**Policy Brief**

# Jesuits for Climate Justice
# SB62 and COP30 campaign

Version Pre-SB62 Bonn negotiations, May 2025

## Introduction

Ten years after the Paris Agreement, with its primary objective of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, we find ourselves in a precarious position regarding climate change, as global warming is predicted to reach 2.7°C, and a new wave of apathy is emerging in world leadership on climate matters.

Following Pope Francis' analysis in his landmark encyclical 'Laudato Si', we face "one complex crisis that is both social and environmental" (n. 139). The fourth Universal Apostolic Preference (UAP4) of the Society of Jesus encourages collaboration in caring for our Common Home. The Society of Jesus is called to advocate for Climate Justice, especially for the most vulnerable communities affected by climate change, at two critical meetings of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) taking place in 2025: in Bonn, Germany, in June, and Belem do Pará, Brazil, in November.

Accordingly, and in response to the ongoing mechanisms within the UNFCCC, the following three common goals ("calls") will be advocated for at these two conferences by the global Ignatian community:

1. Cancel the debt of underdeveloped countries and strengthen the Loss and Damage Fund.
2. Accelerate agreements and set targets for a just energy transition to reduce CO2 emissions.
3. Set concrete targets to build a Global Food Sovereignty System based on agroecological practices

This policy brief outlines the key aims and policy issues for the Ignatian community regarding the upcoming SB62 in Bonn and COP30 in Belém in 2025. It explains each call and provides context within the UNFCCC proceedings, along with suggested readings.

While useful for those participating in the Jesuit delegations to both meetings, it is primarily intended to inform a wider audience and will be publicly available. This first edition covers the SB62 meeting in Bonn from June 16 to 26, 2025, and will be updated with a progress report before COP30, to be held from November 10 to 21, 2025.

## About SB62

SB62 is the short term for the 62nd session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This is the annual meeting that wraps up talks from the last COP and prepares for the next. These two permanent subsidiary bodies of the UNFCCC are jointly tasked with organising COP:

- SBSTA acts as the science advisory team. They inform world leaders what climate science says and how new technologies can help.
- SBI is the "how-to" team. They determine how countries can effectively implement the necessary mechanisms and actions to combat climate change.

The distinction between these bodies is crucial because they represent two concurrent agendas that will run independently throughout the two weeks.

SB62 is then the preparation process for the bigger discussions at COP30. For many Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) it represents a chance to properly prepare for the vital events of COP30, in a setting with fewer people and more opportunities to build networks, gather information and press their moral case for climate justice.

CSOs participating in the SB62 conference usually engage in:

- Understanding the current situation of climate policies in detail, to be able to act at a deeper level at COP30.
- Advocating for their calls based on the moral imperative to fight climate change.
- Building Alliances with like-minded CSOs that share similar interests and will attend COP30 later in the year. CSOs support one another's events (or even organize them together), share expertise and contacts, and collectively accompany the unfolding of the negotiations.

**FIRST CALL**

**Cancel the debt of underdeveloped countries and strengthen the Loss and Damage Fund**

Part 1: Debt Cancellation

*What are the Jesuits for Climate Justice asking and why?*

The Jubilee year offers a significant opportunity to advocate for debt relief through the Caritas-led 'Turn Debt into Hope' campaign, which follows Pope Francis' appeal for debt relief and calls for establishing a new UN financial framework. We wholeheartedly join this appeal and campaign as a fundamental challenge for the universal community of nations.

*Current situation*

The current debt crisis has historical roots and is global in scope. Debt distress threatens human development and impedes progress because debt costs outpace essential spending. The debt of low and middle-income countries is unsustainable, illegitimate, and unfair.

There is an inequality of possibilities and resources among countries in dealing with disasters that are increasing due to climate change. Countries with the highest external debt, lacking their own resources, often end up incurring debt to cope with the consequences of these climatic events. More than 3.3 billion people live in countries where governments spend more on debt repayments than on essential services, such as health and education. Countries in debt distress

should not be forced to choose between servicing unsustainable debts and investing in essential areas such as education, health, or climate action.

This has also been one of the issues that generated the most controversy and where no progress was made at COP 16 on biodiversity, highlighting the need for the two conventions (Climate Change and Biodiversity) to be addressed jointly.

*What is expected to be discussed at SB62*

Cancellation of Debt has historically been a low priority at UNFCCC conferences, but gained attention at the last COP, where Nigerian President Bola Tinubu highlighted its importance. Even if the COP scenario focuses on climate change challenges, it is urgent to make visible and evident the nexus between the UN financial framework, the debt service of low- and middle-income countries, and the costs of mitigation and adaptation to climate change. In fact, many indebted countries are unable to invest in climate action, as they must allocate scarce resources to repay their debts.

At SB62 in Bonn, discussions will likely include integrating debt considerations into the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) negotiations. Key priorities include ensuring that climate finance primarily comes in the form of grants rather than debt-creating loans. The focus will be on advocating for simplified UN public grant mechanisms instead of loans from multilateral development banks or the private sector that worsen debt burdens. Additionally, establishing a UN framework that recognizes the link between climate vulnerability and sovereign debt will be crucial, with an emphasis on prioritizing grants over loans, specifically for adaptation and loss and damage financing, to prevent unjust climate debt.

*Important questions to be attentive to*

- ✓ How can ethical and historical facts help to rethink and reframe the discussion about NCQG and NDC?
- ✓ How can ecological debt arguments be better integrated into financial discussions?
- ✓ What are the ethical and financial/practical reasons that frame and support the cancellation of the debt of low and middle-income countries as a positive contribution on the way to fighting climate change for the benefit of all humanity?

Part 2: Strengthening the Loss and Damage Fund

*What are the Jesuits for Climate Justice asking and why?*

We are calling for a Loss and Damage Fund that takes into account scientific estimates and the genuine needs of the most vulnerable countries and regions on the planet, ensuring funds are sufficient, timely, and transparently managed.

There is growing recognition of the link between climate vulnerability and sovereign debt, with an increasing call for non-debt-creating financing instruments. So, the focus at SB62 and COP30 must center on climate finance that doesn't increase national debt. To achieve this scope, climate finance must prioritise grants over loans, particularly for adaptation, and for losses and damages.

*Current situation*

The expression 'loss and damage', when used in the context of climate science, refers to the consequences of climate change that go beyond what can be avoided through reducing emissions and adapting to its impacts. Part of the aspects included under the concept of "loss and damage" related to the loss and/or threats to species, varieties, and ecosystems, one of the arguments for bringing these conversations between climate change and biodiversity closer together.

As for Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), they are the national climate action plans and emissions reduction targets that each party to the Paris Agreement communicates to the UNFCCC.

The Loss and Damage Fund was established to assist developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, helping them respond to loss and damage. By integrating loss and damage into NDCs, countries can articulate the scale of these impacts and specify the financial support needed, which is crucial for the effective operation of the Loss and Damage Fund.

There is a growing emphasis on integrating loss and damage into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to capture the full scope of the challenges and ensure adequate financial support. The establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund has been underway since COP27. A key expectation at COP30 is the finalization of the Baku to Belém Roadmap, which will address shortcomings in the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on Climate Finance, including the crucial integration of finance for loss and damage, as well as the need for meaningful participation by rights holders. The NCQG is a key element of the Paris Agreement, designed to set a new financial target to support developing countries in their climate actions post-2025.

*What is expected to be discussed at SB62*

At the upcoming SB62 meetings in Bonn, key discussions will revolve around critical areas. These include reviewing and shaping the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) following the 2024 review (the WIM organises expert groups to study issues like slow-onset events and non-economic losses for vulnerable countries - it doesn't make direct policy recommendations but helps the UNFCCC advise affected countries). Bonn will further advance the operationalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund by resolving ongoing questions about its hosting and implementation. A central debate is expected on ensuring that loss and damage are explicitly considered within the NCQG and exploring the potential for its enhanced inclusion in NDCs. Additionally, the role of the Santiago Network, a subsection of WIM, in providing technical assistance for loss and damage will be reviewed.

*Important questions to be attentive to*

- ✓ What concrete support mechanisms should the WIM and Santiago Network provide?
- ✓ What is the best setup for the Loss and Damage Fund to ensure it performs its job properly?
- ✓ How will finance for loss and damage be included in the NCQG, making sure grants are prioritised over loans?
- ✓ Should NDCs include assessments of loss and damage, and how can climate finance avoid pushing vulnerable nations further into debt?

**SECOND CALL**

## Accelerate agreements and set targets for a just energy transition to reduce CO2 emissions

*What are the Jesuits for Climate Justice asking and why?*

The Paris Agreement aims to keep global warming to 1.5°C. The generation of electricity and heat is the largest contributor to greenhouse gases and therefore needs to be cut rapidly. To achieve this, it is, e.g., absolutely essential that global economies quickly stop using fossil fuels, and a key step towards this is the immediate end to all fossil fuel subsidies. These subsidies distort markets, incentivise continued fossil fuel use, and undermine the economic viability of renewable energy.

Considering that NDCs are national climate action plans and emissions reduction targets that each party to the Paris Agreement communicates to the UNFCCC, the SB62 meeting presents a key opportunity to develop clear targets for a fair transition to cleaner energy that reduces CO2 emissions.

More than half of the mineral resources needed to advance the energy transition are located on or near the lands of Indigenous and peasant peoples. We are well aware that a key component of the just transition must be the recognition of the rights of different communities, especially those living near extraction sites. For that reason, the Ignatian community advocates for a path toward energy transition that balances the urgency of decarbonization goals with respect for the rights of the most vulnerable communities.

*Current situation*

The Paris Agreement sets a general goal for temperature, but it doesn't clearly say we must stop producing fossil fuels. We need clear, time-bound targets to phase out the use of coal, oil, and gas. Developed countries must lead the way, stopping the use of fossil fuels by 2040 and for developing countries by 2050. COP30 is the deadline for countries to submit their next round of more ambitious NDCs, and so it's a crucial moment to translate long-term goals into concrete near-term actions on fossil fuels. A vital part of this is setting targets to end fossil fuel subsidies, which can eventually free up money for a genuinely fair and rapid transition.

*What is expected to be discussed at SB62*

NDCs and negotiations on the United Arab Emirates Work Programme on Just Transition, which was postponed at COP29 due to a lack of agreement, will be at the top of the agenda. The discussion will focus on reviewing submitted NDCs, encouraging outstanding submissions, and revitalising the UAE Work Programme that began at COP28. This Work Programme aims to move beyond knowledge exchange toward concrete action, and SB62 will consider recommendations that have been made.

*Important questions to be attentive to*

- ✓ How can the UAE Work Programme move from knowledge exchange to concrete action at SB62, with precise mechanisms for supporting national transitions in both developed and developing countries?

- ✓ What specific guidance can SB62 provide to ensure NDCs include comprehensive just transition plans with measurable targets and inclusive stakeholder engagement processes?
- ✓ What action plan can SB62 develop for the rapid and complete phase-out of fossil fuel subsidies, including transparent accounting for how these funds will be redirected to support vulnerable communities and clean energy development?

**THIRD CALL**

**Set concrete targets to build a Global Food Sovereignty System based on agroecological practices**

*What are the Jesuits for Climate Justice asking and why?*

The urgent transformation of global food systems is necessary because current systems significantly contribute to climate change and biodiversity loss, while failing to ensure food security and nutrition for all. Achieving the Paris Agreement's goals requires a widespread shift toward sustainable food systems based on agroecology. Food Sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound methods, and is central to this transformative transition.

*Current situation*

The NDCs increasingly recognise the potential of agroecologically based food systems to enhance resilience against climate change. Yet, only a small percentage of global climate finance is committed to this, with an even smaller proportion allocated to agroecology. Industrial Global Food systems threaten a significant percentage of species at risk of extinction, with unsustainable agricultural practices primarily responsible for driving biodiversity losses and posing a threat to human health. This underscores the urgent need to transition towards biodiverse local food systems and move them from the margins to the centre of climate finance discussions.

*What is expected to be discussed at SB62*

At SB62, discussions will focus on strengthening Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by incorporating specific measures related to the design and upscaling of sustainable food systems, including encouraging agroecological practices and promoting short supply chains. The NCQG presents an opportunity to increase funding for food systems transformation, ensuring finance for sustainable and resilient food systems becomes a climate priority. Biodiversity discussions will centre on assessing drivers of deforestation and ecosystem conversion, with National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) identifying specific measures to build agricultural systems that are compatible with nature conservation and that address deforestation, free production, and supply chains. These include effective land-use planning, securing land tenure rights for Indigenous peoples and local communities, reforming harmful agricultural subsidies, and creating incentives for the widespread adoption of agroecological practices.

*Important questions to be attentive to*

- ✓ How can concrete mechanisms be established within the NCQG to ensure increased funding for sustainable local or regional food systems by COP30?
- ✓ What specific policy instruments can be prioritised to integrate deforestation-free agricultural production within revised NBSAPs in the UN Biodiversity Conferences?
- ✓ How to promote agricultural systems that conserve and enhance nature's matrix?
- ✓ What concrete measures will ensure active participation of smallholder farmers, Indigenous peoples, women, and other marginalised groups in developing policies for a global sustainable food sovereignty system?
- ✓ What financial mechanisms will be directly available to rural communities to start the agroecological transition on their terms?

**FURTHER READINGS**

**First Call:** Cancel the debt of underdeveloped countries and strengthen the Loss and Damage Compensation Fund

***Debt***

*Debt Justice Position Paper*, Caritas Europa
*Weathering the Storm*, Caritas Australia
*Blueprints for a Greener Tomorrow: A Conversation With Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados*, Council on Foreign Relations
*Healthy Debt on a Healthy Planet,* Expert Review on Debt, Nature and Climate

***Loss and Damage***

*Human Rights and Loss and Damage: Key Messages for the UNFCCC in 2025*, The Loss and Damage Collaboration
*Cross-border, cascading climate risks and the LDC Group: Catalyzing management options within the UNFCCC*, Adaptation Without Borders
*What to expect for the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage in 2025*, Heinrich Boll Stiftung

**Second Call:** accelerate agreements and set targets for a just energy transition to reduce CO2 emissions

*Resisting the Empire of Fossil Fuels: A Strategy For COP30 in Lula's Brazil*, Groupe d'études géopolitiques
*NDC Checklist for Just Energy Transition*, WWF
*Mutually Reinforcing: How a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Complements the Paris Agreement and UNFCCC*, Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative
*Rebooting the Just Transition for the Long Haul*, Just Transition Finance Lab

**Third Call:** set concrete targets to promote a Global Sustainable Food Sovereignty System based on agroecology

*Public Climate Finance for Food Systems Transformation (2024)*, Global Alliance for the Future of Food
*Integrating Deforestation and Conversion-Free Supply Chains into NBSAPs*, WWF

*Increasing Ambition in NDCs through Agriculture and Food Systems Innovation*, United Nations Foundation
*A Toolkit for National Action on Climate, Biodiversity, and Water in Agriculture and Food Systems*, Climate Focus
*Global Public Investment – A Climate Finance Solution for West Africa*, CERAP
*Developing and promoting agroecological innovations within country program strategies to address agroecosystem resilience in production landscapes: a guide*, COMDEKS
*A New Strategy for Transforming Food and Land Use Systems*, *FOLU*

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