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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

COP 30: Brazil's great opportunity

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Brazil will host COP 30, between November 10 and 21, 2025. The event will take place in a turbulent geopolitical scenario: the USA and some financial agents have expressed their intention to relax recently signed environmental commitments. It turns out that today's Brazil seeks to be a powerhouse in terms of sustainability and, suddenly, this apparent demobilization generated the opportunity for the country to express itself to the world and lead a non-transitional agenda on climate issues. In the short term, the commitments made by countries at COP 26, in 2021, in Glasgow, Scotland, which defined the objective of zeroing the balance of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050, are worrying.

In November 2024, during the G20 meeting in Rio de Janeiro, the Brazilian president proposed that developed countries bring forward the goal of bringing their emissions balance to zero by 2040 or 2045. In 2024, the planet's average warming exceeded the 1.5 °C mark (Tollefson 2025) and extreme weather events reached record levels of occurrence. If this warming is not reduced in the coming years, it will be essential that the emissions balance is brought to zero globally by 2040, to prevent us from exceeding the average warming of 2 °C. If this limit is exceeded, it will be necessary to remove billions of tons of GHGs by the end of the century so that the temperature returns to being "only" 1.5 °C higher than in the pre-industrial period.

According to Bidone & Mahler (2021), it should be remembered that only three countries have, at the same time, an area greater than 8 million km^2 and a population greater than 200 million inhabitants: Brazil, USA and China. Also according to the authors, Brazil, however, has great competitive advantages in relation to its peers. The national energy matrix is one of the cleanest, the vocation for regenerative agriculture is naturally carbon sequestering and the country is moving towards assuming the world's first position in food exports.

The small size of the Brazilian population, considering the size of its territory, indicates that there is great scope for sustainable development (Bidone 2024). Industrial activity, in turn, has been losing relevance in recent decades and currently accounts for approximately 12% of GDP. Now, the scenario for the necessary Brazilian neo-industrialization is set: it is exactly the development of an innovative bioeconomy, based on biotechnology, based on the socio-biodiversity of the country with the greatest diversity of life on the planet. This demand, if consolidated, will stimulate the advancement of national science (Nobre 2019) in a multidisciplinary manner.

Even though Brazil has the greatest biodiversity on the planet, the value of all products originating from it represents only 0.3 to 0.4% of GDP. Livestock, in turn, represents 6% of GDP. In the Brazilian Amazon, where the greatest biodiversity on Earth is concentrated, only 1.5% of GDP comes from this biodiversity (açaí, cocoa, chestnuts, cupuaçu, etc.); there, the GDP resulting from livestock farming alone reaches 17.5%. It is important to highlight that livestock farms were the main vector of deforestation (in 90% of cases, illegal and used for pasture) in the national Amazon.

Brazil is historically the fourth largest emitter of GHGs and in recent years it was the sixth largest emitter due to the drop in deforestation in most of its biomes, especially in the Amazon. And it could be the first country to achieve net zero emissions, considering that we have plans to eliminate deforestation in all biomes by 2030 and move quickly towards the energy transition and regenerative agriculture. The country has also given great scale to the reforestation of all its biomes. The best example is the "Arco da Restauração" project, funded by the National Bank for Economic and Social Development, which aims to restore 240 thousand km^2 of the Brazilian Amazon by 2050.

In short, Brazil has the chance to make COP 30 the most important of all COPs. The event should highlight the climate emergency we are experiencing and the risks for the entire planet of not quickly bringing the emissions balance to zero. Regarding the financing of the initiatives, the meeting should indicate the origin to meet the demands of (1) trillion dollars, for the transition to renewable energy and large forest restoration projects and (2) billion dollars, so that localities with inhabitants highly vulnerable to extreme weather events can become much more resilient.

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