

ANALYSING THE CONTEXT OF COP30

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COP30 IN BELÉM, PARÁ

For the first time, the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) will be held in Brazil, from November 10 to 21, 2025. The host city will be Belém, the capital of Pará, located in the heart of the Amazon: one of the most strategically important regions on the planet for climate balance.

Brazil plays a leading role in climate discussions because it:

- Is one of the largest exporters of agricultural commodities and plays a key role in global food security.
- Hosts strategic biomes such as the Amazon, the Cerrado, and the Pantanal.
- Has the potential to lead the energy transition through its renewable energy matrix, green hydrogen, and biodiversity.

COP30 is a global stage for Brazil to reaffirm its position as an environmental powerhouse, but also a test of its ability to align rhetoric with practice and social inclusion.



SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

OIL EXPLORATION IN THE EQUATORIAL MARGIN

The region, which stretches from Amapá to Rio Grande do Norte, including a piece of the Amazon River, **presents significant potential for oil exploration**. It is being referred to as a “new pre-salt” area.

This discovery has sparked **immense interest from Petrobras**, the Brazilian energy giant with state ownership. According to a statement on the company’s own website: “Due to the characteristics of the oil and the estimated volumes in the area, the **Equatorial Margin attracts interest not only from the Brazilian industry, but also from the international oil and gas market**, which sees promising opportunities in the region that need to be developed.”

Ibama (the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources) recommended **rejecting the project due to environmental concerns**, such as the lack of an effective emergency response plan and the presence of sensitive ecosystems in the area. This stance is **supported by Marina Silva**, Brazil’s Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

The ongoing push for the possibility of exploring the Equatorial Margin has drawn negative reactions from the international community, particularly from environmentalists and climate experts.

This position also creates a major paradox: in this context, would it not be contradictory for Brazil to host and pre-side over COP30?



biasoua/pexels



At a public hearing held on May 27, **Marina Silva argued that exploring oil on Equatorial Margin could pose serious risks to local biodiversity.** “We celebrate when GDP grows by 2% or 3%, and it’s a party when it hits 4%, yet biodiversity accounts for 50% of the GDP of many countries. In the case of developing countries, this figure reaches nearly 70%, so no one in their right mind would destroy 50% of their GDP.”

By defending this position, **Marina creates a challenging scenario with the agribusiness sector**, as many politicians in the Senate argue that **such a strong commitment to conservation also hinders the progress of agro** — one of the most profitable sectors of the Brazilian economy. The minister emphasized the real damage that the lack of conservation units can cause, citing the floods in Rio Grande do Sul in 2024, which resulted in 184 deaths.

During the same hearing, Marina was met with great hostility from her colleagues in the Senate, particularly from the more conservative benches.

In stark contrast to this, **President Lula holds an ambiguous position** on the matter. He has not opposed exploration in the Equatorial Margin, and stated that a country should be able to use its own natural resources. There is much speculation about Lula’s true interests in this potential exploration by Petrobras.



“DESTRUCTION BILL” AND AGRIBUSINESS

In May, the Brazilian Congress also approved Bill 2.159/2021 — nicknamed the “Destruction Bill” due to its controversial content. The legislation significantly weakens environmental licensing rules in the country.

Essentially, the bill overhauls Brazil’s environmental licensing process. It **allows projects to obtain licenses automatically, based solely on the entrepreneur’s self-declaration, without requiring any prior technical assessments.**

This opens doors to environmental fraud, the destruction of conservation units and demarcated lands, and the launch of economic activities in protected areas. It also **drastically reduces the authority of environmental agencies.**

Responding to demands from the agribusiness lobby, the bill also **exempts a range of agricultural activities from environmental licensing, based only on the submission of a self-declared form**, with no review of potential environmental impacts.

Experts have strongly opposed the measure, which has also sparked public backlash. **A petition website was launched to gather public support against the bill and urge its rejection before final approval** in the Chamber of Deputies.

Once again, this raises questions about potential contradictions in Brazil’s role as host and president of COP30.



FOSSIL FUEL LOBBYING AT COP30

There is growing pressure for Brazil to restrict the influence of oil, gas, and mining lobbyists at COP30 — a move that has already been taken by other host countries. This issue directly impacts the government’s relationship with Petrobras and major energy companies.

SHALE GAS AND GREY HYDROGEN AS GREEN SOLUTIONS

Many countries and companies — including in Brazil — are promoting grey (or blue) hydrogen as part of the energy transition, **without making it clear that its production still relies on fossil fuels.**

Shale gas is often marketed as a “transition fuel” to replace coal, but it remains a fossil source with serious environmental impacts.

The Brazilian government, particularly through the Ministry of Mines and Energy, advocates for the use of natural gas as a transition fuel, yet fails to clearly distinguish between types of hydrogen in its official messaging.

There is concern that Brazil may open the door to fracking (the process used to extract grey hydrogen) in currently unexplored areas, including within the Legal Amazon and the Equatorial Margin region.

This raises the risk that **Brazil could be accused of greenwashing** if it continues to promote fossil-based solutions as “green”.

CONFLICTS WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES

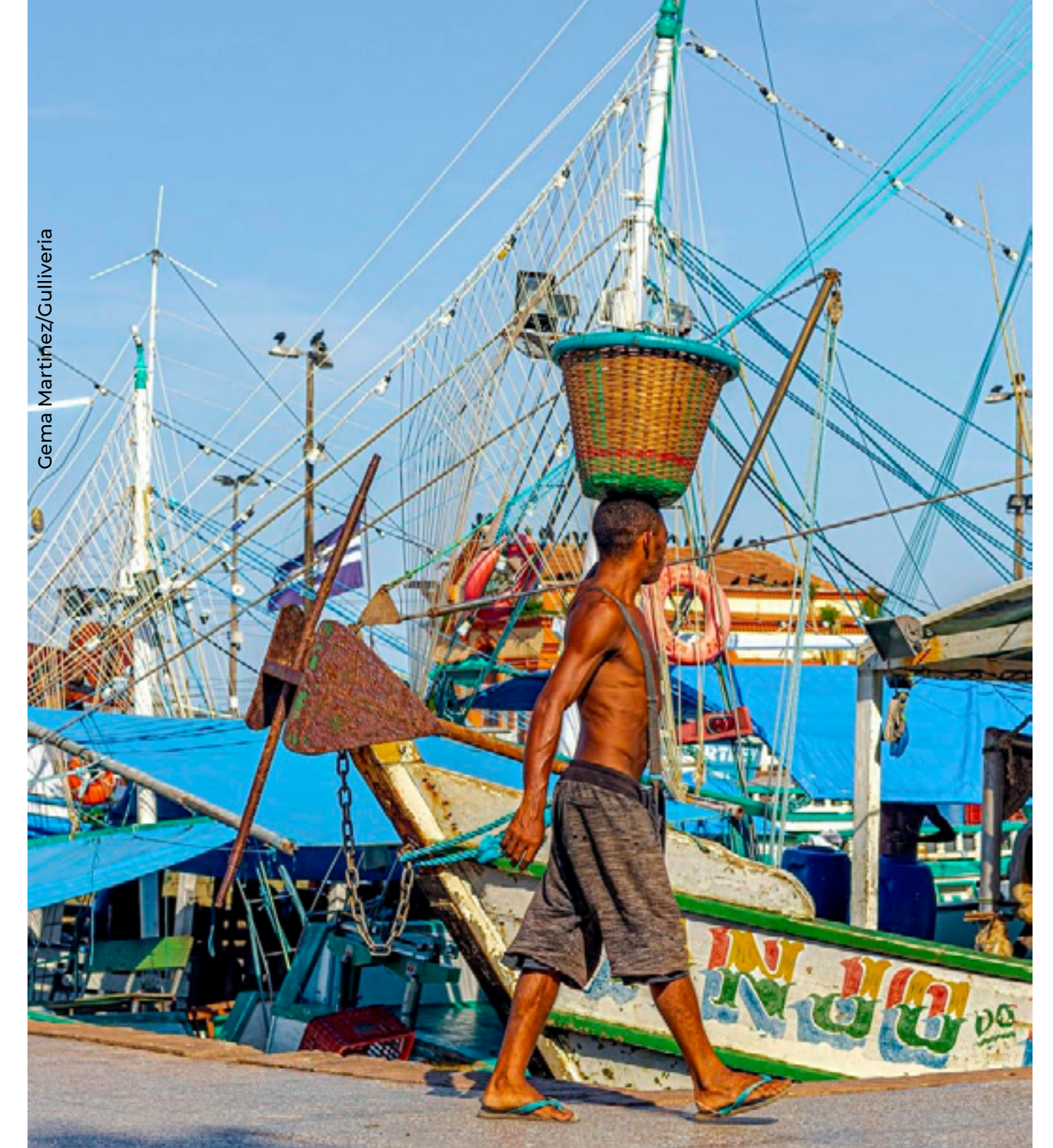
There have been reports of **communities being displaced or affected by infrastructure projects** such as the construction of avenues, hotels, and convention centers. These projects have been criticized for lacking free, prior, and informed consultation, a direct violation of ILO Convention 169, to which Brazil is a signatory.

Residents of peripheral neighborhoods in Belém, many of whom hold strong Afro-Amazonian or Indigenous cultural identities, have **raised concerns that these construction projects could lead to forced removals** and the dismantling of local communities.

Many Indigenous leaders are concerned that **their peoples’ presence at COP30 may be merely symbolic or ceremonial**, without any real space for decision-making.

CULTURAL CONTROVERSIES AND SELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES

During preparatory events for COP30 — such as the Amazon Summit and other international meetings — the



federal government has faced criticism for “hand-picking” which Indigenous or grassroots voices are included in delegations and on official stages. These selections often favor individuals already aligned with the government or with large partner NGOs.

The presence of artists, influencers, and celebrities, such as Alok, Fafá de Belém, and Joelma, chosen to represent Brazil or to communicate the event has also sparked backlash from local activists and experts, who **question the “spectacularization” of COP30.**

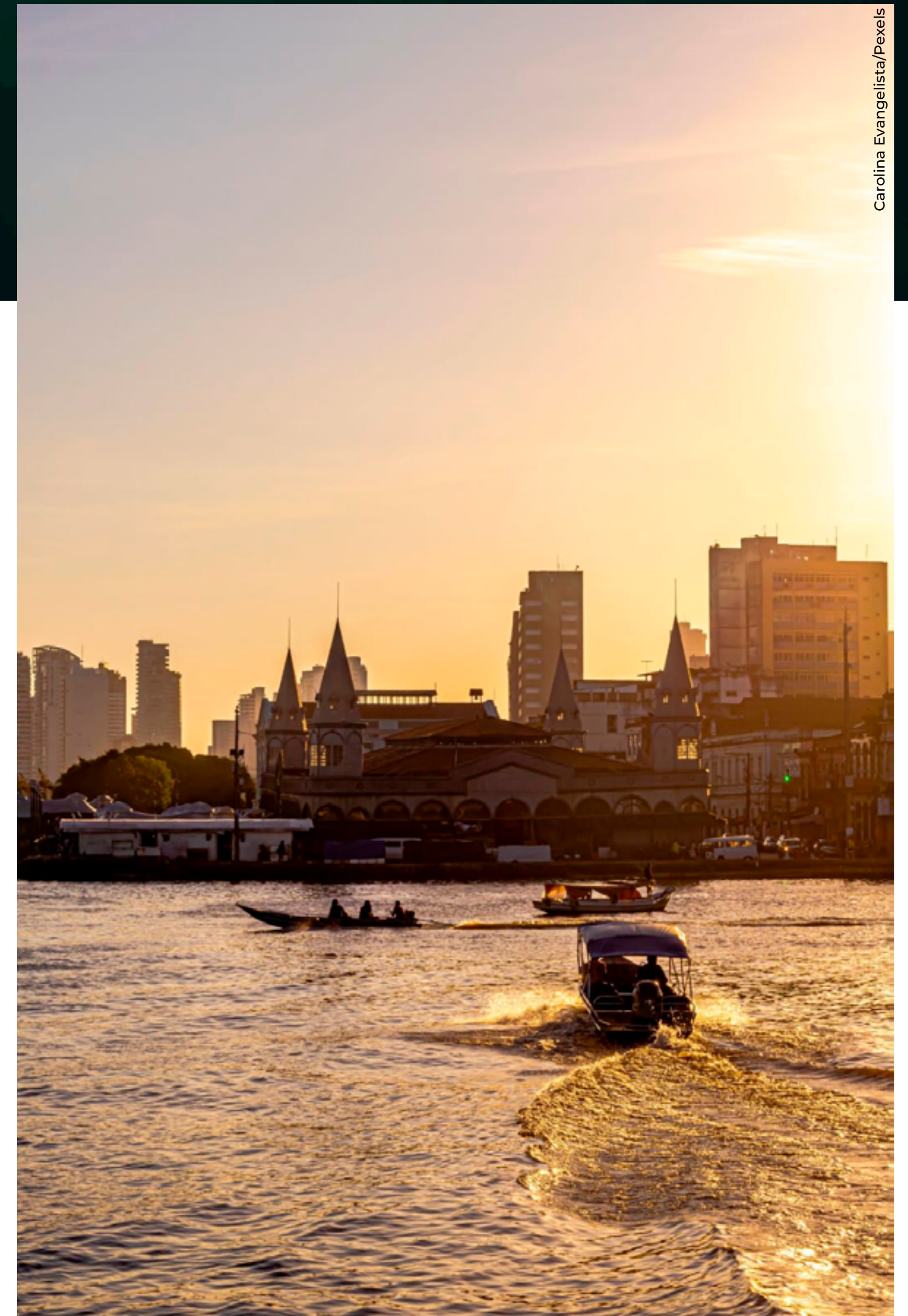


COP30 PRESIDENTIAL AGENDA

- In addition to hosting COP30, Brazil is also responsible for holding the presidency of the conference. André Corrêa do Lago, a diplomat with an extensive background in climate negotiations, has been appointed as COP30 President.
- In the third letter from the COP30 Presidency, released last week, Lago **emphasized for the first time the need to move beyond discourse and take practical actions to advance the energy transition**, truly committing to real change.
- Given the broader political context in Brazil, including the positions of various politicians and even the President of the Republic, this call for commitment may sound somewhat contradictory — especially considering that COP30 will take place in the country.
- The third Presidential letter also reiterates the importance of reviving and implementing decisions

made at previous COPs. In 2023, at the Dubai COP, the Global Stocktake concluded with a global agreement to “transition away from fossil fuels” in a manner that is “orderly, just, and equitable,” but without specifying how, when, or where to start. Instead of moving forward with clear definitions and a transition timeline based on that agreement, several countries began pushing back against the decision. Last year’s conference in Baku sidestepped the issue entirely. Brazil has expressed interest in advancing the topic, but so far has not addressed it directly.

- According to Ana Toni, COP30 Executive Director, Brazil will present a concrete climate finance proposal at COP30. **This is expected to be outlined in the next Presidential letter.**
- We should have a clearer picture of all these developments after the “pre-COP” meeting — the Bonn Climate Conference — which will take place from June 16 to 26, 2025, in Germany.



Carolina Evangelista/Pexels



LULA'S GOVERNMENT POSITION

CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOURSE AND ECONOMIC PRACTICE

- Support for oil exploration in the Equatorial Margin — a highly sensitive area of the Amazon — led by Petrobras, has drawn strong international criticism. President Lula defends using oil revenues to fund the energy transition, but this approach has been labeled as greenwashing by activists and civil society groups.

ENERGY TRANSITION

- The federal government aims to be a global leader in green hydrogen production, yet it is also investing in “grey” and “blue” hydrogen projects (still linked to fossil fuels). In other words, while the energy transition agenda is present, it is often aligned with the interests of powerful economic sectors — agribusiness, oil, and mining. The key question will be how Brazil can pursue a just transition without reproducing patterns of exclusion and inequality.

PRESSURE FOR CONCRETE ACTION ON INDIGENOUS LANDS

- The Lula administration reestablished the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples, appointed Sonia Guajajara, and has highlighted the issue internationally. However, there has been slow progress on land demarcation, and the “Time Frame” bill (Marco Temporal) continues to threaten Indigenous rights, causing frustration. Minister Sonia Guajajara herself has criticized the government’s delays in fulfilling its promises.

PROGRESS AND SETBACKS IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL AGENDA

- Environment Minister Marina Silva has contributed to a reduction in Amazon deforestation but has lost influence over key decisions, such as those concerning the Equatorial Margin. There is an internal power struggle within the government between development-focused groups (such as Rui Costa at the Civil House) and environmental advocates (like Marina and Guajajara).
- **Key Point of Concern:** Lula’s Brazil is attempting to balance sustainability with economic growth, but the pendulum often swings toward the economic side.



INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES



URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE:

With investments exceeding R\$4.7 billion, sourced from federal, state, and municipal funds as well as partners such as BNDES and Itaipu Binacional, the city is implementing over 30 major infrastructure projects covering urban mobility, basic sanitation, tourism, and urban development.



ACCOMMODATION:

The city is currently facing shortage in accommodation options to receive the 50,000 visitors expected. Belém currently offers a total of 36,000 available accommodations. To address this gap, new hotels are being built, existing establishments are undergoing retrofits, and cruise ships are being considered as temporary hotels.



MOBILITY:

Measures are being implemented to improve urban mobility during the event:

- **Metropolitan BRT:** Exclusive bus corridors are being created along Avenida Júlio César, along with the redevelopment of transit terminals.
- **Fleet renewal:** 503 new buses are being acquired, including 100 electric vehicles, to meet the expected demand during the conference.



SECURITY:

- **Intentional Lethal Violent Crimes (ILVCs):** In 2024, Pará recorded a 53.34% reduction in ILVCs compared



to 2018, preserving over 2,000 lives. Compared to 2023, there was an 11.68% decrease in such crimes.

- **Robbery:** In the first quarter of 2025, the state reported a 22.05% reduction in robbery cases compared to the same period in 2024. Compared to 2018, the decline reached 74.98%.

These crime reductions are attributed to **over R\$90 million in investments in public security**, including the acquisition of equipment, renovations and construction of facilities, as well as the integration of security forces and the use of new technologies.

Despite improvements in public safety, Belém still faces deep-rooted challenges related to **social inequality**: according to IBGE, 57.17% of the population lives in favelas or underserved communities (the highest rate among all Brazilian capitals) and the metropolitan region is home to **more than 816,000 people living in poverty**, making it the fifth most unequal region in the country.



HOW TO REALLY CREATE MEANINGFUL CAMPAIGNS IN THIS CONTEXT AND ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITIES?

The work has to be oriented by guiding principles:

- **Anti-colonial and anti-spectacularizing:** avoid imported solutions or “cosmetic” actions. Respect local realities and steer clear of extractive or performative engagement.
- **Co-create with local actors:** when we think about companies wanting to engage in COP30, they must build the campaigns collaboratively with community leaders, local organizations, and regional experts.
- **Be politically and socially aware:** environmental protection vs. development interests; Government narratives vs. civil society concerns - understand the complexities in a deeper level.
- **Focus on legacy, not just visibility:** prioritize lasting impact over momentary exposure. The goal is to contribute meaningfully to the region long after COP30 is over.



Jordy Neves/pexels





LISTENING FIRST APPROACH

Before proposing solutions, listen to local voices — especially those from the affected communities.

- Sherlock Communications has an extensive experience with that, **managing a network of more than 400 NGOs, social projects and community leaders in Latin America.**
- Through **Lupa do Bem**, a platform created to amplify the voices of small NGOs and grassroots initiatives, we support local organizations in showcasing their work and deepening their impact within their communities.

- We maintain constant communication with these leaders as part of our commitment to truly understanding their needs. **Rather than assuming what they require**, we develop materials, training sessions, and workshops based on what they tell us — often through regular surveys and feedback.
- This approach has led to the development of meaningful initiatives, including **three ebooks demystifying important but dense topics within the third-sector and in-person gatherings in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro** that brought community leaders together to share experiences, challenges, and learnings.



BE PART OF THE DEBATE - NOT JUST THE EXPO

Support and promote spaces of dialogue around green transition, energy, and justice. Include an important part of the society in this discussion. This can include:

- **Roundtables** that bring together academics, civil society organizations, and representatives from traditional communities, Indigenous groups, and riverine populations from the Amazon. These spaces should be designed not just for visibility, but for **mutual learning and co-creation of ideas**.
- Hosting public events and workshops that unpack the differences between greenwashing and real climate

action, promoting transparency, accountability, and a **creating a shared understanding of what a just transition really means in practice**.

- **Co-creating roadmaps with community leaders, NGOs, and grassroots projects** to help them spark local dialogue and drive impactful initiatives linked to COP30 in their own territories.
- Rather than building everything under your own brand, support and enhance what already exists. **Think of yourself as a partner, not a protagonist**.



Matheus Pedrosa/Pexels



CREATE LEGACY, NOT JUST VISIBILITY

Rather than investing in actions centered solely on brand exposure, **prioritize initiatives that create tangible, lasting benefits for local communities.** Examples include:

- Support training programs for local youth in areas such as clean energy, climate resilience, or sustainable agriculture — building long-term skills
- Invest in essential infrastructure that directly improves quality of life, such as water filtration systems, internet connectivity, or low-emission transport solutions.

- Go beyond showcasing green technologies — demonstrate how they can empower communities. For instance, support a pilot solar energy project in an urban favela, including training for local residents to manage and maintain the system.

These kinds of initiatives not only align with climate goals but also **contribute to social equity, leaving a meaningful legacy in the region well after COP30.**



INNOVATION FOR CLIMATE AND EQUITY IS ALREADY HAPPENING IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

BLOCKFORCE: TRANSPARENT AND TRACEABLE SUPPLY CHAINS

Brazilian tech using blockchain to verify the social and environmental origin of products like coffee, beef, cosmetics and clothes, driving ethical sourcing and climate-aligned practices. The company has already partnered with brands like Arezzo&Co and Fábula to implement digital traceability systems in their production chains.

FAIR FASHION MOVEMENT: RETHINKING FASHION THROUGH TRACEABILITY

A Brazil-based initiative led by women committed to mapping every step of the fashion supply chain, from raw material to final product, ensuring transparency, fair working conditions, and reduced environmental impact.

WHY THIS MATTERS IN THE COP30 CONTEXT?

These are not future solutions. They are real, local innovations aligned with COP30 priorities: transparency to prevent greenwashing, traceability, and inclusive climate action. Brazil has the tools to lead a just transition, we just need to spotlight and scale them.

HOW SHERLOCK COMMUNICATIONS CAN SUPPORT?

- Amplify these voices through PR and Digital Marketing strategies
- Help global companies identify and connect with local innovative businesses that address key topics on the COP30 agenda and enable meaningful action within the conference landscape.



OTHER WAYS SHERLOCK COMMUNICATIONS CAN LEVERAGE YOUR IMPACT AT COP30



MEDIA RELATIONS

Amplifying initiatives through national and regional media outlets, exploring interview opportunities, press releases, op-eds, webinars, press conferences - positioning your company as part of the climate solution.

DIGITAL MARKETING

Organic and paid digital campaigns (SEO, social media, influencers, media buying) that strengthen authentic narratives with a focus on real engagement and lasting impact.

AUDIOVISUAL STORYTELLING

Production of videos, series, and content that translate your work into human, inspiring stories, prioritizing impact over aesthetics.

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

Optimize websites to highlight your sustainability efforts, with SEO best practices and targeted landing pages designed specifically for COP30 and ESG visibility, boosting visibility for your sustainability commitments.

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Sherlock Communications is a multi-award-winning communications agency operating across Latin America. With offices in Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Chile, Mexico, Argentina, Panama, Costa Rica, and Guatemala, **we have a fully bilingual, multidisciplinary team.** Our mission is to help companies overcome commercial and cultural barriers between Latin American and international markets.

The agency was named **Best International Agency 2024** and **Best Agency in LATAM 2025** by **PRWeek Global Awards**. Sherlock Communications has won and been highly recommended for more than 55 global awards over the past two years, and was named the **second most creative agency** in the world and the **most creative in Latin America** by The Holmes Report's Creative Index.

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