

NYT <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/11/06/climate/what-is-cop30-belem.html>

Here's What to Know About the COP30 Climate Talks in Brazil

Diplomats and leaders from around the world are gathering on the edge of the Amazon rainforest for annual talks on how to limit global warming.

By David Gelles

Nov. 6, 2025, 5:01 a.m. ET

This year's United Nations climate summit got underway in Belém, Brazil, on Thursday.

The meeting, known as COP30, comes during another year of record heat and extreme weather around the globe. At the same time, energy demand is rising and some of the world's biggest economies are rapidly shifting their climate policies.

President Trump withdrew from the Paris Agreement, the landmark 2015 pact aimed at slowing global warming, on his first day in office. Since then, he's been promoting fossil fuels and stripping federal support for clean energy. China, at the same time, is extending its lead in renewable power.

Against that backdrop, diplomats, heads of state and heads of government are gathering to try to chart a path forward.

Here's a concise guide to the meeting.

What to know:

What is COP30?

When is COP30?

Where is COP30?

What's the main goal?

Who will attend?

What does the U.S. absence mean?

What other issues will shape COP30?

What is COP30?

It's an annual gathering of the 197 countries that have agreed to the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Those countries, the parties to the convention, come together every year and try to update their plans to address climate change.

COP stands for Conference of the Parties. This is the 30th such gathering.

In recent years, COP has grown from a relatively insular meeting of diplomats and policy experts into an enormous event that attracts tens of thousands of attendees including business executives, the leaders of nonprofit groups, scientists and activists.

Want to stay updated on what's happening in Brazil? Sign up for Your Places: Global Update, and we'll send our latest coverage to your inbox.

When is COP30?

This year, world leaders are gathering to address the gathering on Thursday and Friday, before the formal start of the talks. The official opening is Monday, and that's when negotiators from nearly 200 countries get down to business. The talks are scheduled to close on Nov. 21, but COPs have a history of going into overtime as negotiators scramble to secure final agreements.

Where is COP30?

Each year's COP is held in a different city. This year, the formal proceedings will take place in a park in Belém, Brazil, a city near the mouth of the Amazon River.

Brazil's president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, came to office with promises to slow deforestation in the Amazon rainforest and has pledged to reduce Brazil's emissions sharply in the coming years.

But hosting the event in Belém has turned into a headache for Mr. Lula. The city does not have enough housing to accommodate everyone attending the event, so many countries are putting up their delegations on cruise ships.

The United Nations has not announced where next year's event will take place. Australia and Turkey are both vying to be host.

What's the main goal?

Countries have been pledging to reduce their planet-warming emissions for years now, but progress has been slow. This year, the goal is to turn those pledges into action, with countries encouraged to put forward specific plans on how they plan to reduce pollution.

Mr. Lula is also calling on wealthy nations to make more funding available for developing nations that need financial support to implement costly clean-energy projects and to prepare for rising temperatures. And, with COP30 taking place in the Amazon region, there will be a focus on preserving tropical forests.

At the end of the conference, negotiators will try to adopt a final agreement that will include new commitments to address climate change.

Who will attend?

Many heads of state and government are expected to attend, including the leaders of Britain, Kenya, France, Germany, Thailand and Pakistan.

But many other leaders are expected to skip this year's talks, including the leaders of China, Australia, Turkey and Indonesia.

President Trump is not attending, and the Trump administration is not planning to send an official delegation, though some Democrats from Congress are expected to attend.

After the world leaders depart, formal negotiations begin among thousands of delegates. And because of the logistical challenges associated with Belém, other events, including gatherings of mayors and business leaders, began earlier this month in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

What does the U.S. absence mean?

When President Trump said he was withdrawing from the Paris climate agreement, other world leaders assailed the move and pledged to continue working to address climate change.

But the sudden American shift has already reverberated around the globe. The United States is the world's largest economy and second-largest polluter, and actions taken by the Trump administration have significantly hampered the country's efforts to reduce emissions.

The Trump administration is also using oil and gas exports as a diplomatic tool, pressuring foreign governments to buy American fossil fuels in exchange for economic and military support.

What other issues will shape COP30?

The trade wars unleashed by Mr. Trump have disrupted global trade, including the flow of rare earth minerals, many of which are critical components in clean energy technologies.

In the year since COP29, investment in data centers powering artificial intelligence has continued to rise, straining energy grids and raising new questions about how the world will meet its power needs.

And in the United States, some longtime climate champions have scaled back their public support for reducing emissions. Several billionaires who previously championed climate issues have gone quiet under the Trump administration, and last week Bill Gates issued a memo that downplayed some of the risks associated with a warming planet and suggested that governments and philanthropies focus more resources on alleviating poverty and providing medical aid to the needy.

2024 Brought the World to a Dangerous Warming Threshold. Now What?

Global temperatures last year crept past a key goal, raising questions about how much nations can stop the planet from heating up further.

David Gelles reports on climate change and leads The Times's Climate Forward newsletter and events series.