

Faith Communities and COP 30 – Maureen Rowan

We were very aware this month of COP 30* in Belém, Brazil from 10th to 21st November.

Many faith communities travelled Belém, which could seem like an expensive waste, given the scepticism surrounding the event. The possibility of progress on climate action looked increasingly remote amid ever deteriorating geopolitics and the denouncement by Donald Trump of the climate crisis as a 'great hoax'. Yet, Guardian reporter, Fiona Harvey, who has been covering COPs for 19 years asserts that, unwieldy as they are, COPs are the *only* forum where the whole world gathers to talk about the climate crisis. They can be seen as the 'least worst' way of making progress. This COP 30 was regarded as a final rallying point for countries to deliver more ambitious 'Nationally Determined Contributions' (NDC), pledges on emissions cuts, plans for adaptation, climate finance and support for vulnerable developing countries.

For faith leaders, that delivery has to go beyond technology, politics and economics to include radical changes of lifestyle and transformation of human consciousness.

The Laudato Si Movement seeks to provide a moral counterpoint to NDCs, based on theological imperatives of creation care. It will bring its 'People's Determined Contributions' (PDC) to COP, stories of practical actions by people of faith and goodwill, taken where political commitments have stalled. Lorna Gold, Executive Director of Laudato Si' Movement, describes these as "the people's answer — a moral uprising for our common home."

Bishop Prof. Dr Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, of the World Council of Churches describes COP 30 as a "*kairos* moment that demands we choose transformation over destruction, solidarity over extraction, and life over profit.....This is not simply about transitioning to cleaner energy; it is about ecological *metanoia* - transforming our hearts, our economies, and our civilizations."

These moral and ethical challenges are far more difficult than recycling and switching the lights off. They bring us back to Romans 8:21 and "hope that the creation itself will be set free from its enslavement to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God "

**The 30th Conference of the 'Parties', (197 States and the EU), who have agreed to participate in and be bound by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the overall goal of which is to "stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations at a level that would prevent dangerous human-induced interference with the climate system."*