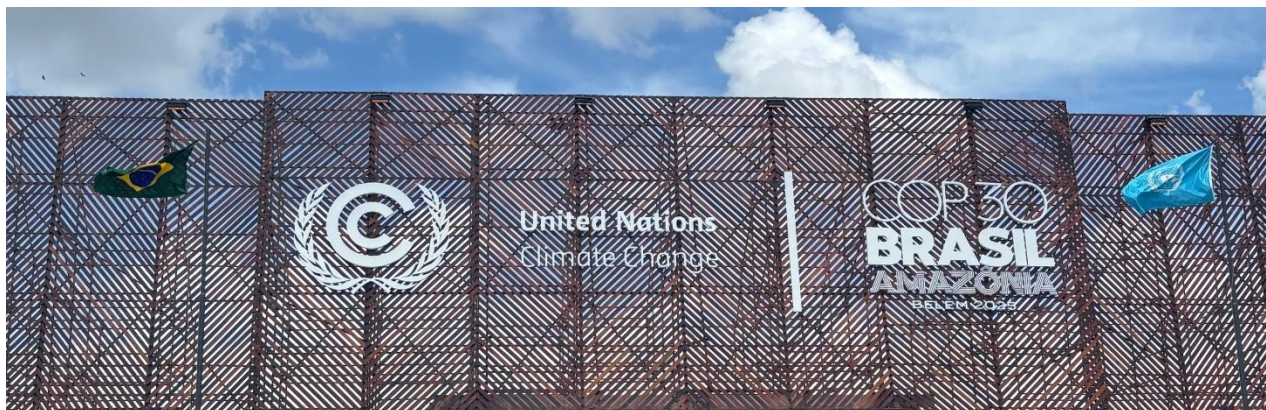


SOIL CARBON NOTES / EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

UNFCCC COP 30 IN BELÉM: THE FIRST COP WITH A REAL FOCUS ON AGRICULTURE



In the heart of the Amazon in Belém, against a backdrop of extreme heat, tropical rains and challenging logistics, COP 30 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has just reached its conclusions. In the opinion of many, it was in some respects an edition that will be remembered, not so much for the outcome of the negotiations, which were somewhat stuttered, nor for its closing with a fireworks display that was not necessarily what was hoped for, but for the fact that for the first time, a COP will have placed agriculture at the center of attention and discussions on climate.

The **international "4 per 1000" Initiative** was present with a delegation from the Executive Secretariat (Paul LUU and Béatrice BRETON-ASKAR), and partners and members from IRD (Jean-Luc CHOTTE), INRAE (Jean-François SOUSSANA), CIRAD (Vincent BLANFORT), SEKEM (Jules ELLIS), SAVE SOIL (Praveena SRIDHAR) and GAÏAGO (Jean-Pierre PRINCEN), particularly when organizing or participating in side events, round tables, meetings and encounters with a wide variety of partners.

HALF-HEARTED NEGOTIATION RESULTS

By organizing its Climate COP in the world's largest reservoir of biodiversity and carbon, an emblematic and highly symbolic location, Brazil wanted to offer a different kind of COP, with fewer declarations and more focus on concrete responses to truly implement the Paris Agreement and its objectives, by clarifying the rules of the game and the financing that could be mobilized.

It was supposed to be a "COP of implementation", according to the Brazilian presidency. But after more than two weeks of tense negotiations (including the choice of venue for COP 31, which will finally be held from November 9 to 20, 2026, in Antalya, Turkey, under a "double presidency": the President of COP 31 will be Turkish, and the Vice-President, also "President of the negotiations", will be Australian), positions that were thought to be behind us resurfaced, notably on fossil fuels, deforestation and less ambitious financing.

Despite the difficult context, some progress was made during this Amazonian COP.

Ahead of the COP, President Lula launched the **Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF)**, an endowment fund financed by public and private contributions (target US\$125 billion), whose annual revenues would be used to make forest preservation an economic model for tropical countries, by remunerating those who succeed in halting deforestation and restoring their forests, and of which a 20% financial share would be reserved for indigenous peoples and local communities.

The "**Belém Package**" was adopted, with the "**Global Mutirão**" decision as its cornerstone, providing guidelines on:

- **Financing** via confirmation of the annual target set at COP 29 in Baku of US\$1,300 billion in public funding for developing countries by 2035, a call for a tripling of funding dedicated to adaptation by 2035, beyond the doubling agreed for 2025 at COP 26 in Glasgow, and the launch of a two-year work program on climate financing to clarify how these targets can be reached;

- **Adaptation**, through the adoption of 59 voluntary, non-prescriptive global indicators to track progress towards the Global Goal on Adaptation adopted at COP 28 in Dubai, several of which relate to the resilience of food and agricultural systems, ecosystem health, water, biodiversity and the ability of populations to cope with climate risks.
- **Just Transition**, through the institutionalization of a specific mechanism that explicitly recognizes that transition must be "just, orderly and equitable", and that climate policies must respect fundamental human rights. Farmers will be able to find answers to their concerns regarding support for their agro-ecological transition (reduction of inputs, crop diversification, etc., without weakening the economy, strengthening incomes, employment and the resilience of rural areas via carbon credits, etc.).
- A **formal climate-trade dialogue** with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other institutions, on carbon adjustment-type measures at borders, with the aim of clarifying the rules around climate-related trade measures and avoiding open trade wars.

At the same time, there were small advances on the market mechanisms of Article 6 of the Paris Agreements, with strict rules on project integrity and the integration of nature-based solutions. In addition, over 110 countries presented new climate targets at the start of COP30, representing a record number and significant political momentum for climate multilateralism.

A SECTOR IN THE SPOTLIGHT: AGRICULTURE

But beyond these mixed results, this Brazilian COP sent out a clear signal by elevating agriculture to a prominent position, with the creation, for the first time at this type of conference, of a space dedicated exclusively to agriculture: **the Agrizone**.

Located in one of the experimental stations of EMBRAPA (Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária), the Agrizone brought together international organizations, scientific institutions, agricultural producer groups and companies in exhibition areas combining pavilions and conference venues. Covering an area of 3,000 hectares, in the heart of the city of Belém, this space, named "Casa da Agricultura Sustentável" (House of Sustainable Agriculture), hosted over 400 events, technical tours and exhibitions dedicated to sustainable agriculture, technological innovation and food safety. In this way, by positioning agriculture with its own identity and differentiated discourse at the center of a special location outside the Blue Zone where the official negotiations were held, Brazil showed the world its agricultural model as a driver of development, innovation and sustainability.

The political impact of such a focus on agriculture cannot be overstated, since for the first time agriculture had its own showcase, with a visibility equivalent to that of any other strategic sector on the climate agenda. Looking back to COP 21 in Paris, when agriculture was still in its infancy and on the margins, we can see just how far we have come in ten years.

However, we must not overlook the discussions on production models in the climate debate, which once again highlighted the diversity of approaches that coexist on the global agenda. While family farming¹ and the most vulnerable producers occupy a central place because of their role in food security and territorial resilience, the desire of Brazil, the host country of COP30, was also to highlight producers whose production model is based on technologies and innovations, which they believe are capable of developing climate-friendly practices on a large scale.

Agroecology was nevertheless highlighted by civil society and certain organizations, including the Coalition for Agroecology and our "4 per 1000" Initiative, who emphasized its concrete role in the fight against climate change and for food sovereignty. We might add that, as underlined by other partners of the "4 per 1000" Initiative present in Belém, including the Coalition of Action for Soil Health (CA4SH), soils are now clearly recognized as a major carbon reservoir, with as yet under-exploited potential for climate change mitigation as a core element of the agroecological transition.

In addition to EMBRAPA, IICA (Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture) played a leading role at Agrizone, playing a strategic role in promoting sustainable agriculture in the Americas and hosting numerous side events on its pavilion.

Between the events in the Agrizone (around 400), and those organized in the Blue and Green Zones, the number of side events devoted to agriculture, food systems, soils, soil health, agroecology and other related subjects at COP 30² is estimated at over 500. This is undoubtedly a record, but it shows how these subjects, which were absent from discussions prior to COP 21 in Paris, have become major topics over the years.

Last but not least, we're delighted with the place of agriculture at this COP 30. The FAO and CIRAD stressed that this edition of the COP had enabled the resilient agriculture and land restoration agenda to move forward at global level, even if the final text fell short of expectations for full integration into climate negotiations.

It remains to be seen whether the special place occupied by agriculture as a protagonist at COP 30 is a passing fad, or whether it will be a long-term one. We can already say that agriculture no longer plays a peripheral role in the climate agenda, it is now an

¹ Family farming accounts for 70% of the world's agricultural production (Source: FAO)

² The international "4 per 1000" Initiative organized, co-organized, moderated or participated with a speaker in 6 side events in the Blue Zone, Green Zone or Agrizone.

integral part of it, and it's common knowledge that without farmers we won't be able to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreements. Many observers agree that the integration of specialized thematic areas at the heart of the negotiations will enable more direct interaction between key players and a more fluid dialogue with the COP's cross-cutting themes.

We can also acknowledge that, thanks to its production capacities, technical knowledge and mature management systems, Latin America is a

major player in proposing solutions on the scale of the continent, if not the planet. And it's undeniable that by placing agriculture at the heart of COP 30, Brazil has taken an important step in this direction. The future will tell whether the next presidencies will maintain this momentum and consolidate agriculture's place at the heart of the climate debate. It's a safe bet that the Australian Presidency and the Turkish host of COP 31 will want to build on the Brazilian foundations.



THE RAIZ INITIATIVE AND AN "GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION AGENDA"

The launch of the **RAIZ Initiative (Resilient Agriculture Investment for net-Zero land degradation)** was another highlight of COP 30 in Belém, helping to place agriculture and agrifood systems at the heart of climate discussions. RAIZ, officially launched with the support of nine countries (Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom), in partnership with the FAO, CGIAR and other major players, aims to mobilize public and private resources and technologies to restore degraded agricultural land on a large scale. This approach to restoring degraded agricultural land³ is in line with the three Rio Conventions and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 15.3, offering a "quadruple win" in terms of climate change, biodiversity, food security and the fight against desertification. RAIZ's objectives are to accelerate the restoration of agricultural land by encouraging innovation and cooperation in the financial ecosystem, through several key actions:

1. **Mapping degraded landscapes** in order to prioritize investment areas and direct funding towards those with the greatest potential for productivity gains.

2. **Identification and costing of investment solutions:** governments will be helped to identify restoration solutions in which to invest (description of costs, returns, financing gaps and identification of possible funding sources).
3. **The design of public-private co-investment mechanisms** to increase funding.
4. **Collaboration and knowledge exchange** within the restoration ecosystem: RAIZ will consolidate lessons learned from national experiences into case studies and guidelines to fuel peer-to-peer learning on a global scale and improve conditions for restoration financing.

RAIZ acts as a gas pedal of current global action on land restoration, working closely with key global initiatives, partners and stakeholders to contribute to the UNCCD goal of restoring 250 million hectares of agricultural land by 2030. The international "4 per 1000" Initiative has become a member of RAIZ.

RAIZ also draws on existing Brazilian programs (such as Caminho Verde), which have already mobilized nearly US\$6 billion to restore up to 3 million hectares in Brazil.

³ According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Climate Change and Land, around 25% of the world's land area is undergoing human-induced degradation, and around 23% of man-made greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions come from agriculture, forestry and other land use (AFOLU Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use).

Finally, the Brazilian Presidency of COP 30, as part of the "Global Climate Action Agenda", has framed the creation of "Plans to Accelerate Solutions" (PAS) within 30 "Thematic Activation Groups" grouped into 6 Axes, including Axis 3 on the Transformation of Food and Agricultural Systems (composed of 3 activation groups or Key Objectives or KOs: "KO 8 - Landscape Restoration and Sustainable Agriculture", "KO 9 - More Resilient, Adaptive and Sustainable Food Systems" and "KO 10 - Equitable Access to Adequate Food and Nutrition for All"). **More than 18 PASs have been submitted under Axis 3, with the international "4 per 1000" Initiative joining forces with three of them in addition to RAIZ⁴.** These PASs and initiatives are part of an integrated approach aimed at removing obstacles and accelerating the transition to sustainable food systems, supported by Activation Groups made up of multi-sector experts. There will be operational follow-up to COP 30 through sectoral PASs, and the international "4 per 1000" Initiative will of course be part of this.

10 years after the historic Paris Agreements at COP 21, COP 30 has just closed its doors on a mixed note. Clearly, not every COP with its frenetic annual pace can conclude with major advances, especially as the international and geopolitical context is also subject to change from one year to the next. Despite this, the general direction is maintained, and after the major steps forward taken in Paris, small steps follow, but steps nonetheless. **Over the years, the subjects we hold dear - agriculture, food systems, soils, soil health, soil carbon sequestration and agroecology - have progressed to the point of becoming increasingly visible and even major.**

The multiplicity of international players present and active on these issues, including our partners at the FAO, CGIAR, the CA4SH and Agroecology coalitions, IICA, member countries (France, Germany, Spain, Argentina, etc.), scientific institutes (IRD, CIRAD, INRAE, EMBRAPA, etc.), NGOs and representatives of the agricultural world (SEKEM, Save Soil, etc.) and companies (GAÏAGO, etc.) show just how important our subjects are. **COP 30 in Belém will undoubtedly go down as the COP which has put agriculture at the forefront, with its Agrizone, its RAIZ Initiative and the omnipresence of these themes in the three zones, the Blue, the Green and the "Agri".**



⁴ "Access to Finance for Agrifood Systems Transformation" led by FAST Partnership, "Regenerative Agriculture for Healthy Soil and Healthy Diets" led by CA4SH, "Carbon Removals in Agriculture" co-led by CIAT, CGIAR, Cascade Climate and the international "4 per 1000" Initiative, and "RAIZ" led by FAST Partnership.