COP30 in Belém (Brazil): Highlights, Lowlights & Student Assignments

Key Highlights

1. Greater global emphasis on climate adaptation and resilience for vulnerable communities.
2. Agreement on clearer indicators to track progress toward the Global Goal on Adaptation.
3. Increased attention to forests, biodiversity, and Indigenous leadership — amplified by the Amazon location.
4. Focus on moving from promises to implementation through practical climate action tools.
5. Renewed commitment to global cooperation despite political and economic tensions.

Main Lowlights

1. No binding agreement to phase out fossil fuels or stop deforestation.
2. Climate finance commitments remain largely voluntary and uneven.
3. Actions still fall short of what science says is needed to keep warming below 1.5°C.
4. Major divides remain between wealthy, fossil■fuel■dependent nations and climate■vulnerable countries.
5. Symbolic leadership did not always translate into enforceable outcomes.

Ten Student Assignments (High School Level)

1. Climate Justice Brief: Explain how COP30 addressed (or failed to address) justice for communities most affected by climate change.
2. Adaptation Case Study: Research one adaptation strategy highlighted at COP30 and explain how it could work in your local community.
3. Indigenous Voices Project: Explore the role of Indigenous leadership at COP30 and why land rights matter for climate solutions.
4. Forest Protection Plan: Design a simple plan to protect or restore forests, inspired by COP30 discussions in the Amazon.
5. Tracking Progress: Explain why measuring climate adaptation is important and propose one indicator schools could track.
6. Youth Climate Letter: Write a letter to a world leader responding to one COP30 highlight and one disappointment.
7. 1.5°C Explainer: Create a one■page explanation of why the 1.5°C target matters and how COP30 addressed it.
8. Climate Finance Map: Show how climate funding flows from wealthy countries to vulnerable ones — and what gaps remain.
9. Local Action Proposal: Design a realistic, local climate action project connected to a COP30 theme.
10. Faith & Climate Reflection (optional): Reflect on moral responsibility for creation care in light of COP30 outcomes.