

Keswick Reminder 07.11.25: NfWW No.99 Why the Brazil COP matters.

As the world edges closer towards climate tipping points, an impending meeting in the heart of the Amazon is so important that it could shape our collective future. From 10th – 21st November in Belem, Brazil, representatives of almost every country in the world will be meeting for the Thirtieth Conference of Parties (COP30) to agree further action on climate change and nature loss, ten years after the consequential Paris COP21.

Some think that these massive get-togethers achieve little and should be abandoned. I don't take that view. While some are less successful than others, the 2015 Paris COP was monumental in its achievements. It produced agreement – the world's first legally binding accord signed by 195 countries – to limit global warming to 'well below 2°C' and pursue efforts to stay below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

This required each country to set its own emissions targets, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), to be reviewed and strengthened every five years. And this set the stage for the goal of achieving global net-zero by mid-century, that is, emitting no more greenhouse gases than are removed mechanically, or naturally by carbon sinks such as soils and forests.

COP30 is expected to be the 'next big moment' in these annual conferences because it will require participating countries to submit new and more ambitious targets and determine whether globally we're on track to stay below 1.5°C. At present we are not.

The location of the conference is highly significant as it will focus attention on the Amazon's rich biodiversity; on the role of forests as natural carbon sinks, and as homes of Indigenous knowledge and leadership – all imperiled by deforestation.

One good piece of news is Brazil's choice of COP president, a veteran diplomat, André Corrêa do Lago, who has already done more as president-elect than the outgoing president from last year's Azerbaijan COP29.

Certainly, Corrêa do Lago has set the right tone by characterizing COP30 as a '*Global Mutirão*' – a concept from Brazilian Indigenous cultures: that is, a 'collective effort', with the global community coming together to work on a shared task.

So, what can we expect of the COP under his leadership?

On NDCs it will be a mixed bag, with some countries likely to submit deep emissions cuts (including EU, UK and Brazil itself), others less so (including US, China, India), which means that there is no chance of meeting the Paris target of 1.5°C. But that does not spell failure: 2°C is still within reach.

There will also be much on climate finance for developing countries for mitigation and adaptation, and for the loss and damage they have already suffered from climate change. And unsurprisingly there will be a particular focus on finance for tropical forest protection.

Whether COP30 can turn promises into progress will be the test. The world will be watching Belem very closely.

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