



Franciscans International
A voice at the United Nations

BRIEF REPORT ON THE LATEST FRANCISCANS INTERNATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING IN BELÉM, BRAZIL

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I would like to take this opportunity to thank the International Franciscans Conference - Third Order Regular (IFC-TOR) for the tremendous support as a representative on the Franciscans International Board of Directors. Unfortunately, my trip to Belém incurred some unforeseen costs. Had I known it would be so expensive, I would not have attended. However, I thank you for going out of your way to fund my entire trip.



I struggled a bit to obtain my Brazilian visa, but our Geneva office staff helped by asking the Dominicans, who were among the organizers, to send us the letters of invitation directly from COP30 with two other F.I. colleagues.



In total, there were 22 members of the Franciscan Family. Every morning, we met to plan the day ahead and decide who would attend which session or conference. In the evening, after dinner, we gathered to share what we had experienced during the day. Sometimes, it was simply fulfilling to go to the People's Summit and mingle with the local indigenous people, sharing in their way of life through conversation, dancing, mini interviews and taking pictures.

Travel

The journey was long and tedious! Fortunately, I met up with two IBD brothers and we had the same experience. Nonetheless, all went well and we arrived safely, welcomed by the humid heat and endless rain of the Amazon!

Accommodation

We stayed at the Capuchin Friars in Belém. The bedrooms were not as nice or comfortable as expected. However, the advantage was that everyone had their own room, and each room had its own bathroom and enough water.

Meals

The brothers generously shared their space with us. We dined with them in their refectory, where there was plenty of variety. At the main conference venue, the Blue Zone, we could not use cash or ATM cards to buy food. Instead, we had to buy vouchers that could only be used in the Blue Zone, even though

there were other venues assigned to other conferences.



It was difficult to know how much to budget for lunch. As the Blue Zone badges were limited, we could not access the Blue Zone every day. Therefore, it was difficult to find an ATM. The Green Zone was open to all, as was the People's Summit at the University of Pará, where the Inter-Faith Dialogue was being held.



Activities

I managed to participate in various activities, such as twice in the Blue Zone and twice in the Green Zone. I also participated in the solidarity demonstration with indigenous people, civil society and various NGOs and other faith-based organizations, such as Caritas, the Lutheran Church, the Anglican Church, the Franciscans and the joint bishops' conferences. I was happy to see how concerned the Church is about climate change.

A statement was released by five cardinals, twenty-three bishops and more than eighty Catholic organizations from over thirty different countries present at COP30. The statement was signed in solidarity with the Catholic Church by more than 40 different countries.



I also had the opportunity to attend an evening mass in a peripheral area and later join them for a feast. It was very simple and crowded; each family brought food to share. It was a lovely evening of fellowship.

Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty

- Climate and food security must be aligned with social justice.
- International climate action must guarantee that no one is left behind.
- Human-centered hunger, poverty and climate justice are interrelated; therefore, all must be



considered and involved. Germany is one of the countries that supports social protection in the event of climate disasters. It has committed itself to remaining a partner in the fight against hunger, poverty and climate change.

- The Brazilian Minister of Forestry is also at the forefront of the fight against hunger and poverty because she says that the climate crisis causes immigration and human loss and makes poor people more vulnerable. Fortunately, local Brazilians have the knowledge and ability to persevere and protect nature and adapt. Brazil's food security system has eliminated hunger in the country (according to the Minister of Forestry) because it has invested in small-scale farmers and local initiatives to promote stable growth. Brazilian smallholders have been made aware of climate justice.

Some impacts of climate change are

Displacement of people

There is a connection between poverty, hunger, climate change and displaced people. For example, Chad is a small, poor country that has received more than a million people displaced by the impacts of climate change.

- Due to displacement, there are more child marriages, child prostitution and human trafficking.
- A side event with the UN Secretary-General on human rights emphasized the right to autonomy in defending and protecting the environment.
- Defenders must be protected, supported and empowered, not intimidated.
- Climate justice is not optional; it is essential to defend environmental defenders.
- Defending environmental defenders means defending human rights.
- When human rights defenders are silenced, the environment is also silenced.

- A voice from the Global South: bishops from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America.

Some of the points raised were

The climate crisis is an urgent reality, with global warming reaching 1.55°C in 2024. It is not just a technical problem; it is an existential issue of justice, dignity, and care for our common home. We must never abandon this goal. It is the Global South and future generations who are already suffering the consequences.

We reject false solutions such as 'green' capitalism, technocracy, the commodification of nature and extractivism, as these perpetuate exploitation and injustice.

- **Equity:** Rich nations must pay their ecological debt through fair climate financing.
- Further indebting the Global South to recover losses and damage in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and Oceania.
- **Justice:** We must promote economic degrowth and phase out fossil fuels. This will end all new infrastructure and ensure that those who have profited from them are properly taxed. This will usher in a new era of governance that includes and prioritizes the communities most affected by the climate and nature crises.
- **Protection:** Defend indigenous peoples, ecosystems, and impoverished communities, recognizing the greater vulnerability of women, girls, and future generations, as well as addressing climate migration as a matter of justice and human rights.

The struggle for climate justice is a united cry to protest, defend and safeguard. Many countries in the Global South have abundant natural resources, yet indigenous people do not benefit from them. The Church wants the local population to be among those who benefit from their own natural resources.

- There must be shared responsibility, not loans.

Human rights must be implemented in all global strategies.

Peace is one of the priorities that can bring stability to countries such as Congo.

Another example given was Paraguay:

Integral fortification

- Water reservation
- Some solutions are ineffective because they are based on ideas from the Global North and often have no impact.

Climate justice cannot be separated from cultural and social justice.

Ecological conversion is for everyone because we are all affected.

Future meetings

One bishop from the Global North spoke about the need for a coalition between the Global North and the Global South, as some parts of the Global North are also severely affected by climate change, particularly wildfires.

Conclusion

The state parties to the UNFCCC agreed on several key documents to implement the Paris Agreement, as part of their joint efforts to address the current climate crisis. The two-week negotiations were intense and difficult, with notable differences of opinion among states regarding the phase-out of fossil fuels, the main cause of the climate crisis. The commitment to transitioning away from fossil fuels, adopted at COP28 in Dubai, continues to be watered down. At COP30, the Brazilian Presidency initially proposed a roadmap to phase out fossil fuels through the 'Global Mutirão', supported by 80 countries. However, under strong pressure from oil-producing countries such as Saudi Arabia and Russia, supported by India and other emerging economies, the final text makes no reference to the roadmap for phasing out fossil fuels.

On a more positive note, civil society organisations, indigenous peoples and communities, and faith-based organisations were more numerous and visible at COP30. Together, they have asserted their presence after being marginalised in recent COPs. The Peoples' Summit and Interfaith Tapiri were among the activities organised for the public outside the COP30 Blue Zone.



Future meetings

Franciscans International Board of Directors (IBD) Calendar Dates
January – May 2026

Date	Venue	Time	WHO
7 th January	Zoom meeting	3 pm	IBD
12-15 th January	Geneva, in person	3 days	President & V. President, meeting with staff
11 th March	Zoom meeting	3 pm	IBD
5-8 th May	Geneva, in person	3 days	IBD
	Zoom meeting		

More interesting pictures



from Belem



