

REN21: COP30 Outcome Falls Short of Global Expectations for a Renewable Future

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Belém, Brazil – The COP30 outcome is a far cry from expectations of progress by the renewable energy community. COP28 created unprecedented political alignment on the global transition away from fossil fuels and on scaling up renewables and energy efficiency. At COP30, the world anticipated another step forward: clearer implementation pathways, stronger signals on support, and a reaffirmation of the global move towards a renewables-based economy. Instead, key elements of clarity — on finance, technology transfer, and capacity building — did not make it into the text. **What remains is a diluted set of messages that neither reflects the urgency of the moment nor provides governments with the tools needed to deliver the transition.**

“While COP30 failed to reflect the real-world momentum behind renewables, nothing can stop what is already happening in markets and economies. The reality is clear: renewable energy is now the most affordable and reliable option, delivering tangible economic and social benefits and strengthening countries’ ability to withstand both climate and economic shocks. The transition is being driven by necessity and evidence — not by negotiation texts,” said **Rana Adib, Executive Director of REN21.**

“In Belém, a worrying divide emerged between society and our global leaders. On one hand, major corporations and citizens have understood that renewable energy is now the cheapest and most advantageous option, and they are moving forward individually with its adoption — whether in companies or on household rooftops. On the other hand, political leaders continue to insist on artificially maintaining a fossil-fuel-based economy, relying on subsidies and on preserving rules of the game that favour that system,” said **Ramón Méndez Galain, President of REN21.**

REN21 welcomes COP30’s call to triple adaptation finance by 2035, with efforts to double it by 2025, however the non-binding target lacks explicit pathways for renewable energy. Without them, the world risks drifting off 1.5°C and failing to build the adaptive capacity needed to protect vulnerable people.

Delivering the shift to an RBE requires new rules that shape how systems operate — from energy supply and modern grids to demand sectors, finance and the enabling economy that

supports sustainable industrialisation. COP30 was an opportunity to set this direction. Instead, global leaders delivered signals that fall short of what is needed to accelerate an economy-wide transition.

The cover text recognises record renewable energy growth and highlights the economic and social benefits of climate action, yet it offers no concrete measures to advance the transition — a missed opportunity at what was meant to be an implementation COP.

Even so, developments on the sidelines of COP30 — new finance announcements to expand electricity grids and energy storage; the Colombia-led declaration on transitioning away from fossil fuels; the Belém Declaration on Global Green Industrialisation; and the Declaration to Promote Resilient and Low-Emission Transport Systems — offered promising signals.

Missing mention of the fossil-fuel phase-out

The final COP30 agreement in Brazil ultimately omitted any explicit reference to phasing out fossil fuels, marking a setback from the momentum built in earlier talks. REN21 notes that this outcome slows momentum toward building a renewables-based economy.

The absence of a clear commitment to transition away from fossil fuels makes it harder for governments and markets to align investments with a renewable future, creating uncertainty at a time when decisive action is essential.

“The outcome of COP30 disregards the basic right to life. By avoiding concrete decisions to phase out fossil fuels — responsible for one in five deaths worldwide — leaders have missed a vital opportunity. We need consistent, science-aligned action to build an economy that protects ecosystems and is powered by renewable energy, where the full health and environmental costs of fossil fuels are acknowledged and addressed,” said **Rosilena Lindo Riggs, REN21 member and Former Energy Secretary of Panama.**

The science is unambiguous: tripling renewables, doubling energy efficiency, and cutting methane by 2030 and beyond would reduce the rate of global warming by one-third within the next decade and by half by 2040, according to the Climate Action Tracker. Parties must recognise that renewable energy is the key to the phase-out, taking concrete steps to shift finance away from fossil fuels, towards renewables.

In response to the outcome, the Governments of Colombia and the Netherlands’ announcement that they will co-host the First International Conference on the Just Transition Away from Fossil Fuels signals progress and sparks hope for greater renewables deployment. This was accompanied by the launch of the “Belém Declaration on the Just Transition Away from Fossil Fuels,” supported by 90 countries, which sets out a global

roadmap defining the minimum level of ambition needed to guide any fair and equitable transition plan worldwide.

“A fossil fuel phase-out roadmap must be emboldened by finance flows that shift decisively toward renewables — only then can we deliver the scale and speed of transition the climate crisis demands,” said Adib.

Still, the outcome wasn’t without bright spots. The approval of a just transition mechanism marked a meaningful step forward, committing Parties to centre people and equity in climate action and to strengthen cooperation, technical assistance, capacity-building, and knowledge-sharing to advance fair and inclusive transitions.

Adaptation gains ground at COP30, renewables still unrecognised

Despite mounting needs, at COP30 governments failed to deliver a clear or actionable financial target for adaptation.

The adaptation finance gap stands at USD 365 billion a year, yet developing countries received only USD 26 billion in international public finance in 2023. Renewable energy — despite its proven role in delivering adaptation benefits — receives only a fraction of this funding. The political goal to “triple” adaptation finance remains aspirational without a defined baseline, clear responsibilities or agreed forms of finance.

“Renewable energy is already delivering vital adaptation benefits — from cooling and water security to resilient health systems and maintaining power during climate disasters — but this remains largely absent from global policy and finance discussions. A renewables-based economy can not only protect people from escalating climate impacts, but it also creates jobs, economic opportunity and energy security. Ignoring this reality risks weakening accountability and slowing the investment we urgently need,” said **Adib**.

Without effective climate adaptation, up to 23% of global GDP could be lost by 2050.

Developing countries understand the stakes and make up 80% of countries submitting National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) that are integrating renewables into their adaptation plans. Yet without significantly scaled-up finance, many will struggle to meet their targets.

Recent pledges from Belgium, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Spain and Sweden to the adaptation fund — totalling **USD 58.5 million** — are a welcome signal of support, but remain

far below what is required. With major contributors yet to step up, the gap between national needs and global delivery continues to widen.

This gap is compounded by a growing mismatch between national ambition and global outcomes: while countries are beginning to recognise renewables in their national adaptation plans at home, multilateral decisions such as the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) continue to lag behind. Closing the gap is essential to accelerate progress, channel finance where it is most needed, and ensure the credibility and effectiveness of the GGA.

Belem Declaration on Global Green Industrialisation

As signatories to the Belém Declaration on Global Green Industrialisation, REN21 welcomes the declaration as a pivotal step toward accelerating a global shift to a renewables-based economy. The Declaration places green industrialisation at the heart of climate and development strategies, recognising that renewable energy, energy efficiency and sustainable value chains are foundational to decarbonising heavy industry.

By emphasising technology co-development, open information flows, and equitable international cooperation, especially for emerging and developing economies, it creates the enabling conditions needed to scale renewable energy industries worldwide. For the renewable energy community, this is a major advance: it embeds renewables as a central driver of economic opportunity, industrial competitiveness, and an equitable energy transition.

Investment Boost for Grids and Storage

At COP30, governments, development banks and industry signalled strong momentum to tackle one of the biggest bottlenecks to the energy transition: outdated grids and limited storage. The Utilities for Net Zero Alliance committed USD 148 billion annually, adding to major packages from multilateral development banks and building on the COP29 pledge.

While this news is a step in the right direction, REN21 stresses that commitments must lead to holistic, system-wide approach. Grid and storage optimisation and deployment must integrate demand, supply and infrastructure planning, and ensure meaningful stakeholder involvement at local, national and regional levels.

“The attention to grids and storage at COP30 reinforces a critical truth: without modern, flexible and resilient grid and storage infrastructure, the rapid scale-up of renewables simply cannot happen. While the surge in commitments is welcome, the gap between what is being

pledged and what is required, particularly in emerging markets, remains substantial,” said Adib.

Declaration to Promote Resilient and Low-Emission Transport Systems

REN21 welcomes the coalition of countries, led by Chile, committing to cut transport energy demand by **25% by 2035** and supply one-third of that demand with renewable energy and sustainable biofuels. Although renewable energy use increased **6.7%**, a welcome acceleration, transport remains the sector most locked into fossil fuels. Between 2022 and 2023, transport energy use grew **3.6%**, surpassing pre-pandemic levels, with fossil fuel consumption up **2.7%**, as per REN21.

“Reducing energy demand while integrating renewables is essential to shift the sector onto a sustainable path. It is central to building resilient, affordable and people-focused transport systems,” said Adib.

As negotiations continue in the next year, governments must work together to embed renewables in every phase of the transition: from phase-out roadmaps to adaptation strategies. Delivering on these pillars is essential for a renewables-based economy that delivers on climate change mitigation, adaptation and energy security.

About REN21

REN21 is the global multi-stakeholder network of governments, industry, NGOs, science and academia that enables the necessary changes to build the renewable-based economy for prosperous lives and societies.

Founded in 2004, we’ve built a powerful and diverse network of +120 institutions and a community of more than 4,000 players, from the energy ecosystem and other key sectors. Our inclusive governance structure and collaborative culture enable us to build on the insights and intelligence of our global community to drive the solutions needed for economic prosperity and societal well-being.

Since 2005, REN21’s Renewables Global Status Report has been co-created with hundreds of experts and contributors, highlighting key developments and trends in renewables.

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