



14 November 2025

His Excellency President. Cyril Ramaphosa

President of the Republic of South Africa
Union Buildings
Pretoria 0083

**Serious concern regarding South Africa's Ministerial Representation at COP30
Negotiations in Brazil**

Your Excellency,

We write this letter as a collective of South African civil society organisations, to express our deep concern over the lack of South Africa's formal Ministerial representation at UNFCCC COP30 negotiations held in Belém, Brazil.

As you are aware, the Conference of the Parties (COP) is a vital global forum where critical negotiations are happening and decisions are being made regarding climate change policy in relation to mitigation, adaptation, climate finance, and realising support for local action. South Africa's active participation has always been crucial — not only to advocate for the interests of African nations and those least responsible but also to galvanize support for a just transition, renewable energy development in South Africa, and reinforce our commitment to the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Our absence from such an essential meeting may undermine the country's leadership role in climate action on the African continent and globally. Moreover, it could risk limiting our ability to influence policy decisions that directly affect our economy, energy security, and climate resilience. South African communities continue to be impacted as the multifold effects of climate change are exacerbated. COP is a critical platform for negotiating the roll-out of finance on adaptation and mitigation, and seeking the additional support for our Just Energy Transition.

While we take note of the recent changes at the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, it is difficult to understand how it is that, in the middle of the COP30, South Africa's Environmental Minister is recalled. We are of the opinion that, it gives the perception that the SA government is not serious about climate change or its leadership in the negotiations, despite this being a crisis that threatens the fundamental social and economic aspirations of all in South Africa.

Minister George's removal may send an unsettling signal at a time when climate leadership is a defining issue in the G20. Given the growing centrality of environmental policy to global economic and diplomatic agendas, the timing of this decision could weaken South Africa's ability to project consistency or the seriousness of its climate commitments.

We therefore respectfully urge your office and the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment to ensure that South Africa is formally represented at COP30 with a strong, empowered and informed delegation that can continue to advance our national and continental climate agenda. We believe it remains essential for the future for South Africa to take part in these strategic deliberations to enhance our global influence and position.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued leadership on behalf of all South Africans.

Yours faithfully,

Names of Organisations

The Green Connection

SAFCEI

Project 90 by 2030

YouLead Initiative

Just Share

Waterberg Women Advocacy Organization

groundWork/ Friends of the Earth South Africa

The New Environmental Justice Solutions

Cederberg Rastafari Movement

West Coast Food Sovereignty and Solidarity Forum

Environmental Traits

Laudato Si' Movement South African Chapter

Far South Peninsula Community Forum (FSPCF)

Gael Gray

Patrick Dowling

Fossil Free SA