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Analysis: First Week of COP30 — Promise, Pressure, and Persistent Gaps

The first week of COP30 negotiations in Belém, Brazil, showed cautious optimism, incremental progress in selected areas, and growing frustrations, especially due to the slow pace of talks and lack of consensus on key issues.

Main Developments

- Negotiators made some progress on climate finance discussions focused on mobilizing **\$1.3 trillion annually by 2035** for developing countries, but no consensus was reached.
- New NDC submissions and reviews showed encouraging projected emission cuts if current pledges are met, yet they remain insufficient to keep global warming below **1.5°C**.
- The **Loss and Damage Fund** advanced operationally, with attention given to start-up funding requests and ongoing talks on funding modalities and sources.
- There was significant activity and several announcements related to **nature-based solutions, forest protection, and sustainable agriculture**, supported by new philanthropic and private-sector commitments.

Areas of Progress

- The Brazilian COP30 presidency promoted a collaborative atmosphere and shifted sensitive topics into early consultations and parallel processes, reducing open clashes and enabling more focused discussions.
- There was steady but modest progress on operationalizing finance goals and strengthening adaptation support, backed by new stakeholder initiatives and greater attention to vulnerable nations.

Challenging Issues

- Negotiations faced difficulties on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), with positions ranging from completing a fully negotiated text now to calling for a two-year delay.
- Article 6 negotiations remained highly complex, with concerns about credibility, integrity, loopholes, and double-counting, especially regarding nature-based credits.
- Frustration grew due to slow progress, procedural bottlenecks, and inequalities caused by large delegations from richer countries, while many developing nations felt outpaced and underrepresented.
- Public protests, particularly by Indigenous groups and climate activists, focused on delays, insufficient protection for the Amazon, and lack of ambition on phasing out fossil fuels.

What Must Happen in Week Two

As ministers arrive, negotiations shift from technical drafting to political decision-making. To avoid a weak outcome, Week Two must:

- Shift negotiations from technical to high-level political discussions, which will be crucial for breaking major deadlocks, especially on finance, adaptation, and fossil fuel phaseout.
- Clear and ambitious political deals are needed on scaling up finance, establishing robust adaptation goals, and finalizing Article 6 market rules.
- Parties will be under pressure to finalize a draft “COP package” that delivers substantive outcomes on science-based emission reductions, loss and damage funding, and just transitions, with special focus on frontline and vulnerable communities.

Week One of COP30 showcased constructive tone, incremental gains, and emerging alignment, but urgency still lags behind reality. The summit's credibility will depend on whether Week Two turns cautious optimism into enforceable commitments that align finance, ambition, and justice with the scale of the climate emergency.





COP30 Stocktaking Plenary Sets Stage for High-Stakes Week Two

The COP30 stocktaking plenary closed the first week by reviewing progress and setting priorities for a decisive second week. The COP30 President reported productive early discussions on trade, climate finance, the 1.5°C pathway, and emissions reporting.

Four unresolved areas — finance, emissions reporting, trade measures, and ambition linked to 1.5°C — were addressed through presidency-led consultations and are expected to dominate upcoming negotiations.

No country statements were delivered due to limited time, emphasizing the shift from broad exchanges to direct, text-based negotiation. A summary note will guide ministers as high-level talks begin, including how to operationalize last year's global stocktake.

Key issues ahead include **tripling adaptation finance by 2030, phasing out fossil fuels**, aligning targets with **1.5°C**, and clarifying the structure of the “**UAE dialogue**.” Negotiators will also consider trade-related climate measures, new emissions reporting mechanisms, and sectoral plans such as shipping decarbonization, and grid and storage modernization.

As COP30 moves from consultation to negotiation in Belém, finance, fossil fuels, and trade will shape some of the toughest decisions in a high-stakes political week.

Beyond Negotiations: People's Summit Belém 2025 and Its Climate Justice Agenda



The People's Summit, held in Belém, Brazil, from **November 12-16, 2025**, coinciding with COP30, brought together more than **1,000 organizations** and approximately **30,000 participants**, including Indigenous peoples, traditional communities, social movements, grassroots networks, and civil society from around the world. Activities were hosted at the Federal University of Pará (UFPA) and in various public spaces throughout the city, transforming Belém into a hub of people-driven climate dialogue, cultural expression, and political mobilization.

The Summit served as a counter-narrative to the formal COP negotiations, offering a platform for those who feel excluded from official decision-making processes. Participants expressed frustration over insufficient government ambition, exclusion of frontline communities, and the advancement of extractivist, market-driven, and financialized climate responses that perpetuate injustice, deepen inequalities, and reinforce corporate power.

Speakers emphasized climate justice, territorial rights, food sovereignty, community-led solutions, and the need for a just transition beyond fossil fuels, grounded in ancestral knowledge and participatory governance. Symbolic acts — including the Boat Parade for Climate — reinforced identity, resistance, and solidarity among diverse global struggles. Rather than acting solely in opposition to COP30, the Summit positioned itself as a constructive and mobilizing political force advancing transformative alternatives rooted in the experiences of affected peoples.

Key Demands Highlighted in the Declaration

The Final Declaration of the People's Summit presents a strong set of systemic, rights-based, and anti-capitalist demands. Some of the most central demands include:

FINAL DECLARATION OF THE PEOPLE...

- Reject false market-based climate solutions, including the commodification and financialisation of nature and the environment.
- Guarantee Indigenous, traditional, and local peoples' territorial rights, including land demarcation, protection, zero deforestation, and ecological restoration.
- Implement food sovereignty and agroecology through popular agrarian reform, ensuring land access and reversing concentration and dispossession.
- Ensure climate solutions are led by affected peoples, recognizing ancestral knowledge and community-led governance.
- End the exploitation and expansion of fossil fuels, while ensuring a just, sovereign, popular, and equitable energy transition.
- Fight environmental racism, especially in urban and peripheral territories, through rights-based adaptation policies, housing, sanitation, and accessible public transport.
- End wars and militarisation, redirecting military spending toward climate recovery and reparations.
- Guarantee loss-and-damage reparations and accountability for socio-environmental crimes, including legal consequences for corporations and decision-makers.
- Tax corporations and wealthy elites, ensuring public financing for climate justice and social protection.
- Strengthen human rights protections for environmental defenders, ending criminalisation, persecution, and violence.

The People's Summit frames climate justice not only as an environmental demand but as a political, economic, cultural, feminist, territorial, and anti-imperialist struggle, asserting that true solutions arise from grassroots power, not from top-down negotiations or profit-driven systems.

UNDERSTANDING KEY NEGOTIATION CONCEPTS AT COP30: COVER DECISION AND THE MUTIRÃO PROPOSAL

▪ Cover Design (Cover Decision) at COP30

In Week One of COP30, the future of the **cover decision** — the high-level political outcome text that sets the overall narrative and ambition for the conference — became a major focus but remains unresolved, with no agreement yet on its scope or even its necessity.

Importantly, at COP30 “**cover design**” does not refer to the visual cover of a document or booklet, but to the development, structure, and content of the final political statement that may draw together negotiation outcomes and signal next steps in international climate action.

What the Cover Decision Is

The cover decision is a non-binding, consensus-based political text that:

- Summarizes COP outcomes and shared priorities
- Highlights items not fully captured in technical decisions
- References science, equity, ambition gaps, and future work
- Can acknowledge new frameworks such as the Baku-to-Belém finance roadmap
- Provides diplomatic momentum and direction between COPs

Key Debates

Parties are divided on whether to have a cover decision at all, following contentious experiences at recent COPs. If adopted, requested elements include:

- Fossil fuel phase-out / transition language
- Stronger finance commitments, especially for adaptation and loss & damage
- Just transition protections for vulnerable groups
- Science-aligned language on the emissions gap
- Integrity safeguards for Article 6 and carbon markets to avoid “false solutions.”

Some major developing economies are cautious about political texts that could overstep mandates, introduce new obligations, or shift blame, while vulnerable nations and civil society groups are pushing for urgent, science-based language. The Brazilian presidency has stated that no cover decision will be forced without real consensus.

Current Status of Cover Design (End of Week One)

- No zero-draft for Cover Design has yet been produced.
- Discussions are running in parallel with other agendas and remain highly political.
- Observers see momentum, but warn the result could be weak or absent due to divisions on fossil fuels, finance, and equity.
- A status update may precede ministerial negotiations in Week Two.

Week One delivered active debate but no breakthrough on the cover decision. Week Two will determine whether Parties can bridge political divides and deliver a meaningful, ambitious signal, or whether COP30 could end without one.

▪ Status of the Mutirão Proposal at COP30

The “**Mutirão**” proposal, introduced by the COP30 presidency, has emerged as both an inspirational theme and a practical organizing framework for COP30. It has been actively discussed in negotiations, with the presidency encouraging Parties and stakeholders to embrace it as a shared pathway for mobilizing climate action and closing the gap between ambition and implementation.

Meaning and Significance

- Mutirão is a Portuguese word rooted in Indigenous Tupi-Guarani culture meaning collective effort or mutual aid, where people work together for the common good.
- At COP30, it represents solidarity, shared responsibility, and practical collaboration, aligned with Brazil’s cultural tradition of community-driven solutions.
- It reframes climate action as working together, rather than merely negotiating together.

How COP30 is Applying the Concept

- Mutirão is being used to connect negotiation rooms with real-world action, ensuring that outcomes are visible, practical, and inclusive.
- Through the **Global Mutirão platform**, governments, civil society, private sector, and local actors are invited to present concrete climate efforts, from grassroots initiatives to public policies.
- It informs the **COP30 Action Agenda**, encouraging transformative, cooperative, and scalable efforts that go beyond traditional pledges.

Mutirão has become COP30’s signature concept, blending culture, diplomacy, and action to inspire global cooperation. Its ultimate success will depend not only on formal negotiated results, but also on how much real climate action it mobilizes at every level — from local communities to the global stage.



Faith Reflection After Week One of COP30: From Awareness to Mission

Week One of COP30 exposed a clear tension: important discussions, but insufficient urgency, especially on finance, fossil fuel transition, adaptation, and justice for vulnerable communities. While negotiations continue, people and ecosystems are already suffering.

The Brazilian concept of **Mutirão** — collective work for the common good — offers a meaningful pastoral lens, fully consistent with Laudato Si' and Catholic Social Teaching. It reminds us that ecological conversion requires shared responsibility, not spectatorship.

A Three-Fold Call to the Church and Faith Communities

1. Be a Prophetic Moral Voice

- Affirm climate action as an ethical duty, not merely a technical debate.
- Advocate for fair finance, rapid fossil fuel transition, and strong protection for Indigenous and frontline peoples.

2. Live the Mutirão in Practice

- Form community action groups in parishes, schools, and ministries.
- Implement tangible ecological actions: restoration, sustainable food practices, water protection, waste reduction, and clean energy.

3. Connect Local Reality to Global Advocacy

- Prioritize voices of Indigenous peoples, youth, women, and marginalized communities.
- Advance ethical institutional choices, including sustainable operations and responsible investments.



Week One brought constructive dialogue but not decisive breakthroughs. COP30's credibility now depends on whether Week Two delivers justice-aligned, science-rooted commitments, not minimal compromises.

As disciples of Christ, we are called not to observe history but to shape it through compassion, courage, and communal responsibility.

**Prayer must become witness, and witness must become action.
This is Mutirão. This is mission. This is the Gospel for our time.**