GPS

PARAGUAY • URUGUAY • ARGENTINA • BRAZIL

GRUPO DE PAÍSES PRODUCTORES DEL SUR

GROUP OF PRODUCING COUNTRIES FROM THE SOUTHERN CONE

Contribuyendo a la producción global sustentable de alimentos

Contributing to the global sustainable food production

www.grupogpps.org | info@grupogpps.org

The results of COP30 and the strategic role of the agricultural sector: implications and perspectives towards COP31

Paloma Ochoa

December, 2025

Contenido

Summary 3

1. Introduction 3

2. Agriculture, climate change and global governance 4

3. Key results of COP30 4

3.1. The Belém Package and the emphasis on adaptation 4

3.2. Food systems, forests and land at the center of the agenda 5

3.3. Technological initiatives and public-private partnerships 5

3.4. Political limits and structural absences 5

4. The agricultural sector in the face of the COP30 agreements 6

4.1. Agriculture as a climate solution: evidence from the Southern Cone 6

4.3. Challenges for developing countries and structural limitations of the agreements 7

5. Some recommendations 8

6. Perspectives towards COP31 8

7. Conclusions 9

The results of COP30 and the strategic role of the agricultural sector: implications and perspectives towards COP31

Paloma Ochoa

December 2025

Summary

COP30, held in Belém, Brazil, in November 2025, marked a turning point in the integration of agri-food systems into the core of global climate governance. Against a backdrop of increasing pressure on food security, adaptation financing, and ecosystem protection, the agreements reached reinforced the role of the agricultural sector as a key actor in mitigation and adaptation. This paper analyzes the main outcomes of COP30, with a particular focus on the decisions, commitments, and mechanisms related to agriculture, and assesses their opportunities, limitations, and challenges. It also examines the outlook for COP31, identifying the key issues likely to shape the next round of negotiations and their implications for developing countries and agricultural export economies.

Keywords: COP30, agriculture, climate change, adaptation, climate finance, agri-food systems, COP31.

1. Introduction

Climate change has become one of the main drivers of economic, social, and productive development on a global scale. Within this context, the agricultural sector occupies a particularly complex and relevant position, as it is one of the most vulnerable to climate impacts and, at the same time, the only economic sector that can effectively contribute to carbon sequestration.

The 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30), held in Belém, Brazil, took place against a backdrop of high geopolitical fragmentation, trade tensions, and a development finance crisis. Despite these challenges, the summit successfully reached a consensus on a set of decisions known as the "Belém Package," focusing on adaptation, climate finance, and the explicit recognition of the role of food systems, forests, and land.

The Belém Political Package (also known as Mutirao , a Tupi-Guarani word meaning collective work) brings together 29 decisions adopted by consensus that include just transition, financing, adaptation with global indicators, science, gender and technology, with a strong intention to accelerate the implementation of the Paris Agreement (COP30).

Although, thanks to the impetus given by the Brazilian presidency, COP30 consolidated agriculture as a structural axis of the climate agenda, significant gaps persist between formal commitments and effective implementation capacities, especially in developing countries.

2. Agriculture, climate change and global governance

The relationship between agriculture and climate change is structured around three main dimensions: mitigation, adaptation, and food security. From a mitigation perspective, the sector offers enormous potential for carbon sequestration through practices such as regenerative agriculture, soil restoration, silvopastoral systems, and reforestation.

Furthermore, in terms of adaptation, agriculture is one of the sectors most exposed to climate variability, the increase in extreme events, water stress, and soil degradation. This is especially critical for family and small-scale farming, which accounts for a large part of food production in developing countries.

From a global governance perspective, the progressive integration of agriculture into the international climate regime has been slow and marked by tensions between developed and developing countries. While the former have tended to prioritize market-efficient approaches and clean technologies, the latter have emphasized the need for financing, technology transfer, and equity in responsibilities. This is particularly relevant and significant when adopting a stocks-and-flows approach. While flows focus on the current contribution of individual countries to global emissions, stocks account for the accumulated historical contributions that have led us to the current situation. In this sense, the responsibility of developed countries is not, and should not be, equivalent to that of developing countries (Ochoa, 2025).

3. Key results of COP30

3.1. The Belém Package and the emphasis on adaptation

COP30, held in Belém, consolidated a structural shift within the climate regime: adaptation ceased to play a secondary role and became a political priority. The *Belém Political Package* was adopted, establishing a goal of tripling adaptation funding by 2035 and doubling it by 2025, along with the operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund starting in 2026 (AAPRESID, 2025). This shift reflects the recognition that, even

with ambitious mitigation scenarios, the impacts of climate change will continue to intensify over the coming decades.

Additionally, 59 indicators for the Global Adaptation Goal (GGA) were approved for the first time, creating a common technical basis for measuring vulnerabilities, resilience and sectoral actions, representing a critical step forward for agriculture in the face of climate change.

For the agricultural sector, this emphasis on adaptation is particularly relevant, as it opens up the possibility of financing water infrastructure, early warning systems, research into resistant seeds, productive diversification, and insurance mechanisms against extreme events.

3.2. Food systems, forests and land at the center of the agenda

COP30 consolidated the integration of food systems within the climate architecture. The interdependence between food production, biodiversity conservation, poverty reduction, and climate stability was explicitly recognized. Within this framework, commitments related to forest protection, combating deforestation, and recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities were strengthened.

From an agricultural perspective, this decision represents progress in the systemic view of the climate problem, but it also generates tensions in countries where the expansion of the agricultural frontier continues to be a key driver of economic growth.

3.3. Technological initiatives and public-private partnerships

Another key outcome of COP30 was the boost given to public-private partnerships aimed at decarbonizing critical inputs for agricultural production. In particular, projects related to the development of low-carbon fertilizers using clean hydrogen and new synthesis technologies were promoted.

These initiatives reflect a growing interest in reducing indirect agricultural emissions, which in many cases represent a significant portion of its total carbon footprint. However, their economic viability and accessibility for small producers still present important questions.

3.4. Political limits and structural absences

Despite progress in adaptation and financing, COP30 highlighted significant limitations. Resistance persisted to incorporating more explicit commitments to the gradual phasing out of fossil fuels, as did the difficulty in establishing binding targets for the private sector. These tensions reflect the enduring power imbalances and the power asymmetries within the international system.

The United States' absence from COP30 had a significant impact on both the political and financial fronts. The lack of participation from one of the main historical actors in the climate regime weakened signals of commitment to financing and affected key initiatives. A prime example was the Tropical Forest Fund, which managed to secure commitments of approximately USD 6 billion, well below its target of USD 125 billion, highlighting the structural limitations of climate finance in a context of fragmented leadership.

4. The agricultural sector in the face of the COP30 agreements

4.1. Agriculture as a climate solution: evidence from the Southern Cone

COP30 marked a turning point by firmly establishing the idea that agriculture can be an indispensable part of the solution. No-till farming, integrated crop-plant systems (ILPF), regenerative agriculture, and bioenergy were presented as production models capable of capturing carbon, reducing emissions, and increasing resilience.

Although formal negotiations on agriculture and food systems within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change continue under the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on Agriculture and Food Security (SJWA), whose four-year mandate runs from 2022 until its review at COP31 (next year), the COP30 agreements open a window of opportunity to advance a structural transformation of the agricultural sector. The increasing availability of financing for adaptation and technological innovation can facilitate the adoption of sustainable production practices, improve input efficiency, and reduce losses along agri-food chains.

Furthermore, the recognition of agriculture's potential as a carbon sink reinforces international interest in payment mechanisms for ecosystem services, agricultural carbon markets, and environmental certification schemes.

In this vein, one of the most significant milestones of COP30 was the creation of AgriZone , the first exclusive space dedicated to agriculture within a COP. It hosted more than 350 technical and political events, attracting over 25,000 visitors and showcasing technological advancements in low-carbon production, regenerative agriculture, integrated systems, and agroforestry approaches.

The AgriZone provided a concrete demonstration that tropical agriculture can be an active part of the climate solution, integrating productivity, mitigation, and adaptation. Officials from the COP presidency and the IICA emphasized the need to institutionalize this forum at future summits.

Technical demonstrations at AgriZone and panels conducted by Aapresid , ABAG, Embrapa and IICA showed that no-till farming doubles carbon capture in soils and

reduces emissions by up to 40%, producer-led innovation is regionally scalable and technology and artificial intelligence can function as central adaptation tools (AAPRESID, 2025; ABAG, 2025; IICA, 2025).

Additionally, and in line with the above, several initiatives for soils and bioeconomy were presented, among which the following stand out:

- RAIZ Initiative (Resilient Agriculture Investment for Net Zero Land Degradation): led by Brazil, with support from FAO and nine other countries, focused on restoring degraded soils, mobilizing public and private investment, and building rural resilience. It is based on the fact that more than 2 billion hectares are degraded worldwide.
- TERRA Plan: focused on expanding agroecology, soil restoration, bio-inputs, resilient seeds and mixed financing for family farming.
- Low Carbon Soybeans (Embrapa): with verifiable direct seeding protocols, with increases of 48% in productivity and reduction of up to 76% in emissions compared to conventional tillage.

These initiatives consolidate the transition from narrative to territorial action.

4.3. Challenges for developing countries and structural limitations of the agreements

However, the potential benefits of these advances are not distributed automatically or equitably. In many developing countries, a lack of institutional capacity, poor infrastructure, technological gaps, and funding constraints limit the possibility of implementing the commitments made.

COP30 significantly broadened the debate on climate finance for tropical agriculture, with a strong emphasis on:

- Climate credit
- Sustainable rural insurance
- Blended finance
- Ecosystem services markets

Panels led by ABAG, CNseg and FGV highlighted that rural insurance appears as a structural instrument of productive resilience in the face of extreme events, while CRAs (Environmental Reserve Quotas) emerge as key mechanisms to articulate conservation and profitability.

Another major challenge for the agricultural sector is the growing interrelationship between climate policy and international trade. The introduction of more stringent environmental standards, carbon border adjustment mechanisms, and traceability requirements present new barriers for exporting countries. At the same time, these instruments can become opportunities for producers who can differentiate themselves

through sustainability attributes. The effectiveness of the COP30 agreements will depend largely on the realization of promised financial flows, the effective transfer of technologies, and the strengthening of local capacities.

In this regard, the FAO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) published a report on agri-food systems and NAPs (National Food Supply Chains) during COP30. Adaptation Plans), which reveals that countries recognize the importance of adapting the agri-food system, but significant gaps in financing and technical capacity persist, and only a fraction of global adaptation resources are directed to the agricultural sector, representing a barrier to effective implementation. Furthermore, the FAO highlighted that agri-food systems represent a significant percentage of global mitigation potential, but receive a minuscule share of total climate finance, which is a critical gap (FAO, 2025).

Despite the progress made, the final COP30 text did not include a roadmap for phasing out fossil fuels or halting global deforestation due to a lack of political consensus. This was interpreted by many delegations as a setback in mitigation, reinforcing the growing importance of adaptation as a core strategy.

5. Some recommendations

Based on the analysis of the results of COP30, some lines of future action can be considered:

1. **Strengthen climate finance for small-scale agriculture** , prioritizing adaptation projects with direct impacts on food security and rural employment.
2. **Develop robust measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) systems** for mitigation initiatives in agriculture, especially in fertilizers, livestock, and land use, that allow the implementation of payment systems for environmental services.
3. **Promote effective technology transfer models** , avoiding the concentration of profits in large companies.
4. **Linking climate policy with trade policy** , mitigating the impacts of new environmental standards on agro-industrial exports.

6. Perspectives towards COP31

COP31, to be held in Antalya, Türkiye, is shaping up to be a key event for moving from political commitments to the effective implementation of the agreements reached in Belém.

It is expected that the agenda will focus on operationalizing adaptation financing mechanisms, monitoring emissions reduction commitments, and consolidating regulatory frameworks for sectoral initiatives.

For the agricultural sector, the priorities will be:

1. Definitive institutionalization of the AgriZone as a permanent space.
2. Operational implementation of RAIZ and Plan TERRA in developing countries.
3. Standardization of MRV systems for carbon in agricultural soils.
4. Consolidation of rural climate insurance as a global public policy.
5. Integration of agriculture into international carbon and bioeconomy markets.

Brazil will continue to lead the climate agenda throughout 2026, reinforcing the political centrality of southern agriculture in global climate governance. For the agricultural sector, COP31 could mark a turning point in the institutionalization of international standards for low-emission agriculture, as well as in the definitive integration of food security within the global climate architecture. However, the pace and depth of these advances will depend on the political will of the major emitters and the degree of North-South cooperation.

7. Conclusions

COP30 solidified a historic shift in international climate governance by explicitly recognizing agriculture as a key player in mitigation, adaptation, and food security. The creation of AgriZone , the launch of RAIZ, the increased role of producers, and the strengthening of climate insurance and financial mechanisms confirm this strategic change.

However, the Belém results also highlight the persistent tensions between production, the environment, and development, as well as the profound asymmetries between countries. For the agreements reached to have a real impact, it will be essential to advance effective implementation mechanisms, guarantee equitable access to financial resources, and strengthen institutional capacities.

Looking ahead to COP31, the central challenge will be to move from the declarative to the operational level, turning political commitments into concrete public policies that allow for the compatibility of agricultural productivity, food security and environmental sustainability.

The real test will begin in the period 2026–2030, when commitments must translate into public policies, effective financing, and measurable productive transformations.

References:

AAPRESID (2025). *The voice of Argentine agriculture at COP30: solutions from the territory*

ABAG (2025). COP30 – Vision Geral e Avanços para o Agro Brasileiro

Coal Brief (2025). *COP30: Key outcomes for food , forests , land and nature at the UN climate Talks in Belém.* Carbon Brief

FAO & UNDP (2025). *Agrifood Systems in National Adaptation Plans : an analysis.* FAOHome

FAO (2025). *COP30: FAO brings agrifood systems to the forefront of climate action.* FAOHome

MITECO (2025). *Official COP30 results report.*

Ochoa, P. (2025). *The role of the private agricultural sector of the Southern Cone in preparation for COP30 in Belem* . GPS

UN Geneva (2025). *Belém COP30 delivers climate finance boost and pledge to plan fossil fuel transition .* The United Nations Office at Geneva

UNFCCC. *COP30 Action Agenda / Belém Package of Decisions .*