

Monday 16th June 2025

Letter from scientists: be the climate leader the world needs

To the Excellency  
Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva  
President of Brazil

Mr. President,

As COP30 rapidly approaches, we strongly urge you to use your substantial global platform to champion a fast, fair, effective, and full phaseout of fossil fuels. The science is clear: the burning of fossil fuels is driving climate change and its disastrous impacts on the lives and livelihoods of people all around the world. These climate impacts will erase decades of development progress and make it harder, if not impossible, to reduce inequalities, alleviate poverty, and end hunger. We believe we share these goals with you.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Paris Agreement - a historic moment when the world united to limit global warming and ensure a prosperous future for all. Yet, a decade later, we remain well short of our goals. The last 10 years were also the 10 hottest years in history.

The world has now exceeded 1.5°C of warming in a single year for the first time on record. We are experiencing escalating climate impacts on every continent — from heatwaves and mega-fires to devastating floods, crop failures, and climate-driven displacement. These events are disproportionately harming those least responsible for climate change. The overwhelming cause is our continued reliance on fossil fuels. In addition to land, our oceans are also being adversely affected. Rising sea levels, warming temperatures, and acidification are placing unsustainable stress on marine ecosystems, causing coral reef collapse, threatening global fishing areas, and endangering the livelihoods of coastal communities.

Scientific evidence from the IPCC and IPBES is conclusive:

- Existing fossil fuel extraction plans alone will exhaust the 1.5°C carbon budget.
- The only Paris-aligned pathways require deep, immediate, and sustained cuts in fossil fuel use, with energy systems powered predominantly by renewables.
- Delay is no longer an option. The IPCC finds that to stay below 1.5°C with limited overshoot, global emissions must fall by at least 48% by 2030. Yet, emissions have continued to grow since the last IPCC report, meaning that even steeper cuts are needed to achieve the goals outlined by the Paris Agreement.

- According to the 2024 Global Carbon Budget, the remaining amount of carbon that can still be emitted while staying within the 1.5°C window - will be exhausted within six years if no drastic action to limit emissions is taken.
- The IPBES Nexus Assessment reinforces that cutting the hundreds of billions of dollars in fossil fuel subsidies and investing in nature-positive energy transitions delivers benefits for biodiversity, food security, water access, inequality and human health.

Mr. President, Brazil is already a leader in renewable energy, with nearly 90% of its electricity coming from clean sources. The country is also home to vast natural wealth - forests, rivers, biodiversity - that can help anchor a global shift toward a just and resilient future. With your leadership at COP30 and BRICS, Brazil has the opportunity to define what it means to be a climate leader in the 21st century and have other countries join this mission.

Without a fast, just and planned transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems, as agreed during COP28, it will be impossible to avoid strong socioeconomic impacts that will impact humanity for centuries. We recognize this is a significant challenge that must be tackled with urgency, courage and pragmatism. With only a few months before COP30, we respectfully call on you to make the transition away from fossil fuels a top priority for COP30, leading a global conversation and negotiations to consolidate the next steps for this transition, and providing the clarity and hope humanity needs to build a safer and more prosperous future.

As we rapidly approach the 10-year anniversary of the Paris Agreement, history will remember this moment when leaders will either decide to do what is scientifically and morally right or if keep the status quo. The time for courageous leadership, backed by science - is now.

With great respect,

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