

The Indispensable Role of Youth and Traditional Communities in the COP30 Presidency Roadmaps: A Comprehensive Analysis

The invitation issued by the COP30 Presidency to submit contributions for the Roadmap on the Transition Away from Fossil Fuels and the Roadmap on Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation represents a pivotal moment in global climate governance. While these roadmaps are being developed under the Presidency's responsibility rather than a negotiated mandate, the President, André Corrêa do Lago, has emphasized that they must be "inclusive, participatory, and transparent" to effectively identify practical implementation options.

Central to this inclusivity is the active participation of youth and traditional communities. These groups are not merely beneficiaries of climate policy; they are essential partners whose insights are required to address the critical barriers and levers identified by the Presidency.

I. Traditional Communities: The Frontline of Forest Governance

The COP30 Presidency Roadmap for Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030 aims to implement the outcomes of the first Global Stocktake (GST1). For these efforts to be successful, the "rights and knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities" must be a foundational element.

1. Bridging Knowledge Gaps in Forest Management

The roadmap seeks to identify "existing means of implementation and solutions" while highlighting "obstacles and gaps". Traditional communities possess unique, site-specific knowledge that is vital for:

- **Sustainable Forest Management:** Traditional practices often integrate "bioeconomy and agroforestry" in ways that maintain ecological integrity while supporting livelihoods.
- **Restoration and Reforestation:** Local communities are best positioned to share "best practices and lessons learned" regarding which species and methods are most resilient in specific biomes.
- **Identifying Drivers of Degradation:** These communities are often the first to witness the "drivers" of deforestation and forest degradation, providing real-time data on "physical, economic, and institutional" barriers.

2. Strengthening Law Enforcement and Combatting Crime

The roadmap explicitly includes "law enforcement and organized crime repression at the national level" and "transnational environmental crime" as key topics.

- **Local Monitoring:** Traditional communities often serve as the primary guardians of their territories. Their participation is essential for designing "governance frameworks" that effectively repress environmental crime.
- **Institutional Solutions:** Insights from these communities can help the Presidency identify "international institutional challenges" related to trade rules and illicit markets that undermine forest conservation.

II. Youth: Drivers of Innovation and Intergenerational Equity

The Roadmap for Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels focuses on a "just, orderly and equitable" process that accounts for "different national circumstances, pathways and approaches". Youth voices are critical to ensuring this transition is not only rapid but sustainable over the long term.

1. Innovation and Technological Solutions

The Presidency is looking for "technological solutions and innovation pathways" and "potential levers" to accelerate implementation.

- **New Economic Paradigms:** Youth are often at the forefront of the "energy transition: demand-side perspective," adopting new technologies and shifting consumption patterns.
- **Future-Proofing Infrastructure:** As those who will live with the energy systems currently being designed, youth input on "long-term economic diversification" is essential to avoid stranded assets and ensure "transition management" is forward-looking.

2. Redefining Just and Equitable Transitions

A central question of the roadmap is how the transition can "best reflect the diverse realities of countries at different stages of development".

- **Intergenerational Justice:** For a transition to be truly "just," it must address the "economic and financial systemic risks" that will disproportionately affect future

generations.

- **Social Levers:** Youth movements provide the "social levers" necessary to build political will and institutional support for "policy instruments and market mechanisms" that favor renewable energy.

III. The "Spirit of Mutirão": A Call for Collective Action

The COP30 President has called for this work to be conducted in the "spirit of *mutirão*"—a reference to collective, community-led efforts—and has opened a call for submissions to all stakeholders.

1. Mapping Barriers and Enabling Factors

The Presidency intends to map "critical barriers and enabling factors" while recognizing that "no single transition pathway applies to all countries". By including youth and traditional communities, the roadmap can capture:

- **Diverse Realities:** How "degrees of dependence on fossil fuels" or "degrees of forest cover" impact the feasibility of specific policies.
- **Institutional and Social Barriers:** Identifying "institutional and governance frameworks" that currently exclude marginalized voices.

2. Practical Options for Implementation

The ultimate goal of these roadmaps is to "translate global consensus into implementation" and offer "differentiated options". These options will only be "action-oriented" if they are grounded in the lived experiences of those on the frontlines of climate change.