

COP31

Africa’s Priorities for COP31: Policy Brief

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African Priorities for COP31 Policy Brief

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Executive summary

COP31 comes at a critical moment for Africa and the international climate regime. Ten years after the Paris Agreement, the priority should now shift decisively from negotiating commitments to implementing them. For Africa, the test of COP31 will not be the number of new initiatives or declarations announced in Antalya, but whether existing commitments translate into tangible improvements in resilience, energy access, livelihoods and prosperity, backed by the finance, technology and capacity-building needed to deliver them.

Africa approaches COP31 while facing intensifying climate impacts alongside profound development challenges. Droughts, floods, heatwaves and other extremes are already undermining food and water security, infrastructure, livelihoods and development gains. At the same time, many African countries face high debt burdens, constrained fiscal space, high borrowing costs, inadequate energy access, and structural inequalities in global finance, trade and technology.

Africa should therefore enter COP31 not simply as a vulnerable continent seeking support, but as a rights-holder, climate leader and solution provider. The continent has enormous renewable energy resources, critical minerals, adaptation knowledge, and the potential to build new green industries. Realising that potential requires a climate regime that addresses the structural barriers constraining African development and enables countries to pursue nationally determined, equitable and prosperous development pathways.

Africa's central priorities for COP31 are:

Adaptation and resilience: Deliver the commitment to at least triple adaptation finance by 2035; operationalise the Belém Adaptation Indicators transparently and with strong African representation; back National Adaptation Plans with predictable, additional and predominantly grant-based finance; keep agriculture and food security centered on adaptation, development and the needs of smallholders and frontline communities; and turn the loss and damage architecture into rapid, direct support for affected countries and communities.

Climate finance: Treat developed countries' obligations under Article 9 of the Paris Agreement as central to COP31, with public finance forming the foundation of support, particularly for adaptation and loss and damage. Finance must be accessible, predictable and high quality, with grants and highly concessional resources prioritised over debt. COP31 should strengthen the Adaptation Fund, advance replenishment of the major climate funds, and improve accountability for delivery of the New Collective Quantified Goal.

Just transition, energy and industrialisation: Ensure that Africa's transition advances energy access, industrialisation, decent work, poverty reduction and resilience. The Just Transition Mechanism should move towards implementation, with representative governance, clear functions and pathways to finance, technology and capacity-building. Electrification should expand affordable and reliable clean electricity and productive energy use, while green industrialisation should enable African countries to manufacture technologies, add value to transition minerals, and create jobs.

Mitigation and the fossil-fuel transition: Continue the Mitigation Work Programme while preserving its facilitative, non-prescriptive, and non-punitive character. Implementation should support renewable energy, grids, storage, clean cooking, and productive electrification. The transition away from fossil fuels must be just, orderly and equitable, addressing employment, fiscal dependence, energy access and economic diversification rather than focusing on fossil fuel supply in isolation.

Technology and transparency: Technology transfer must extend beyond importing finished products to co-development, knowledge transfer, licensing, local adaptation and manufacturing capability. Developing countries also need predictable support to meet Enhanced Transparency Framework requirements.

Global Stocktake: As the second Global Stocktake begins, adaptation and means of implementation should receive comparable attention to mitigation, with equity and CBDR-RC applied throughout and differences in reporting capacity recognised.

Trade and participation: Climate-related trade measures must not shift the costs of climate action onto developing economies or restrict the policy space needed for African industrialisation. Trade should instead enable Africa's participation in emerging low-carbon value chains. Across all workstreams, African youth, women, workers, farmers, Indigenous Peoples, local communities and other frontline groups should be able to shape and implement climate action, not merely be represented in consultation spaces.

Ultimately, COP31 should be judged by implementation. Africa does not need another layer of ambitions, declarations and initiatives without the means to deliver them. A successful COP31 will begin closing the gap between commitments and implementation and enable African countries to build resilience, expand clean energy access, industrialise and pursue climate-compatible development on fair and equitable terms.

We have a single mission: to protect and hand on the planet to the next generation.

~ Francois Hollande, Former French President



I. Introduction

This policy brief provides an African perspective on key thematic priorities for the upcoming 31st session of the Conference of the Parties (COP31), taking place in Antalya, Türkiye, in November 2026. It aims to support African negotiators, policymakers and civil society in advancing a coherent justice-oriented African strategy and narrative in the lead up to and during COP31.

The conference comes at a decisive moment for the global climate regime. Over successive sessions, Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have established much of the institutional architecture needed for climate action, including work programmes, frameworks, technical expert groups and bodies, financial mechanisms, pledges, commitments and reporting requirements. The tenth anniversary of the Paris Agreement in 2025 and the completion of its first policy cycle marked a transition towards an era in which implementation and delivery must become the measure of success. For developing countries, this means translating commitments into tangible improvements in resilience and adaptive capacity, reduced vulnerability, expanded access to affordable and reliable clean energy, and just transition pathways that support climate compatible development, decent work, and prosperity.

Yet COP31 will take place against another turbulent geopolitical and economic backdrop that continues to reshape international climate cooperation and multilateralism. The geopolitical disruptions that characterised the period leading up to COP30 have persisted into 2026, compounded by conflict, energy and food insecurity, escalating climate impacts, and increasing pressure on multilateralism. Escalating conflict between the United States and Iran severely disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, constraining global oil supply chains and contributing to higher energy and food prices and broader inflationary pressures. The near closure of the Strait of Hormuz, for instance, saw oil flows fall from around 20 million barrels per day before the conflict to an average of just 2.7 million barrels per day between March and May 2026.[1] These disruptions have exposed the economic and energy-security risks associated with fossil fuel dependence, reinforcing the importance of energy sovereignty and renewable energy.

At the same time, 2026 has been marked by a succession of extreme weather and climate events, from torrential rains and flash floods across West Africa in January to record ocean temperatures in June, wildfires across Canada and Europe, and record heatwaves across Western Europe. A rapidly developing El Niño in the tropical Pacific has added another layer of risk, as the World Meteorological Organisation confirmed in July that El Niño conditions were already underway and forecast them to intensify into a strong event, leaving climate-vulnerable regions even more susceptible to extreme droughts, floods, heatwaves and escalating humanitarian needs. Compounding these energy, conflict, economic and climate pressures, the United States formally left the Paris Agreement in January 2026 and, earlier that month, announced its decision to withdraw from the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and dozens of other global institutions and initiatives.

For Africa, these intersecting crises carry particularly high costs. The continent is warming faster than the global average, while increasing droughts, floods, heatwaves and other climate extremes are undermining livelihoods, food and water security, infrastructure, and development gains.

Africa's climate vulnerability is not driven by physical exposure alone, but is also structurally produced through historical and ongoing inequalities, including debt burdens exacerbated by loans, limited fiscal space, unequal trade and finance systems, technology dependence, and extractive economic relationships that continue to constrain countries' capacity to respond and build energy and food

1 See https://www.iea.org/commentaries/how-global-oil-supplies-have-readjusted-to-help-fill-the-huge-gap-left-by-the-strait-of-hormuz-shock.

sovereignty. The continent needs approximately US$190-277 billion in climate finance every year to meet its 2030 climate goals, compared with US$43.7 billion in total climate finance flows received in 2021/2022.[2] Loss and damage costs are projected at US$440 billion in Africa alone between 2020 and 2030.[3]

Africa must therefore enter COP31 not simply as a vulnerable continent seeking recognition and support for its unique circumstances, but also as a rights-holder, climate leader and solution provider with the agency, leadership and sovereignty to shape climate, adaptation, and just transition pathways. This requires addressing the structural and procedural barriers that constrain African climate action and participation, while enabling the continent to capture greater value from its renewable energy potential, critical minerals, adaptation solutions, and emerging green industries.

However, while the climate crisis and changes in the global energy landscape continue to unfold rapidly, international climate negotiations have struggled to respond at a comparable pace. The June 2026 Bonn Climate Change Conference showed the difficult road that lies ahead to COP31, with unresolved tensions from COP30 in Belém carrying into negotiations and discussions on climate finance, adaptation, just transition and the Adaptation Fund. Some technical and institutional progress was achieved, including agreement on the terms of reference for the review of the Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP) and decision to retain the UN Environment Programme as the Climate Technology Centre's host. However, many politically sensitive issues, particularly related to finance and adaptation, remain unresolved. As a result, COP31 will inherit a crowded agenda and significant pressure to turn repeated delays into meaningful implementation and delivery for developing countries.

COP31 will also operate through a unique Türkiye-Australia leadership arrangement. Türkiye will host COP31 and hold the Presidency, including leadership of the Action Agenda, while Australia will serve as President of Negotiations. The arrangement also gives the Pacific a prominent role, with Fiji hosting the pre-COP meeting and Australia working with Pacific Island Countries to elevate regional priorities in negotiations.[4] The Presidency has positioned COP31 as another 'implementation COP' and a 'COP of the Future', with the objective to turn commitments into tangible progress. It will also include an Action Agenda, spanning electrification and the energy transition, zero waste and the circular economy, resilient cities and infrastructure, sustainable agriculture and food systems, green industrial transformation, climate finance, and strengthening the resilience of vulnerable regions and ecosystems.[5]

For Africa, however, the central test of COP31 will not be the number of new initiatives or declarations announced in Antalya, but whether the shift from negotiations to implementation translates into concrete and just outcomes, backed by the finance, technology and capacity building support required to address structural barriers, strengthen resilience, and enable African countries to pursue nationally determined, equitable, and prosperous development pathways.

2 See https://www.climatepolicyinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Landscape-of-Climate-Finance-in-Africa-2024.pdf

3 See https://africa.wri.org/africa/key-cop28-takeaways-africa

4 See https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/JOINT%20LETTER%20FROM%20COP31%20CPD-PON.pdf.

5 See https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/JOINT%20LETTER%20FROM%20COP31%20CPD-PON.pdf.

II. Key COP31 priorities

A. Climate adaptation and resilience

Context

Adaptation is a central test of whether COP31 and the Paris Agreement's implementation phase can deliver for Africa where climate impacts are already exacting a heavy toll. In a single season in 2024, floods and landslides displaced more than 700,000 people across Kenya, Tanzania and Burundi.[6] Against this backdrop, adaptation negotiations at the UNFCCC are undergoing a stress test across its various streams. Global Goal on Adaptation negotiations closed in deadlock at SB64, and NAP Central shows that only 27 of the 54 African countries have submitted their plans, which is a stark indicator of persistent financing and technical challenges that African countries face in developing their NAPs. Meanwhile, countries continue to make pledges to the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) without full delivery. By September 2025, the fund had US$822.06 million in pledges but only US$397.74 million received, while the current funding request pipeline amounts to US$2.8 billion across 119 countries. Against this backdrop, Africa approaches Antalya with a dual purpose: to safeguard the gains already secured on adaptation and loss and damage, and to consolidate a unified, justice-centered negotiating identity ahead of COP32 in Addis Ababa in 2027.

The Global Goal on Adaptation

COP30 raised the political profile of the GGA, making it a top priority of the Presidency, but major faultlines remained at the close of negotiations. Parties adopted 59 Belem Adaptation Indicators (BAI), concluding two years of technical work under the United Arab Emirates–Belém work programme. But both developed and developing countries raised concerns about the final list and the process through which last-minute revisions were made without contributions from Parties. The second major area of contention is adaptation finance, particularly the COP30 call to "at least triple adaptation finance by 2035". These two issues; the tripling of adaptation finance target and the operationalisation of the BAI, continued to dominate GGA negotiations at SB64 and could again determine whether agreement is possible in Antalya.



6 World Weather Attribution, Urban planning at the heart of increasingly severe East African flood impacts in a warming world (May 2024)

Where negotiations stand

At SB64, negotiations stalled over two issues: the composition and governance of the technical taskforce to be established to develop the methodologies and metadata for the BAI, and the inclusion of a reference to the decision on tripling adaptation finance by 2035 in the GGA text.

A key test of GGA implementation will therefore be whether COP31 can give practical meaning to COP30's call to "at least triple adaptation finance by 2035." For Africa, the tripling should be treated as an implementation commitment linked to the GGA and the wider NCQG framework to ensure accountability and alignment with developed countries' obligations under Article 9.1.

Key adaptation and resilience priorities for Africa at COP31

» **Keep Means of Implementation at the center of the GGA:** Africa should resist attempts to separate the call for tripling adaptation finance, and the means of implementation more broadly, into distinct tracks. Decision 12 CMA7, paragraph 34 has already established a home for the tripling target within the GGA negotiations and should therefore not be reopened to renewed negotiations, but rather provide clarity on the baseline, its linkage to the NCQG, milestone years for measuring progress towards the target, and form of finance for the target. Adaptation goals stripped of credible finance references would measure adaptation and not resource it.

» **Operationalise the indicators robustly and transparently:** The post-Belém indicator process must close the methodological and metadata gaps, and ensure that the indicators are adaptation-relevant, appropriate and measurable, rather than entrenching a rushed list. The technical task force under BAV should be Party-led or have strong oversight from Parties, ensure regional balance, with expert and UN-agency input serving to support Parties rather than substitute them.

» **Representation of African Experts in the composition of the Technical Taskforce:** Ensure balanced representation of experts from developing countries and least developed countries within the technical taskforce responsible for improving BAI metadata and methodologies and facilitate their meaningful participation throughout the process to ensure that the realities and experiences of developing countries are adequately reflected in the final outputs.

» **Improve coherence between the GGA, Baku Adaptation Roadmap and the UNFCCC adaptation architecture:** Parties must seek a way of ensuring that the substantive discussions from the three remaining BAR workshops are captured and documented to guide a deliberate alignment of the UNFCCC adaptation architecture. The effectiveness of the BAR will be determined by its ability to provide normative guidance that addresses both technical adaptation coordination and underlying political economy issues that limit access to adaptation finance and its implementation.

» **Supporting developing countries for the operationalisation of the BAIs:** Decision 12/CMA.7, paragraphs 14 and 17, already notes that developing countries should be supported to implement the targets under the UAE-FGCR, including the BAIs. Parties should reinforce the role of the Climate Funds, GCF, GEF, and Adaptation Fund Global in supporting developing countries to implement the UAE-FGCR, including through special and dedicated support windows.

National Adaptation Plans

National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) are the primary vehicle through which developing countries identify their medium- and long-term adaptation needs and integrate them into national planning and budgeting. While NAPs reflect national circumstances and priorities, their formulation and implementation depend on the provision of finance, technology and capacity building support by developed-country Parties in accordance with Articles 9, 10 and 11 of the Paris Agreement. NAPs are also increasingly recognised as the bridge between the Global Goal on Adaptation, the adaptation elements of Nationally Determined Contributions, and implementation on the ground, making their quality, financing and implementation central to the adaptation agenda.[7] Moreover, NAPs entrench the inseparability of adaptation and development by helping developing countries identify the finance, technology, and capacity building required to translate adaptation priorities into implementation necessary for achieving mid-term and long-term development.

Where negotiations stand

The COP30 decision on NAPs, revealed that even though there has been significant progress in the formulation and implementation of NAPs, only a limited number of developing countries, around 88 to date, had submitted their plans by the 2025 deadline due to persistent challenges in accessing finance, technology and capacity building support for both NAP formulation and implementation. While the next formal assessment of the NAP process is not scheduled until COP35 in 2030, the urgency of adaptation needs, especially in Africa, requires that this is kept on the agenda to maintain political oversight and accountability.[8]

In parallel, the Global Implementation Accelerator under the Global Mutirão package and the multi-stakeholder NAP Implementation Alliance launched through the COP30 Action Agenda aim to help move countries from planning towards implementation and investment-ready, bankable pipelines. However, these initiatives should complement formal and predictable means of implementation support delivered through the formal UNFCCC and Paris Agreement architecture and should not make commercial bankability a condition for financing adaptation priorities that deliver essential resilience benefits but do not generate financial returns.

- **Secure means of implementation for NAP formulation and implementation:** Support for NAPs formulation and implementation must be grant-based, predictable and additional, and must not shift the accountability burden onto developing countries or require them to justify national budget allocations for adaptation at the multilateral level.
- **Eliminate existing barriers in accessing support for NAPs formulation and implementation:** Parties must ensure that GCF readiness and preparatory funding is delivered, and a NAPs implementation windows established under Adaptation Fund and GEF as stated in paragraph 17-19 of decision 12, CMA 7.
- **Shorten accountability between assessment cycles:** With the next full global assessment of NAPs not due until 2030, COP31 should strengthen interim visibility on progress towards this review, implementation progress, and whether the means-of-implementation gap identified in the COP30 decision are being closed.

7 Decision 2/CMA.5, paragraph 10(b); Decision 12/CMA.7 recognising NAPs as a vehicle for achieving the UAE Framework targets.

8 the finance, technology + capacity building required to translate adaptation priorities into implementation

Agriculture

Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Security

The Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Security (SSJWA) is set to conclude at COP31, where Parties are expected to finalise discussions on the progress and outcomes of the current joint work and provide direction on the future of agriculture and food security under the UNFCCC. The SSJWA, under the SBI and SBSTA, is the only dedicated agriculture and food security track under the UNFCCC. Over its four-year period, it has centered on a series of workshops, a synthesis of Party and observer submissions, and the Sharm el-Sheikh online portal to share knowledge and match needs with funding. It has also maintained a deliberate "agriculture and food security" framing, rather than focusing on emissions across the agri-food systems value chain.

For Africa, this work area is particularly important, given agriculture's centrality to food security, livelihoods and rural economies, while much of the continent's agriculture also remains rain-fed and highly vulnerable to droughts, floods, heat and other climate impacts. Agriculture is therefore fundamentally an adaptation and development priority for Africa.

Where the negotiations stand

At SB64, Parties held the second of two-mandated workshops focused on identifying needs and accessing the means of implementation for climate action in agriculture and food security, including a "World Café" exchange with farmers, Indigenous Peoples, women and youth. Parties agreed to continue consideration of the report on the first in-session workshop on systemic and holistic approaches to implementation of climate action on agriculture, food systems and food security, and the second annual synthesis report on the work undertaken by constituted bodies and financial and other entities under the Convention at COP31 in Antalya.

Several faultlines emerged in the negotiations. Developing-country groups sought to maintain the mandate's focus on "agriculture and food security", adaptation and means of implementation, while resisting an overbearing framing towards "agrifood systems" or "food systems" from developed countries that could shift emphasis towards mitigation and production emissions. Underlying these discussions is a persistent implementation and finance gap. At SB64, developing country Parties reinforced calls for grant-based and directly accessible finance that reaches smallholders, for agroecology and food sovereignty. They cautioned against any framing that conflates agroecology with contested approaches such as "climate-smart agriculture", biotechnologies, no-till and artificial intelligence in agriculture. The incoming COP31 Presidency has also signaled agriculture and food security as a priority in its Action Agenda. These initiatives should complement rather than substitute for negotiated outcomes and the provision of means of implementation through the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement architecture.



Key African priorities for agriculture at COP31

» **Secure a substantive decision on the future of the SSJWA:** As the SSJWA mandate draws to a close, COP31 should agree on a clear and ambitious pathway for agriculture and food security negotiations under UNFCCC that builds resilience, drives prosperity, and moves from dialogue and knowledge-sharing towards implementation, rather than further procedural deferrals.

» **Maintain agriculture and food security as adaptation and development priorities:** Resist approaches that shift the emphasis towards emissions reduction framing in ways that could place disproportionate burdens onto African smallholders. Parties should safeguard this workstream and keep adaptation, adaptation co-benefits, food justice and the ending of hunger central, with national circumstances and CBDR-RC respected.

» **Scale up the means of implementation.** Call for new, additional, predictable and grant-based finance at scale, alongside technology development and transfer and capacity building, with simplified and direct access for developing countries and smallholder producers, particularly women, and simplify access to the GCF, the Adaptation Fund and other channels.

» **Centre smallholders and frontline communities.** Smallholder farmers, the majority of whom are women, as well as fisherfolk, pastoralists, youth, Indigenous Peoples and local communities should be treated as co-designers and agents of change, rather than passive recipients, in needs assessments and in the design and delivery of climate action and finance.

» **Support agroecology, food sovereignty and locally led approaches:** Prioritise farmer-led and community-led agroecology and food sovereignty approaches that strengthen resilience while delivering wider benefits for biodiversity, food security, health and livelihoods. Carbon market approaches and debt-creating instruments should be treated with caution, especially where they undermine food sovereignty or fail to reach smallholder farmers and key food actors.

» **Strengthen coherence with wider adaptation and implementation processes:** Connect the SSJWA effectively with NAPs, GGA, climate finance, loss and damage and just transition tracks, while maintaining its distinct agriculture and food security mandate.

Loss and damage

Developed countries long resisted action on loss and damage, particularly due to concerns about liability. For Africa, loss and damage is a critical justice issue because escalating climate impacts are already eroding development gains, destroying livelihoods and infrastructure, and imposing costs on countries that contribute least to the climate crisis and have the least fiscal space to absorb them. Following decades of advocacy, the establishment of the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) at COP19 (2013) the Santiago Network at COP25 (2019) and, ultimately, the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) at COP27 created an institutional architecture for responding to these impacts. The central challenge has now shifted from establishing this architecture to ensuring it delivers finance and support at the scale and speed required by affected countries and communities.

Where negotiations stand

At COP30 Parties welcomed progress made by the FRLD Board in advancing the Barbados Implementation Modalities (BIM), which provide for bottom-up, country-led and country-owned approaches and promote direct access, rapid-disbursement modalities, a small-grants policy and a long-term resource-mobilisation strategy. The FRLD initially allocated US$250 million, which was subsequently increased to US$342 million for 2025-2026. Some 176 funding requests were made by 119 developing countries, including 81 from Africa within the pipeline, totaling US$2.8 billion.[9] The current allocation remains only a fraction of the resources requested and of estimated global loss and damage needs. COP30 also adopted the third review of the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM), strengthening the emphasis on delivery, coherence, and finance. The Santiago Network (SN) also gained a stronger role in providing country-level technical assistance, and its regional presence was reaffirmed. However, greater clarity and resources are needed to translate these mechanisms into effective support at the country level, especially for assessing and responding to both economic and non-economic loss and damage.

Key African priorities for loss and damage at COP31

» **Convert pledges into paid contributions, not merely announcing new ones:** COP31 should place emphasis on accountability and transparency. Parties should ensure that countries deliver on their pledges in recognition of the escalating losses and damages and should insist on public accountability regarding how much of the cumulative pledges has been contracted and disbursed. This should serve as a benchmark for an enhanced and ambitious first replenishment in 2027 under the Barbados Implementation Modalities (BIM).

» **Ensure direct, rapid, and community-level access:** The FRLD's delivery arrangements under the BIM should provide a genuine window for direct access by affected communities, with rapid disbursement and small-grants modalities that avoid the bureaucratic obstacles common to other UNFCCC mechanisms; civil society has called for options, including budget support and direct transfers, to affected populations.

» **Address slow-onset events and non-economic loss and damage:** Ensure the FRLD and wider architecture respond to slow-onset events, climate-induced displacement, and non-economic losses alongside extreme events.

» **Strengthen coherence across the architecture:** Use the WIM review to strengthen coordination and complementarity between the FRLD, the Santiago Network and national mechanisms, and resource the Santiago Network adequately to match technical support to actual damages. The Santiago Network should be equipped to support developing countries in accounting for both economic and non-economic losses, as a foundation for their access to adequate financial support.

» **Strengthen national integration and data systems:** Support countries to integrate loss and damage into national policies, planning and reporting, building the evidence base and country-owned pipelines needed to translate the new architecture into real support.

9 https://ldyouth.org/2026/07/08/statement-of-the-ldyc-for-the-9th-board-meeting-of-the-fund-for-responding-to-loss-and-damage/

B. Climate finance

Climate finance will be one of the defining issues of Africa's expectations at COP31. The widening gap between climate needs and actual flows explains why finance under Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement must be treated as a legally binding obligation of developed countries, not as recycled pledges. This is a position further reinforced by the International Court of Justice's 2025 Advisory Opinion on States' obligations regarding climate change. Public finance must remain the foundation for climate finance, particularly for adaptation and loss and damage, and the quality -- grants, highly concessional, accessible, predictable, and additional -- matters as much as the quantum.

Africa enters COP31 in the context of constrained fiscal space, high borrowing costs and rising debt service burdens. Climate action financed primarily through loans risks compounding the debt distress and vulnerability of developing countries. Thus, climate finance discussions at COP31 should focus on three distinct demands: developed countries must move from political commitments to fulfilling their obligations under article 9 of the Paris Agreement; public finance must remain as the foundation for climate finance, with it being preferably grant-based and genuinely available to developing countries, particularly for adaptation and loss and damage; and mechanisms for delivery, such as the Adaptation Fund, must be strengthened to ensure resources reach the most vulnerable in a timely and predictable manner.

Strengthening of the Adaptation Fund

The Adaptation Fund remains an important part of the multilateral climate finance architecture because of its focus on supporting concrete, locally driven adaptation projects and its pioneering "direct access" model, which enables accredited national institutions in developing countries to receive funding without the involvement of international intermediaries. As revenue from the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) declined, the Fund became increasingly dependent on voluntary contributions that have repeatedly fallen short of its target and is now being transitioned to serve the Paris Agreement, drawing a share of proceeds from Article 6.4 Carbon-market mechanism[10].

The Adaptation Fund continues to operate well below the scale of resourcing required, with pledges at COP30 falling short of the US$300 million annual mobilisation target. The Fund's transition to serve the Paris Agreement and its transitions arrangements were not concluded at COP30, and were instead deferred to the 64th session of the Subsidiary Bodies (SB64). But, at SB64, key questions remained unresolved, including the membership and composition of the Adaptation Fund Board, arrangements for the Adaptation Fund to exclusively serve the Paris Agreement, and the initiation of the fifth review of the Fund based on the work undertaken at COP30.

For Africa, the Adaptation Fund's transition is an opportunity to strengthen its role within the climate finance architecture while protecting its direct access model and focus on adaptation projects. COP31 should resolve outstanding institutional governance and operational structures while ensuring the fund remains effective, accessible and adequately financed



10 Decision 1/CMA.3, paragraphs 62–68; Decision 13/CMA.7 on matters relating to the Adaptation Fund.

Key African priorities for the Adaptation Fund COP31

» **Conclude fair and transparent governance arrangements:** Africa demands that the Fund's board membership and governance considerations be established under a foundation of balanced representation, equity and meaningful representation and participation of developing countries.

» **Finalise the transition to exclusively serve the Paris Agreement:** Parties should establish clear and equitable transition arrangements for the Fund's transition, and agree on a clear and equitable pathway that will enable prompt monetisation of the share of proceeds under Article 6.4, voluntary contributions, including resources for adaptation under Article 6.2, and the complete transfer of remaining assets under the Clean Development Mechanism. Since this provision is not adequate to the Fund, the board should also adopt a more reliable contribution mechanism to ensure that the Fund is sustainably resourced with grant-based and highly concessional public climate finance.

» **Ensure an ambitious outcome from the fifth review of the Adaptation Fund:** The fifth review must therefore recommend actions to strengthen the Fund's effectiveness, sustainability, accessibility and scalability to address the adaptation finance gap through grant-based and highly concessional resources. Africa demands capitalisation and replenishment through predictable, multi-year contributions, working towards tripling the Fund's annual outflows from 2022 levels by 2030.

» **Protect and expand direct access:** Reinforce simplified access for LDCs and African countries and strengthen national entities, rather than absorbing the Fund into the slower and more centralised financial architecture.

Conclude the second review of the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF)

The Standing Committee on Finance (SCF) supports the COP in exercising its function in relation to the UNFCCC's financial mechanism, including by improving coherence and coordination in climate finance delivery, supporting mobilisation of financial resources, and strengthening the measurement, reporting and verification of support to developing countries.[11]

Where negotiations stand

Since its inception, the climate finance landscape has evolved significantly, driven by the entry into force of the Paris Agreement, the growing prominence of Article 2.1(c) and the development of new financing instruments. Periodic reviews are essential to ensuring that the climate finance framework remains effective and responsive to evolving circumstances. However, the review has faced repeated delays, having been deferred at SBI62, at COP30 in Belém, and subsequently to SBI64 in 2026. The deadlock has persisted, with the review now postponed further to SBI65. These delays stem from Parties' inability to agree on a way forward, particularly regarding the role of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA) in the review process. Resolving this disagreement is therefore likely to be a key agenda item for Parties at COP 31.

The Standing Committee on Finance (SCF) is mandated to strengthen coherence and coordination across the climate finance architecture and should not itself be left in a state of institutional uncertainty. Parties should prioritise resolving the question of the CMA's role in the review and avoid allowing this procedural disagreement to further delay substantive discussions.

11 https://unfccc.int/topics/climate-finance/funds-entities-bodies/standing-committee-on-finance/about-the-standing-committee-on-finance

Key African priorities for SCF at COP31

» **Conclude the second review of the SCF:** COP31/CMA8 should adopt a joint decision on the SCF's function and close the CMA role definitively. In order to reflect the SCF's evolving role, Parties should agree that the committee serves both in the COP and CMA while its governance arrangement shows its dual responsibility to break the deadlock and give the review a chance to be completed at COP31.

» **Give equal attention to quality and quantity:** The review must result in a mandate that is anchored in the scale of climate finance needs for adaptation, mitigation and loss and damage for African and developing countries, as recorded in the SCF Needs Determination Reports.

» **Designate the SCF as NCQG progress assessor:** SCF should be the primary technical body responsible for producing regular independent assessments of collective progress towards delivering the NCQG, drawing on existing reporting process while preserving the SCF advisory mandate.

Ensure the Climate Finance Work Programme provides clear implementation pathways for scaling climate finance.

COP30 established a two-year Climate Finance Work Programme (CFWP), including on Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement in the context of Article 9 as a whole. The programme began in 2026 under two co-chairs, one from a developed and the other from a developing country, supported by Party submissions, consultations and engagement workshops.

The CFWP remains politically contested, with issues of trust and accountability in the Paris Agreement regime at the centre. The SB64 discussions revealed that the CFWP is not just a technical workstream, but a political proxy for the broader question of whether developed countries will deliver on their obligations to provide international public climate finance.

A key divide is whether the CFWP should focus primarily on implementing developed countries' legal obligation to provide finance under Article 9.1, as developing countries argue, or take a broader approach to Article 9 as a whole, which would include private mobilisation and enabling environments. Developing countries are concerned that such broadening could dilute the distinction between finance that developed countries are obligated to provide and finance that is mobilised from other sources.

Three sessions of the CFWP took place at SB64, parallel with the Veradas Dialogue on Article 2.1(c) and its complementarity to Article 9. CMA8 will convene the Xingu Finance Talks under the Veredas Dialogue and in consultation with the co-chairs as an annual high-level roundtable. The talks will aim to facilitate a cooperative exchange of views among all interested parties and stakeholders, specifically academia, international finance institutions and the private sector, to address the challenges and opportunities in the implementation of Article 2.1(c) of the Paris Agreement and its complementarity to Article 9.

For Africa, the work programme must not be used to dilute the centrality of Article 9.1, and its outcomes at COP31 should reaffirm that finance provision by developed countries is a legally binding treaty obligation, not a discretionary or voluntary pledge.

Key African priorities for Climate Finance Work Programme COP31

» **Secure a standalone Article 9.1 item at CMA8:** Africa presses for the Climate Finance Work Programme to be taken up as a standalone item at CMA8, centred on the developed-country obligation to provide public finance under Article 9.1, and resist the dilution of that obligation into "mobilise-all-sources" framings or unilateral trade measures such as CBAM.

» **Ensuring an equitable distribution between mitigation and adaptation:** Taking into account the agreed tripling of adaptation finance, while also addressing the NCQG's recognition of the urgent need for enhanced action and support for Loss and Damage, as well as financing Just Transition.

» **Ensure the Xingu Talks Deliver for Africa:** The Xingu process and conversations should prioritise concrete efforts towards debt relief and non-debt finance instruments such as debt swaps and lower costs of finance as measurable outputs of the fiscal space pillar rather than a space for technical exchange.

Replenishment process of the UNFCCC Fund

For Africa, the 'replenishment' of multilateral climate funds should not be treated simply as a voluntary donor exercise, but as part of developed countries' obligations to provide climate finance under Articles 9 and 4.3 and 4.4 of the Paris Agreement, informed by assessing developing country needs using data from Nationally Determined Contributions, National Adaptation Plans, and SCF reports. This is particularly important for a continent facing escalating climate impacts while least responsible and constrained by debt, high borrowing costs, and unpredictable funding cycles.

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) remains the largest dedicated multilateral climate fund and a central channel for supporting developing countries' mitigation and adaptation priorities, including through country ownership[12]. COP31 therefore provides an important opportunity to shape the ambition, quality, and accessibility of the replenishment.

The Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) was established at COP27 after three decades of advocacy, and COP30 marked a decisive institutional shift towards its replenishment. Unlike GCF-3, which has an already established replenishment model, FRLD's very first replenishment cycle is still being designed, with its transition from interim World Bank hosting to an independent secretariat also underway on a fixed timeline. The Fund is Africa's highest leverage fight in the finance architecture, and COP31 provides the chance to build in from the onset the same standards of predictability, concessionality and direct access that Africans must fight to extract from GCF-3 through years of established practice.

Africa therefore should push for the GCF, the FRLD, and the Adaptation Fund to be replenished and resourced at the scale, speed, and quality commensurate with developing countries' needs.

12 https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/documents/2026-07/18-arrangements-third-replenishment-green-climate-fund-gcf-b45-19-rev01.pdf

Key African priorities for the replenishment process of the UNFCCC Fund

» **Predictable, accessible and concessional finance:** The GCF-3 should deliver a substantial, multi-year pledge floor of grant-based, highly concessional public finance with continued donor pledges made conditional on fixed enforceable accreditation and disbursement timeline benchmarks, making it the proof point for predictable quality and genuinely accessible climate finance across the rest of the COP31 agenda.

» **Institutionalise predictable finance for loss and damage:** Establish a formal institutional replenishment cycle for the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD), replacing ad hoc pledging with predictable, periodic replenishments informed by a robust, needs-based assessment methodology. In parallel, strengthen simplified direct access modalities and pre-allocate a defined share of the Fund's resources for rapid disbursement against pre-agreed triggers, enabling timely support following disaster onset without requiring affected countries to complete a full proposal cycle before accessing assistance.

» **Direct, community-level access:** The FRLD's delivery arrangements under the BIM should provide a genuine window for direct access by affected communities, with rapid disbursement and small-grants modalities that avoid the bureaucratic obstacles common to other UNFCCC mechanisms; civil society has called for various options, including budget support and direct transfers to affected populations.

» **A formal replenishment cycle for the Adaptation Fund beyond the CDM levy:** Establish a stabilised formal replenishment cycle for the Adaptation Fund to end reliance on volatile Clean Development Mechanism CDM levy proceeds. The Funds' direct access modalities should be protected and expanded as an operational model for other funds. Further, replenishment outcomes should be reported against progress towards the 1.3 trillion Baku-to-Belem Roadmap.

» **Convert pledged commitments to paid contributions:** Replenishment outcomes should be tracked and reported on a paid contribution basis as opposed to the pledged existing design for each replenishment cycle. In the case of pledges, binding payment schedules with legally binding consequences for non-payment should be enforced, ensuring commitments carry the same accountability as delivery.



Cross-cutting matters: Accountability in the implementation of NCQG

The New Collective Quantified goal (NCQG), agreed at COP29 in Baku, establishes the overarching climate finance framework through 2035. It includes two targets to achieve by 2035: the goal of at least US$300 billion per year for developing countries, with developed countries taking the lead, alongside efforts by other actors to scale finance to at least US$1.3 trillion per year in climate investments into developing countries. The NCQG views multilateral development banks (MDBs) as critical to mobilising climate finance, acknowledging the voluntary intention of Parties to count all climate related outflows from, and finance mobilised by, the banks. The goal frames delivery in terms of both quantity and quality of finance. COP31 is not a moment to renegotiate the NCQG, but rather to strengthen its implementation and accountability through the climate finance processes underway.

For Africa, the credibility of the NCQG will depend on the ability of Parties to translate the goal into actionable output that matches the volume and urgency of developing countries' climate finance needs. Funds should remain primarily as grants as opposed to loans in order to be consistent with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and to avoid debt burdens.

A key test of NCQG implementation will be supporting delivery of COP30's commitment to at least triple adaptation finance by 2035 as set out in paragraph 34 of Decision 12/CMA.7. Parties must ensure that the tripling forms part of that goal without compromising quality, ensuring that it is non-debt-creating, concessional and grant-equivalent. Calculating the tripling based on the doubling pledge (US$40 billion by 2025) would make the new adaptation finance goal under the NCQG a tripling of the doubling, that is, US$120 billion by 2035. Achieving this within NCQG delivery would help to ensure parity between adaptation and mitigation finance.

COP31 should provide greater clarity on the baseline, place emphasis on grant-based finance, identify milestones in delivering this commitment, and ensure progress towards a greater balance between mitigation and adaptation. This should result in adequate finance flows from the established adaptation funds and eliminate barriers to direct and timely access.

Africa's NCQG accountability push should be firmly anchored on the deliberations on a standing agenda item on Article 9.1 obligations while clarifying persistent gaps in the current climate finance architecture.

C. Just transitions

Context

For Africa, just transitions must be understood as development pathways rooted in whole-of-economy and whole-of-society transformation. They should advance universal energy access, industrialisation, decent work, poverty reduction, climate resilience and sustainable development, ensuring that no one is left behind.

The Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP) remains an important space for Africa to ensure that climate action supports its development priorities. At COP30, Parties agreed on the establishment of a Just Transition Mechanism, which included rights to previously unrecognised groups in the UNFCCC process such as informal workers and Indigenous Peoples. This has been followed up with discussions on the operationalisation of the Just Transition Mechanism (JTM), including its functions and governance. This reflects growing recognition that climate goals can only be achieved through transitions that support all workers and communities, and with sufficient international support.

This has been coupled with dialogue sessions under the Just Transition Work Programme which have highlighted the need for the inclusion of adaptation, food security, agriculture and industrialisation and their relation to Just Transition. Building resilience is already changing livelihoods and requires work across sectors such as agriculture, water, health and ecosystem restoration. Much of this

work remains informal, community-based or unpaid, yet it is critical for reducing vulnerability. A just transition should therefore recognise and support adaptation labour while ensuring that climate action does not place additional burdens on vulnerable workers and communities.

Where negotiations stand

At SB64, Parties spent much of the negotiations reviewing and making effort to agree on the Terms of Reference for the review of the Just Transition Work Programme, including its scope, objectives and effectiveness. Discussions also continued on a possible Just Transition Mechanism (JTM), including its functions, governance arrangements and implementation modalities. This was followed up with a sixth dialogue on JT and industry and an informal inter-sessional amongst negotiators convened by the Australia COP31 Negotiation Presidency.

While progress was made, negotiations remained focused largely on procedural questions on the Work Programme and mapping. Another key point of divergence concerned the purpose of a future mechanism. Developing countries generally emphasised the need for a mechanism that can support implementation through finance, capacity building and other means of implementation, while many developed countries favoured a more facilitative and cooperation-focused approach. As COP31 approaches, the challenge will be to move beyond process discussions and focus on how the JTWP can support workers, communities and countries in delivering fair and development-oriented transitions.

For Africa, the key question is no longer whether a mechanism should exist, but whether it will be designed to address the continent's development realities and implementation needs. COP31 is a key decision point for moving from conceptual agreement towards institutional design and implementation.

Key African priorities for just transitions at COP31

» Provide direction on the governance of the Just Transition Mechanism, ideally including Global North and South representation as well as observer-constituency representation.

» Outline the functions and modalities of the Just Transition Mechanism.

» Conclude the review of the Just Transition Work Programme with agreement on the continuation of the programme

» Finalise the relationship between the Just Transition Work Programme and the Just Transition Mechanism.

» Promote green industrialisation and equitable value addition. The mechanism should support local manufacturing, beneficiation of transition minerals, economic diversification and job creation, enabling African countries to capture greater value from global energy transition supply chains.

» Address the impacts of climate-related trade measures. COP31 should provide space to deliberate measures such as Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanisms and related policies that may constrain industrial development and fiscal space.

» Provide pathways to means of implementation. Discussions on transition pathways should be accompanied by adequate finance, technology transfer, capacity-building, social protection and economic diversification support, in line with national circumstances, development priorities, and CBDR-RC.

Related COP31 Action Agenda Priority: Electrification targets and green industrialisation

Electrification is emerging as a central pillar of the COP31 Presidency's clean energy agenda. At SB64 in Bonn, the COP31 Presidency announced a voluntary global target to increase electricity's share of final energy consumption to **35% by 2035**. The target is intended to accelerate the electrification of transport, buildings, industry and other end uses while reducing dependence on fossil fuels. The Presidency has indicated that implementation should be supported through technical assistance, capacity-building and finance, with the International Energy Agency expected to support work on how the target can be achieved.

For Africa, however, electrification cannot be considered only as an end-use transition. The continent still faces a fundamental electricity-access challenge, alongside inadequate generation capacity, weak and underdeveloped grids, high electricity costs and limited access to affordable finance. COP30 placed greater emphasis on implementation through initiatives on renewable energy, grids and storage, including significant voluntary investment commitments. Africa therefore needs an electrification agenda that simultaneously expands universal and reliable electricity access, increases clean electricity supply, and enables productive uses of energy, while supporting industrialisation and economic development.

The 35% target is currently a **Presidency-led voluntary target on the Action Agenda rather than a negotiated UNFCCC commitment**. Its announcement at SB64 has nevertheless positioned electrification as a major issue at COP31. Africa's priority will be the finance, infrastructure, technology, and capacity required for developing countries to electrify without increasing energy insecurity or debt burdens. Electrification will only deliver climate benefits where additional electricity demand is met through clean and reliable generation.

Key African priorities at COP31 on the electrification agenda

» **Make electrification an access agenda as well as a decarbonisation agenda:** COP31 should ensure that global electrification efforts contribute to universal, affordable, reliable and modern electricity access in Africa, rather than primarily accelerating electrification in already highly electrified economies. This includes providing finance and technology and add momentum to already existing programmes in Africa such as Mission 300 as pathways to reduce energy poverty.

» **Prioritise productive electrification:** Electrification should support African development through agriculture, manufacturing, transport, digital infrastructure, small businesses and other productive uses of electricity. The objective should be to turn expanded electricity access into economic opportunities, rather than electricity consumption alone.

Key African priorities at COP31 on green industrialisation

» **Turn trade into an enabler of Africa's green industrialisation:** COP31 should move the conversation beyond the defensive question of how Africa can avoid the negative impacts of climate-related trade measures. Trade policy should actively facilitate African participation in emerging low-carbon markets, including renewable energy technologies, batteries, green minerals, electric mobility, sustainable fuels and other environmental goods and services. This requires reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers, improving standards cooperation and supporting African producers to meet evolving international requirements.

D. Enhanced Transparency Framework: Support for Reporting and Capacity-Building

The Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF), established under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement, is the baseline mechanism through which Parties track progress on their Nationally Determined Contributions and report on adaptation action and climate finance provided and received. The ETF is entering a critical implementation phase. Article 13 of the Paris Agreement established a common transparency framework for tracking climate action and support, while recognising differing capacities of developing countries.[13]

Where negotiations stand

At SB64, Parties considered financial and technical support for ETF implementation and reflected on the lessons from the first BTR cycle. Although implementation has advanced, developing countries remain at different stages of the reporting cycle. [14] As of the June 2026 Bonn session (SB64), 132 countries had submitted their first BTRs, six had already submitted second BTRs, and 76 had submitted National Adaptation Plans, with 144 having initiated the NAP process. A record mix of 37 developed and developing countries presented their progress through the Facilitative, Multilateral Consideration of Progress (FMCP) process, the largest cohort since the mechanism began.

The second BTRs are due by 31 December 2026 for Parties subject to the regular reporting requirement. Africa backed the idea of a harmonised transparency framework in hopes that the capacity gap between developed countries with extensive years of MRV infrastructure and those of developing countries will be filled with reliable and predictable finance. The SBI64 synthesis of 90 developing country BTRs found persistent gaps, including understaffing, inconsistent use of flexibility, weak reporting structures, and slow disbursement of funding.

These findings matter for COP31 because they turn Africa's political claims to documented evidence. They strengthen the case that support for reporting cannot be deferred, thus COP31 must address financing gaps before the second BTR cycle repeats the same problems.

Key African priorities on ETF at COP31

» **Transparency finance as a standing Paris Agreement obligation, not a GEF line item:** A core ask for Africa at COP31 is that transparency finance be treated as a standing obligation flowing from the Paris Agreement and not just another GEF line item. Financesshould be set aside for CIBT and BTR support away from GEF non-climate focal areas and scaled beyond the current US$75 million for CBIT and US$145 million reporting envelope.

» **Mirror direct access reforms for timely delivery:** Funding should shift towards programme-based MRV institutional funding rather than project–by-project applications so that capacity does not have to be rebuiltfrom scratch every reporting round. The process should also mirror the direct access reforms to enhance timely delivery

» **Predictability and adequacy of finance:** ETF implementation support should move from uncertain funding to reliable sufficiently scaled financing that is tied to actual reporting needs. This should be done through the Capacity Building Initiative (CBIT) that will cover relevant but non-mandatory reporting.

13 https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sbi2026_10.pdf

14 https://unfccc.int/second-biennial-transparency-reports

E. Mitigation

The Paris Agreement's first Global Stocktake (GST) confirmed that global mitigation action remains substantially off track and called for deep, rapid and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, alongside a transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly and equitable manner. It also identified key actions for the energy transition, including tripling renewable energy capacity and doubling the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030. The implementation challenge is particularly significant for Africa, which faces rapidly rising energy demand, persistent energy-access deficits, and major infrastructure and investment gaps, while many economies remain dependent on fossil-fuel revenues and employment. African countries therefore require mitigation pathways that support development, energy access, industrialisation and economic diversification rather than treating emissions reduction as a stand-alone objective.

The challenge for COP31 is therefore no longer establishing mitigation objectives, but to ensure that implementation is adequately supported, equitable, and responsive to the different development contexts of countries. The 2025 NDC Synthesis Report[15] indicates that a large majority of Parties with new NDCs considered the first GST, including its mitigation outcomes, in preparing their new climate plans. However, significant gaps remain between current action and the level of mitigation required to keep 1.5°C within reach.

The Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme (MWP) was established in 2021 and operationalised[16] as a dedicated platform to scale up mitigation ambition and implementation during this critical decade, complementing the Global Stocktake (GST). It was deliberately designed to be facilitative, non-prescriptive and non-punitive, respecting national circumstances and the nationally determined nature of NDCs. The MWP provides a formal space for Parties to exchange views on mitigation solutions through global dialogues and investment-focused events, including opportunities to connect projects and proponents with financial and technical institutions. Its current mandate runs through 2026, making its continuation and future design a central issue for COP31.

Where the negotiations stand

At SB64 in Bonn, Parties reviewed the effectiveness, functioning and future of the MWP and considered whether it should continue beyond 2026. The discussions exposed a fundamental divide. Developed countries, AOSIS and several other Parties supported extending and strengthening the programme, including stronger operational links to the GST, multi-year thematic work and a more explicit role in supporting implementation and mitigation ambition; but the African and Arab groups, LMDCs and other developing countries stressed that the MWP should retain its existing facilitative and non-prescriptive character and should not be used to introduce new mitigation obligations, benchmarks or expectations beyond nationally determined commitments.

The African Group also emphasised practical implementation and improved access to finance, while the Arab Group called for greater Secretariat support to translate mitigation opportunities into investment-ready projects. The disagreement was ultimately unresolved at SB64 and carried forward under Rule 16, meaning COP31 will decide if, whether and how the programme continues beyond 2026.

15 https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs/2025-ndc-synthesis-report

16 https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma4_auv_4_scaling_up_mitigation.pdf

Key African priorities for mitigation at COP31

» **Extend and strengthen the MWP without changing its fundamental mandate:** COP31 should secure the continuation of the MWP as a dedicated platform for mitigation ambition and implementation, while preserving its facilitative, non-prescriptive and non-punitive character. Any extension should strengthen implementation and practical outcomes without creating new mitigation obligations or undermining the nationally determined nature of NDCs. Developed countries should lead through deeper and faster emissions reductions and provide adequate support for developing countries to pursue low-emission development.

» **Put implementation and means of implementation at the centre:** The MWP should move beyond the exchange of mitigation ideas towards identifying and addressing the barriers that prevent developing countries from implementing them. Global dialogues and investment-focused events should systematically address access to finance, technology transfer, capacity-building and project preparation, with particular attention to the constraints facing African countries. Africa should press for increased access to grant-based and highly concessional finance, technology and capacity-building to implement mitigation actions.

» **Make the investment-focused events deliverable and accessible:** The MWP should strengthen its matchmaking and project-preparation functions so that African countries can translate NDC priorities into credible investment pipelines. Financial institutions, multilateral development banks, the UNFCCC Financial Mechanism and Technology Mechanism should be more systematically engaged, while ensuring that investment-focused processes do not privilege projects solely based on commercial bankability or create new conditionalities for developing countries.

» **Prioritise energy access and African development needs:** Mitigation policy should not undermine Africa's urgent need to expand reliable energy access and productive energy use. International mitigation cooperation should support African countries to scale renewable energy, modernise and expand grids, deploy storage, improve energy efficiency, expand clean cooking and electrify productive sectors. The objective should be to enable Africa to pursue low-emission development while closing its energy-access and development gaps. This includes African participation and ownership through experts, civil society, Indigenous Peoples, workers, women, youth and regional bodies.

» **Link mitigation implementation to industrialisation and economic transformation:** COP31 should recognise that Africa's mitigation pathway presents opportunities for green industrialisation, local value creation, jobs and economic diversification. Support should therefore extend beyond individual renewable-energy projects towards integrated industrial strategies covering grids, storage, manufacturing, minerals processing, transport, clean cooking, energy efficiency and other productive uses of clean energy. Mitigation action should enable African countries to capture greater economic value from the energy transition rather than reproduce existing patterns of resource extraction.

Related COP31 Action Agenda priority: Transitioning away from fossil fuels

Mitigation discussions are also taking place against the backdrop of the unresolved political question of how to implement the GST's call for a transition away from fossil fuels. COP30 did not secure consensus on fossil-fuel language in the Mutirão decision and instead established a Presidency-led roadmap on transitioning away from fossil fuels (TAFF roadmap) in energy systems in a just, orderly and equitable manner, with the process expected to report to COP31. At SB64, the roadmap process continued through Presidency-led engagement, including discussion of how to translate the existing global consensus into implementation. This creates an important opportunity for COP31 to address implementation barriers, but also reinforces the need to ensure that transition pathways account for development needs, energy access, economic diversification and national circumstances across Africa.

COP31 should use the Presidency's fossil-fuel transition roadmap to address the practical conditions required for a fair transition, including energy access, economic diversification, fiscal dependence on fossil-fuel revenues, employment, industrial development, technology and finance. Africa should reject approaches that focus exclusively on reducing fossil-fuel supply without addressing the economic structures and development needs that underpin fossil-fuel dependence. The transition must support the expansion of affordable, reliable and clean energy while enabling countries to diversify their economies and protect workers and communities.

F. Technology governance development and transfer

Technology development and transfer are central to Africa's ability to implement both mitigation and adaptation action. Article 4 of the UNFCCC and Article 10 of the Paris Agreement provide for cooperation that extends beyond access to mature technologies to include their development, application, diffusion and transfer, yet delivery has remained inadequate and too often takes the form of finished technologies to developing-country markets, rather than the transfer of knowledge, productive capabilities and technologies needed for countries to adapt, manufacture and maintain solutions themselves.

For Africa, this reinforces a broader structural inequality: the continent supplies many of the minerals underpinning the global energy transition while receiving comparatively little value from the technologies and industries built around them. Greater attention must be given to adaptation technologies, which continue to receive less support than mitigation despite Africa's rapidly growing resilience needs.[17] Africa therefore remains positioned largely as a supplier of raw materials and consumer of technologies developed elsewhere, with limited control over their design, ownership, adaptation and deployment. This is particularly problematic for adaptation, where access to early warning systems, climate information and technologies for resilient agriculture, water management and health systems can determine communities' ability to withstand worsening climate impacts. A just approach to technology must combine access with co-development, African ownership and strengthened local innovation systems, recognising technology transfer as both a distributive and restorative justice issue.

Where the process stands

The Technology Implementation Programme (TIP) was established following the first Global Stocktake to strengthen implementation of technology priorities identified by developing countries. Africa entered COP30 seeking a programme that went beyond pilot projects and market-based diffusion to address intellectual-property barriers, support endogenous innovation, and build regional manufacturing and technology capacity.[18]

17 See https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sbi2022_13.pdf, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sb2025_06_adv.pdf.

18 https://www.powershiftafrica.org/publications/african-priorities-for-cop30-policy-brief

At SB64, technology was one of the few areas to record concrete institutional progress. Parties agreed to retain UNEP as host of the Climate Technology Centre, securing continued technical support through 2027, and advanced work on linkages between the Technology Mechanism and Financial Mechanism. COP31 should build on these developments by ensuring that technology needs and technical assistance translate into financed implementation, while using the TIP and wider Technology Mechanism to address the structural barriers that continue to constrain technology development and transfer in Africa.

Africa's overarching priority should be technology justice and sovereignty; moving Africa from a passive recipient of technologies towards an active co-developer, producer and innovator, able to capture greater value from the technologies and industries underpinning the global transition.

Key African priorities for technology governance development and transfer at COP31

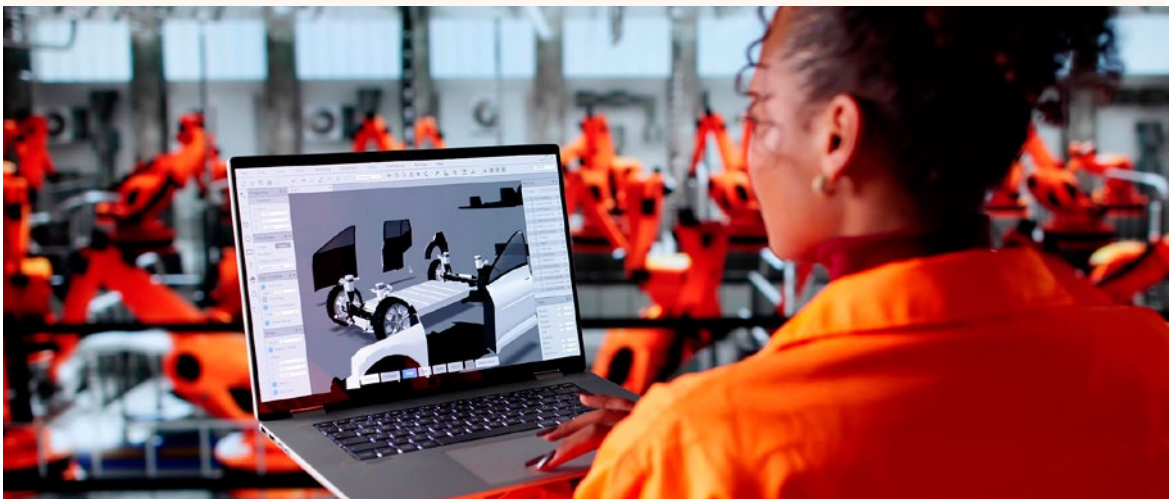
» **Broaden the scope of technology transfer to reflect the full scope of obligations under the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement:** Technology cooperation must extend beyond access to finished products to include joint research and development, demonstration, knowledge transfer, licensing, co-development, local adaptation and the transfer of production and manufacturing capabilities.

» **Make the TIP implementation-focused:** The TIP must support the actual transfer, scaling and local production of technologies identified by developing countries, rather than limiting support to technical assistance, pilots and market-based diffusion

» **Link technology needs to finance:** Strengthen links between the Technology Mechanism and Financial Mechanism so that Technology Needs Assessments (TNAs), Technology Action Plans and technical assistance from the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN) translate into fully funded implementation, backed by adequate and predictable finance.

» **Prioritise adaptation technologies and African innovation:** Increase support for early warning, climate information, resilient agriculture, water and health technologies while strengthening African research institutions, innovators and locally driven solutions.

» **Address intellectual property and trade barriers:** Advance appropriate TRIPS flexibilities, licensing arrangements, open-source approaches and public-interest cooperation that enable affordable access to transformative technologies and support domestic production.



G. Global Stocktake

For Africa, the second Global Stocktake (GST2) is an opportunity to ensure that the Paris Agreement's assessment of global progress reflects not only the ambition gap, but also the persistent implementation and support gaps facing developing countries. African countries are already experiencing escalating climate impacts despite contributing little to global emissions and facing significant constraints and gaps in accessing finance, technology and capacity building support. GST2 must assess progress through equity and CBDR-RC and avoid approaches that apply uniform expectations across different national circumstances.

COP31 will mark the commencement of the GST2 cycle, which will run through 2028, and assess collective progress over the period 2024-2028. Under Article 14 of the Paris Agreement, the GST is the five-year review process designed to assess collective global progress in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement, considering mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation and support, in the light of equity and the best available science.[19]

For Africa, GST2 must build on the lessons learnt from the first by providing a comparable and equal assessment of progress across adaptation, mitigation, loss and damage, and means of implementation, with equity applied more systematically across the assessment. The GST1 confirmed that Parties were collectively off track to achieve the Paris Agreement's long-term goals and identified significant gaps in adaptation and means of implementation support. While it established the importance of assessing collective progress in light of equity, its outcome did not fully resolve the significant gaps between developing countries' climate needs and the finance, technology, and capacity required to implement them. African negotiators have consistently stressed that the GST should identify these gaps and use its findings to strengthen both climate action and international support.

Where the process stands

At SB64, the Chairs of the Subsidiary Bodies held an informal meeting on preparations for GST2. The immediate priority at COP31 will be to establish the information base and parameters that will inform the stocktake over the following two years. This is particularly important for Africa because countries are at different stages of implementing the Enhanced Transparency Framework, and many are still strengthening their data and institutional capacity for Biennial Transparency Reporting cycles. Unless this is recognised, data gaps could underrepresent African needs and support gaps, along with commensurate action. GST2 must also assess whether developed countries are delivering finance, technology, and capacity building commitments. GST should be grounded in equity and CBDR-RC. Based on these principles, GST must avoid using a flat global benchmark that treats countries with different historical responsibilities, capacities, and development needs as equivalent. Africa remains committed to constructive engagement as parties prepare to launch the second Global Stocktake in COP31.

Key African priorities for Global Stocktake at COP31

» **Strengthen the assessment of adaptation:** GST2 should draw on NAPs, adaptation communications, and the GGA indicators as they are operationalised to access both adaptation progress and the gap between adaptation needs and support, provided these indicators are used to anchor adaptation assessment in quantifiable measures rather than narrative or qualitative reporting alone.

» **Ensure a balanced GST2:** The next stocktake should weigh adaptation as heavily as mitigation. Adaptation should be assessed against quantifiable measures as opposed to qualitative impressions; and the adaptation finance gap must be assigned an actual dollar value, a task GST2 is uniquely positioned to undertake, given the volume of finance data available.

19 https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement

» **Ensure African and Global South realities are adequately represented:** Differences in reporting capacity and BTR maturity should not be interpreted as an absence of action or need. GST2 must draw on the full range of agreed information sources, including evidence from regional bodies and institutions, NAPs, NDCs, financial mechanism data, scientific assessments, and global synthesis reports.

» **Assess the means of implementation gap:** Finance, technology transfer and capacity building support to developing countries should be assessed alongside climate action. GST2 should use SCF assessments, the UAE dialogue on finance delivery findings, the NCQG implementation data, needs identified in NDCs, and the multilateral fund records to make the gap between assessed needs and delivered support visible. This should be treated as core evidence for operationalising equity and CBDR-RC.

H. Climate-related trade measures

Climate-related trade measures have been recognised by developing countries as creating significant risks where they impose additional compliance costs, restrict market access and/or shift the costs of climate action onto developing economies with lower historical emissions and more limited financial and technical capacity. These concerns have intensified as developed countries introduce or expand unilateral climate-related trade measures, including carbon border adjustment mechanisms (CBAMs), emissions standards and other requirements affecting the carbon content of traded goods. The European Union's CBAM, which entered its definitive regime in 2026, is particularly significant for African exporters of carbon-intensive products such as iron and steel, aluminium, cement, fertilisers and electricity. Such measures raise concerns not only about their direct trade effects but also about their implications for industrialisation, fiscal revenues, technology access, and the ability of African countries to move up global value chains.

The UNFCCC has long recognised the relationship between climate action and trade. Article 3.5 of the Convention provides that measures taken to combat climate change, including unilateral measures, should not constitute arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade. At COP30, the issue of climate-related trade measures became a major political issue, with developing countries, led by the Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDCs), seeking stronger consideration of unilateral measures within the UNFCCC, while several developed countries argued that questions of trade compatibility should be primarily addressed through the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The WTO has also started its own processes, such as a voluntary pilot exercise, to share information on trade and climate measures, including approaches to measuring embedded carbon emissions. WTO discussions have also highlighted regulatory fragmentation, the interoperability of carbon standards and CBAMs, and the need to consider the development dimension and market-access impacts of climate-related trade measures on developing countries.

The issue was ultimately addressed through Presidency-led consultations rather than as a standalone negotiated agenda item. The Global Mutirão decision reaffirmed the importance of an open international economic system and stated that climate measures, including unilateral measures, should not constitute arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or disguised restrictions on international trade. It also reaffirmed Article 3.5 and established dialogues at SB64, SB66 and SB68 on opportunities, challenges, and barriers to enhancing international cooperation on the role of trade. A high-level event is set to consider the outcomes of the dialogues in 2028.

Where the negotiations stand

The first of these dialogues took place at SB64 in Bonn in June 2026 and exposed a clear North-South divide. Developing countries sought to examine the compatibility and impacts of climate-related trade measures through the principles and provisions of the UNFCCC, including Article 3.5, equity and CBDR-RC, while developed countries favoured technical exchanges, information sharing and avoiding duplication with work already taking place through the WTO and other institutions.

African interventions focused on the relationship between trade, industrialisation and development. This included arguments from Africa states that the UNFCCC and WTO should not be used to legitimise trade measures designed to shield domestic industries from competition under the guise of climate action, the need to protect African industrialisation and economic development, including local-content policies, and participation in technology value chains. These positions reinforce the wider African position that climate-related trade measures should not constrain the policy space required for industrialisation or impose additional costs on countries that lack the resources and technological capacity of developed economies.

Continued discussions are expected at SB66 and SB68 during Bonn discussions. This means there is no dedicated dialogue or agenda meeting for climate-related trade measures during COP31. However, we expect developing countries, including those from Africa, to continue raising the issue in different fora, such as the Just Transition Work Programme and the Technology Implementation Programme.

Key African priorities for climate-related trade measures at COP31

- **Operationaliwe Article 3.5 of the Convention:** African countries should continue to press for the trade dialogue (led by the BASIC group) to be an agenda item to examine how the existing obligation under Article 3.5 can be implemented in practice. COP31 should therefore establish a clearer basis for assessing the cross-border impacts of climate policies on developing-country economies and ensure that climate action does not become a vehicle for protectionism.

- **Make the UNFCCC trade dialogue substantive and accountable:** COP31 should ensure that the second phase of the dialogue moves beyond information-sharing by establishing co-facilitation, continuity across the SB64, SB66 and SB68 dialogues and the 2028 high-level event, and a systematic record of developing-country concerns at each round. Engagement with the WTO and UNCTAD should support this process while preserving the UNFCCC's climate, equity and development mandate, rather than shifting responsibility for the issue to the WTO.

- **Defend Just Transition and CBDR-RC in Trade policy:** Via the Just Transition Work Programme, re-emphasis must be made that climate-related trade cooperation should recognise that countries have different historical contributions, capabilities and development needs. A fair climate-trade regime must therefore combine environmental objectives with equity, development and means of implementation. Trade should be used to accelerate a just transition and economic transformation in Africa, not to impose new costs that deepen existing inequalities between the Global North and Global South.

» **Strengthen coherence between the UNFCCC, WTO and other institutions without allowing fragmentation to weaken accountability:** The UNFCCC trade dialogue should engage the WTO, UNCTAD, ITC and other relevant institutions while retaining a clear climate, equity and development mandate. Coordination should prevent duplication, but it should not result in climate-related trade questions being removed from the UNFCCC simply because they also fall within the mandate of the WTO. African countries must have meaningful representation across both processes.

I. Youth and cross-sectoral alliances

Africa has the world's youngest population while its young people, women, workers, farmers, Indigenous Peoples, local communities and other frontline groups are among those most affected by climate change. However, their participation in climate governance often remains limited.

Youth and non-Party stakeholder engagement has become an important part of the UNFCCC climate Action architecture through the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action and the High-Level Climate Champions. Heading to COP31, the Presidency has identified youth engagement and cross-sector joint action among its Action Agenda priorities. The agenda has described young people as "solution partners" while cross-sectoral alliances have been called on to forge stronger connections across climate change, biodiversity and land degradation. The Presidency has emphasised the role of non-Party actors, including academia, CSOs, and local governments, and has appointed a dedicated Youth Champion.

As the UNFCCC increasingly shifts towards implementation, meaningful participation must extend beyond representation at COPs to influencing how climate policies and implementation plans are designed and delivered. African youth and other climate-vulnerable groups should not only be represented in COP31 spaces but also be enabled to shape, lead and implement solutions across the Action Agenda, including adaptation, clean energy, food systems, resilient cities and green industrialisation. They should be supported with finance, capacity building, technology access, and knowledge sharing skills to participate effectively in shaping climate policy and negotiations delivering climate action for resilient and equitable futures.

Key African priorities for youth and cross-sectoral alliances at COP31

» Strengthen meaningful, inclusive and institutional participation: Parties at COP31 must operationalise Article 12 of the Paris Agreement by making sure support for intergenerational equity is not a tick box exercise. Young people deserve platforms beyond LCOY and RCOY, and COP31 should support equitable, full, inclusive and gender responsive participation by young people, women, Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLCs)

» **Put people at the center of the just transition:** COP31 cannot be an implementation COP without agreement on how predictable finance can be mobilised to support youth-led organisations and initiatives. This is essential if young people are to be fully recognised as drivers of climate solutions on the ground.

III. COP31 Action Agenda Priorities (Non-negotiated)

The COP31 Action Agenda provides an opportunity to reinforce Africa's adaptation priorities across food security, resilient health systems, resilient cities, oceans, and ecosystems. For Africa, these themes must move beyond declarations and dialogue towards delivery on the ground, complementing NAPs, the GGA, and negotiated work on agriculture and food security, rather than creating parallel processes or additional reporting burdens.

COP31 should support climate-resilient food and health systems, resilient and greener African cities through stronger infrastructure and planning, updated building standards, early-warning and climate information systems, and the restoration and protection of urban ecosystems such as wetlands, forests and green spaces. This requires accessible and predictable finance, technology transfer and capacity-building that enable African countries and cities to move from climate-resilient planning on paper to implementation on the ground.

Oceans and seas should similarly move from dialogue towards implementation

Africa's coastal and marine ecosystems and communities face growing risks from sea-level rise, ocean acidification, pollution, and ecosystem degradation. COP31 should build on the Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue by strengthening institutional capacity and delivering accessible climate finance and technology transfer for coastal and marine adaptation, including the protection and restoration of marine ecosystems and integration of Indigenous and local knowledge. Greater coherence across relevant climate, biodiversity, and regional ocean processes should support implementation while avoiding duplication.

The political test for COP31 will be delivery, African countries and communities do not need another layer of ambitions, declarations and initiatives without the means to implement them. Action Agenda initiatives should demonstrate when and how commitments will be delivered on the ground, mobilising additional resources and translating existing commitments into country-led implementation and tangible resilience benefits for frontline communities.

Zero waste

According to the Global Waste Management Outlook 2024, municipal solid waste generation alone, excluding industrial waste, exceeded 2.1 billion tonnes in 2023 and is projected to reach 3.8 billion tonnes by 2050.[20] When you add industrial waste, construction debris, agricultural waste, and other streams, total global waste reaches an estimated 28 billion tonnes annually. The report further states that the global direct cost of waste management was an estimated US$252 billion in 2020, and this figure does not capture the wider costs associated with pollution, poor health, and climate change resulting from poor waste disposal. Drastic action is necessary to reduce global waste generation and advance circularity.

While waste reduction and circularity have largely been framed as ways to reduce emissions from extraction of virgin materials and end-of-life treatment of products, they also have important adaptation dimensions. Food waste from pre-harvest and post-harvest practices results in food insecurity, income losses for farm families, malnutrition and other health impacts associated with lost aesthetic value of the environment due to open decomposition of organic agricultural waste.

20 https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/44939

Moreover, circular economy practices, including energy recovery, reuse, recycling and upcycling, provide viable complementary adaptive livelihood alternatives for farming communities who are adversely impacted by climate change. Achieving a zero-waste economy also requires behavioural and institutional changes across society and the economy.

Africa expects COP 31 presidency to:

» **Frame zero waste and circularity as beneficial for adaptation:** Recognising waste generation from agriculture due to inadequate pre-harvest and post-harvest practices is important to drive investments into agricultural and food systems, including value addition technologies, cooling, modern harvesting, storage and transportation.

» **Center adaptive livelihood benefits of zero waste and circularity:** Achieving zero waste can create new livelihood opportunities by recovering value from waste through cottage industries, composting, waste collection, recycling and upcycling. These activities can supplement traditional livelihoods that are increasingly affected by climate change.

» **Connecting zero waste and health:** Poor waste disposal results in sanitary lapses, destroys the aesthetic value of the environment, and results in prevalence of infectious diseases such as cholera and dysentery. Poorly disposed solid waste also provides breeding grounds for vectors such as mosquitoes that spread malaria. Therefore, addressing waste builds community resilience and the ability to thrive amidst climate change.



IV. Conclusion

COP31 must mark a shift from commitments to delivery. For Africa, success in Antalya will depend on whether the climate regime begins to close the gap between agreed goals and the finance, technology and capacity-building required to implement them. This means turning adaptation commitments into funded action, making loss and damage finance accessible to affected countries and communities, strengthening accountability for climate finance, and ensuring that mitigation and just transition pathways support development, energy access and economic transformation.

Africa's priorities are interconnected. Adaptation cannot be delivered without finance; mitigation cannot be equitable without technology and capacity; and a just transition cannot succeed if African countries remain exporters of raw materials while value, manufacturing and jobs are created elsewhere. Climate-related trade measures, transparency requirements and the Global Stocktake must therefore be approached through equity, CBDR-RC and the different capacities and development circumstances of countries.

COP31 is also an important staging point ahead of COP32 in Addis Ababa. Antalya should consolidate a coherent African agenda centred on implementation, justice and sovereignty, while strengthening the institutions and support needed to turn that agenda into action. Africa should enter COP32 not only with a clear account of its vulnerabilities and needs, but also with a stronger claim to shape the solutions, from adaptation and renewable energy to green industrialisation, technology development and locally led resilience.

The measure of COP31 will therefore be practical: whether African countries and communities leave with clearer pathways to resources, stronger implementation mechanisms and greater policy space to pursue climate-compatible development. Delivery, rather than another layer of declarations, must be the benchmark for success.





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