International Bodies

COP30

CHAIR:

GWCIA 30

December 6th

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Letter from the Chair

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to GWUCIA XXX! My name is Cara, and I am delighted to be your chair for the UN Climate Change Conference, or COP 30.

For a little bit about me, I am a student of The Elliott School within The George Washington University's class of 2028 studying International Affairs with a concentration in International Development. I started doing Model UN my 2nd year of high school and I have stuck with it since! I joined GW's Model UN team immediately after coming to campus and I can't wait to share the juxtaposing feeling of excitement and nervousness that I get everytime I attend a conference.

Besides school and Model UN, I am super involved with my sorority, Sigma Kappa, and I am part of the management team at Brandy Melville's DC location. I love to try new restaurants and have study dates with my friends at coffee shops all around DC! Additionally, I grew up in Annandale, Virginia and went to Frost Middle School in Fairfax, so I know the DMV well and I wouldn't trade growing up in this area for anything else.

As someone who has an International Development concentration, the topics discussed at COP 30 are extremely important to me. While in this committee, I advise that delegates not only think of economical solutions, but also solutions that serve the local community. Regardless if the solutions are tangible or not, have fun! Model UN is supposed to be a little goofy, while also researching and analyzing real, global issues. Don't take your speeches and papers so seriously; even at my age of 20 and having done 10+ conferences, I mess up all the time and I am constantly trying to improve. I like to think of public speaking and debate as a muscle, it will have its' good and bad moments, but as long as you train it, it's generally going to get stronger.

Good luck, delegates! I look forward to seeing you all December 6th.

Sincerely,
Cara King
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Committee Description

The 2025 United Nations Climate Change Conference, or COP30, is set to be held in Belém, Brazil, a city known as the 'gateway to the Amazon.' The conference takes place in the context of increasingly dire climate change, burgeoning progress in climate infrastructure, and global challenges to climate diplomacy. For the world to effectively combat climate change, it must be done quickly, equitably, and with cooperation from all countries.

Officially the Conference of the Parties (COP) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the conference has been held annually to create progress towards dealing with climate change, producing pieces of legislation such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. The conference is attended by many states, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations.

The expectation for procedure in this committee is similar to any other General Assembly committee. Delegates will engage in moderated and unmoderated debate, form blocs, and write and vote on resolutions.

Topic 1: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The primary cause of modern climate change is the increase in Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The production of gasses such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide due to industrial activity, agriculture, and deforestation has contributed to the gradual warming of the globe by the greenhouse effect, where certain gasses trap heat in the earth's atmosphere, raising earth's temperature. Since the pre-industrial era (1850-1900), the temperature of the Earth has risen about 1.2 degrees celsius (2.2 Fahrenheit), with this decade being Earth's hottest ever. This has resulted in the acidification of oceans from excess carbon dioxide, sea level rise, melting ice, droughts, and more frequent and severe weather events.

Previous UN agreements have focused heavily on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This focus began with the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which recognized human-made greenhouse gas emissions as the primary cause of global warming and committed countries to reduce their emissions to "a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system." This was expanded upon by the 2015 Paris Agreement, which sets a limit of a 1.5°C increase in global temperatures, requiring a 50% decrease in emissions by 2030 and net-zero emissions by the mid-2000s.

COP30 focuses on the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), the commitments that countries make to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. These commitments serve as binding targets for countries that are continuously tracked to evaluate the progress of climate change mitigation. A key part of the Paris agreement, NDCs have been published by most countries. For COP30, countries are expected to publish updated NDCs for 2025, but only a few countries have done so.

Countries face many challenges in the implementation of their NDCs. Current

commitments fall short of the 1.5°C or 2°C target set in the Paris Agreement. If followed, current commitments would result in a 3°C increase in global temperatures. Additionally, many countries are failing to implement the proper policies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Both of these factors make it very improbable that the world achieves its target of only a 2°C increase in temperature unless further action is taken to force compliance with NDCs.

On top of COP30's specific focus on NDCs, ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions remains a significant challenge for the conference to address. Renewable energy is one of the most important facets of this issue, as a majority of greenhouse gas emissions come from energy produced by fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas. Replacing fossil fuels with solar, wind, hydro-electric, and even nuclear sources is a key part of reducing greenhouse gas emissions as a whole. Likewise, energy efficiency also is a major part of reducing emissions, both for fossil fuels and renewable energy sources. Energy policy is not the only way greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced. Land management, reforestation, and transportation are also major areas of focus, along with many other issues.

Research Questions:

- How can countries and international organizations enforce Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs,) as well as encourage states to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions?
- How can the world prevent global warming from going above 1.5°C or 2°C?
- What methods can be used to speed up the transition to renewable energy?
- Through what other means can emissions be reduced?

Topic 2: Climate Financing and Developing Countries

Climate finance refers to local, national or transnational financing that seeks to support mitigation and adaptation actions that will address climate change. Climate finance is needed for many projects, as they often require large amounts of investment in order to be constructed. This applies to projects that try to mitigate climate change and those that try to adapt to it. The Paris agreement affirms that Developed countries are expected to lead climate financing efforts, taking into account the unique needs of developing countries. Climate finance is overall designed to reinforce efforts to combat climate change in both developed and developing countries.

COP30 aims to expand on previous commitments to climate financing made at COP29 in Baku. From an initial pledge of $300B a year, the "Baku to Belém Roadmap to 1.3T" aims to increase public and private climate investment to $1.3T by 2035 in developing countries. COP30 aims to plan the scale and methods of this climate finance pledge.

COP29 discussed a variety of sources for climate finance. Developed countries are expected to pledge at least $300B by 2035. However, under the deal struck in Baku, private companies and international lenders such as the World Bank are called upon to cover the rest. Although large, this investment was described to be a "paltry sum" given the scale of global climate change.

Numerous issues surround the issue of climate finance. Many surround the role of developed countries. Under 1992 UN rules, developing countries are encouraged to contribute, but only developed countries are required. Wealthy countries claim that some of these rules are outdated, notably excluding countries like China and Saudi Arabia from being required to contribute. Many wealthy countries have also failed to provide adequate finance, failing to hit the previous $100B target for several years after

the deadline. This issue is made worse by the waning commitment of developed countries to provide financing, most notably by the United States. This, coupled with the issues of securing private investment, creates a significant challenge for climate mitigation projects in developing countries, where it is often most needed.

Research Questions:

- How can more climate financing funds be raised from both public and private sources?
- What are the unique challenges that developing countries face and what unique needs do they have in financing climate action?
- How can developed countries be expected to invest in climate finance?
- How can the economies of both developing and developed countries benefit from investment into climate change mitigation and adaptation?

Topic 3: Tropical Rainforest Conservation

Tropical Rainforest Conservation is also a major topic of discussion for COP30, especially given its Amazonian setting. Brazil plans to launch its rainforest-saving megafund, the Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TRFF), at the conference. The TRFF is a fund that plans to shift the economics of deforestation, aiming to invest $125B in a portfolio and using the dividends to pay developing countries to protect and restore tropical rainforests.

Brazil's project comes in the context of intensifying tropical forest loss, around 9 million acres a year. Tropical rainforests are the most biodiverse biomes on the planet and are vital for global ecosystems and scientific research. However, those regions have come under threat from both climate change and human exploitation, a dire issue especially in developing countries. Regions such as Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America have seen particularly rapid deforestation.

Tropical rainforests are regularly cleared for economic reasons, such as logging, new pasture for livestock, land for planting crops, or mining. Beef, soybeans, and palm oil are the biggest drivers of deforestation, with beef in particular contributing significantly to greenhouse gas emissions. These products are often sold on the international market to foreign consumers. Because of this, combatting deforestation requires the balancing of economic and environmental concerns.

Preserving tropical rainforest environments remains a key component of mitigating climate change. Tropical rainforests are key "carbon sinks," as the dense plant life absorbs carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and turns it into biomass and then returns it to the environment. It is for this reason that the Amazon rainforest is considered the "Lungs of the planet."

Research Questions:

- How can the Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TRFF) work to prevent deforestation? What are its weaknesses? How can it be improved?
- How can developing countries protect Tropical Rainforests from economics-driven deforestation?
- How can Tropical Rainforest ecosystems be protected from deforestation and overall climate change?
- What methods can be used to reforest deforested areas?

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