



By: The Editorial Board

COP30 and the end of the old climate policy



When the official deadline for the conclusion of COP30 in the Brazilian Amazon passed last Friday, it appeared that this would be yet another summit which, despite dramatic expectations, ended in a compromise that satisfied all participants but did not truly obligate anyone.

However, events in the days following the deadline showed that **COP30** was not merely a conference without an agreement but a moment when it became clear that countries no longer share a common understanding of the direction of global climate policy.

The negotiations in **Belém** did not result in a political agreement. The Brazilian presidency of the summit presented a draft final document without a single mention of **fossil fuels**, even though this was regarded as the main test of the maturity of the global climate system.

None of the proposals concerning fossil fuels were accepted; all were removed from the version of the text that Brazil presented. There is no phase-out, no phase-down, and no transition path.

Several countries, including members of the European Union, the United Kingdom, Pacific nations, and several Latin American countries, refused to accept a document without even a basic reference to the cause of **climate change**.

Brazil defended its position by stating that it sought the "broadest possible consensus". In other words, it wanted a text that would not offend any major producer country or damage the geopolitical relations it has been building in recent years.

The difference between the official end of COP and the actual political conclusion of the negotiations only became apparent when the EU made it clear that it would not ratify the agreement without an explicit commitment on fossil fuels.

This was the first open blockade by the Union in the climate process since the Paris Agreement.

A forum that no longer shapes any global direction

Such a conflict is not the result of just one week of negotiations. It is the outcome of a process that lasts for years.

The COP in Belém was supposed to be a turning point, precisely because it was being held in the **Amazon** and because Brazil was placing climate policy at the centre of its international reputation. That is precisely why the absence of an agreement signals a deeper change in climate diplomacy.

The main divide is no longer simply North-South, nor wealthy versus poor. The division now lies between two visions of the world. In one, fossil fuels are a problem and must be abandoned in the coming decades.

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In the other, the transition to green energy may be desirable, but it must not disrupt the political stability and economic model of countries that are deeply dependent on oil and gas.

In this second vision, fossil fuels are not an obstacle but the foundation of development. Belém only exposed this gap to the extent that it is no longer possible to hide it with diplomatic language.

The most important moment came when it became clear that there was no way to reconcile the two approaches. In the draft, Brazil tried to avoid conflict by simply removing any mention of fossil fuels. That move was not a technical intervention but a political decision.

By removing the key issue from the text, the host sought to present the result as "balanced", but in doing so, it effectively

removed the meaning of the summit.

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The system no longer works

The reactions that followed the formal end of the negotiations clearly demonstrated this. Messages from Europe indicated that the global process could no longer rest on the logic of the lowest common denominator.

From the Caribbean and the Pacific came statements that the countries, which will disappear first due to **sea level rise**, cannot be held hostage to the economic interests of oil producers.

From parts of Asia and Africa, it was said that there cannot be talk about leaving fossil fuels without massive financing of **transition**.

Everyone spoke from their own position, but the common denominator was the same – the system no longer works.

The Paris Agreement created the illusion that the world could agree on a long-term transition

Belém is therefore an important turning point. The significance of Belém lies not in its immediate dramatic consequences, but rather in its revelation of a truth that global politics has been evading for the past fifteen years.

The Paris Agreement created the illusion that the world could agree on a long-term transition. Such an agreement was possible because obligations were flexible and expectations were unclear.

Over time, flexibility ceased to be an advantage and became an excuse. Fossil fuel countries have learned to use that framework and interpret it as a guarantee that no

meaningful obligation will be imposed. Belém is simply the culmination of that process.

The end of the illusion of universal agreement

At the same time, even developed countries are not in an equal position. The European Union remained alone in insisting on a stricter document, but it too lacks a unified internal stance.

Pressure from domestic industries, rising costs of the energy transition, and a political climate that strengthens sceptical factions in many member states have limited Europe's capacity to be a clear global leader.

The blocking of the text in Belém reflects more the EU's reluctance to relinquish its symbolic leadership than its readiness to assume a new, stronger role.

The most significant consequence of the COP, which has not yet fully entered public discourse, is the possible shift of action from universal UN mechanisms to smaller, functional climate alliances. This is not necessarily a bad thing.

Countries dependent on fossil fuels will continue to invest in oil and gas, citing economic development and political stability

Throughout the 20th century, the most successful global agreements were not made in forums with over 190 countries but in smaller groups with sufficient interest and capacity to implement action.

If COP30 is remembered as the conference that marked the end of the illusion of universal agreement, then the next phase of climate policy may appear much more realistic.

It will likely be a multi-speed policy. The most ambitious countries, including parts of Europe, several advanced economies in Asia, and some

countries with strong renewable sectors, will attempt a faster transition to clean energy through regional and bilateral mechanisms.

Countries dependent on fossil fuels will continue to invest in oil and gas, citing economic development and political stability. A third group, comprising many countries in the Global South, will keep seeking financial support that has not been delivered as promised.

The world does not have the luxury of time

In this context, Belém is not a failure but a sign of real transformation. The global politics of climate change now resemble a political arena where conflicts are openly expressed.



Belém shows that the shared interest no longer exists in its previous form. Now, the politics of climate change will be conducted as a politics of power, not as a universal moral project - Lula Da Silva

This is not necessarily negative, as the illusion of unity did not yield real results.

When differences are addressed directly, there is an opportunity for new arrangements. The problem is that the world does not have the luxury of time.

Each year of delay makes the transition more expensive and politically complex, while extreme weather events become more devastating.

This is why COP30 cannot simply be labelled a

failure. It actually demonstrated that the old model is no longer valid. The world had been trying to build a strategy based on the assumption that everyone would keep pace with the shared interest.

Belém shows that the shared interest no longer exists in its previous form. Now, the politics of climate change will be conducted as a politics of power, not as a universal moral project.

After COP30, it became clear that a global agreement no longer exists. Each major power is now pursuing its own path, without waiting for joint decisions.

Those with money and technology will move forward, while those relying on large forums and agreements will remain blocked, as those forums no longer produce results.