UN Limits Staff at COP30 Climate Summit Over Accommodation Concerns

High hotel prices for Brazil's COP30 climate summit in November have prompted the United Nations to urge its staff to limit attendance, while government delegations are still scrambling to find rooms within their budgets.

The move comes as delegations grow increasingly concerned about the cost of accommodation in the coastal Amazon city of Belem hosting COP30. Brazil is working to nearly double available hotel beds, but soaring prices for accommodation have stoked calls from some governments to relocate the conference, which Brazilian officials have rejected.

"In view of the capacity constraints in Belem, I would like to kindly request that heads of United Nations system, specialized agencies and other relevant organizations review the size of their delegations at COP 30 and reduce numbers where possible," the U.N. climate secretariat's (UNFCCC) executive secretary Simon Stiell said in a document published on the UNFCCC website.

A spokesperson for Brazil's COP30 presidency did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The UNFCCC did not issue such a request ahead of last year's U.N. climate summit in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Nearly every government in the world will gather at the annual U.N. summit to negotiate efforts to curb climate change.

But developing countries have warned that they cannot afford Belem's accommodation prices, which have soared amid a shortage of rooms.

At a meeting of countries’ representatives and U.N. officials last month, the UNFCCC asked Brazil to subsidise hotel prices to ensure rooms for $100 per day for delegates from the world’s poorest countries and $400-$500 per day for other countries, according to an official summary of that meeting, seen by Reuters.

Miriam Belchior, executive secretary to Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva’s chief of staff, told journalists after the meeting that Brazil was already bearing significant costs for hosting COP30 and could not provide further subsidies. Brazil has offered poorer nations rooms capped at around $200 per night.

Countries’ representatives and U.N. officials are due to meet again this week to discuss the accommodation situation for COP30.