A nice compromise, but one that could bring some challenges in itself.

COP32's location selection was much smoother, with Addis Ababa set to host the 2027 meeting.