

World leaders must step up at COP30 to strengthen climate action and multilateralism

London, 5 November 2025

The Elders today call on world leaders attending COP30 in Belém to show courage and ambition in the face of a worsening climate and nature crisis, but also to defend the necessity of multilateral cooperation when it is under increasing attack.

Ten years on from the landmark Paris Agreement at COP21 in 2015, this should be a moment to celebrate the partial progress made over the past decade in addressing climate change. It is also a time to “strive to do better”, in the words of President Xi Jinping, to cut emissions, phase out fossil fuels, stop deforestation, and fund climate adaptation at speed and scale.

The Elders deplore the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement of the United States of America, the wrecking tactics recently on display at negotiations on a new shipping levy at the International Maritime Organization, and the disruption to the global trading system caused by new US tariffs.

This is the opposite of the global leadership needed to tackle the existential threat of the climate and nature crisis, whose effects know no borders. It stands in contrast to the ambitious steps taken by other states, cities and businesses. They must now support the leadership of Brazil as COP Presidency to make Belém the moment the world commits to deliver faster – on every front.

Heads of state and government should be guided by scientific evidence and data. They need to be robust in countering the disinformation peddled by the fossil fuel lobby.

They should point to the progress made thanks to multilateral cooperation over the past decade, including agreeing a broad consensus around the goal of keeping temperatures as close to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels as possible, curbing the projected rise through concerted action, and the creation of a Loss and Damage Fund to help climate-vulnerable nations. Climate COPs need reform but they are working – just not fast enough.

The changing economic landscape is altering the political calculus by which climate policy is made. This year, renewable energy overtook coal as the world’s leading source of electricity. Those who miss the economic opportunities of the renewable revolution will be left behind. We

urge COP30 delegations to stand firm against the lobbying of petrostates and the fossil fuel industry, and insist on ambitious plans for a just and inclusive global energy transition.

Developed countries have a particular responsibility to renew their climate finance pledges and show how they will mobilise the \$300 billion per year assistance for developing economies they agreed to at COP29 in Baku.

Recent surveys show that 8 out of 10 people want their governments to take more climate action. COP30 must be the moment for leaders to listen to the often silent majority, not just the often vocal minority. They must protect the planet for those already suffering from extreme weather events, and for future generations, before it is too late.

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