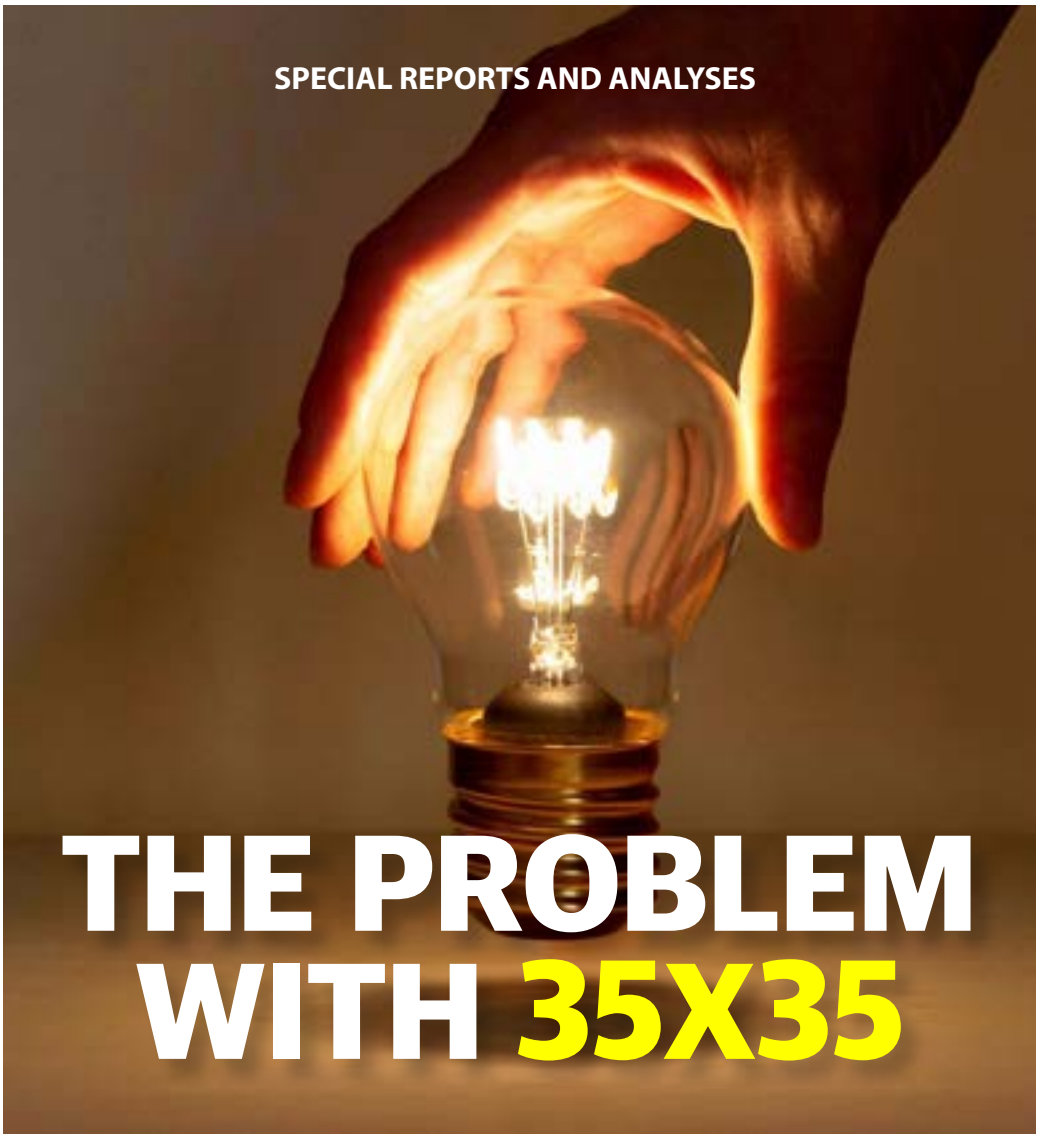
The COP31 Chronicle

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SPECIAL REPORTS AND ANALYSES

THE PROBLEM WITH 35X35

The 35 by 35 pledge could reshape the global energy system, but its success will ultimately be measured by the choices it compels: whether it accelerates the phase-out of fossil fuels, confronts the injustice of unequal access to energy finance, and ensures Africa can secure affordable financing for its transition. Without these commitments, ambition risks becoming rhetoric, and another headline target detached from reality **Page 2&3**

ARE YOU FEELING LOST IN ANTALYA?

WE KNOW YOU NEED THIS!

Find more coverage of the Antalya summit, including analyses, video interviews, documentaries, and much, much more on our website and social media outlets.

France slams the brakes on finance, resists reopening global funding deal: Despite gap between climate finance commitments and the funding actually reaching vulnerable countries, Paris insisted this week on the need for more information to understand why existing resources are not reaching intended destinations **P.6&7**

On GGA, it fells like deja vu from Bonn: Developed countries want an expert-only technical task force, developing countries want some form of political oversight by Parties. **P.22**

And, finally, there is some good news! 83 developing countries have filed their NAPs, including 12 new submissions this year, the largest annual increase so far. Seven are from Africa. **P.27**



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editor's note

COP31's 35x35 electrification goal risks missing the biggest point

The 35 by 35 pledge could transform the global energy system. But without a commitment to replace fossil fuels and deliver affordable finance for Africa, it risks becoming another headline target that fails to deliver

BY MOHAMED ADOW

The world is entering the age of electrification. Electric vehicles, renewable power and cleaner industrial technologies are transforming the global economy. This is an enormous opportunity, particularly for Africa, where clean electricity could unlock a new era of industrial development and prosperity.

So the decision by Türkiye and Australia to make electrification a flagship initiative at COP31 should be welcomed. Their proposed 35 by 35 goal, increasing electricity's share of global final energy consumption from around 23 per cent today to 35 per cent by 2035, could accelerate this transformation.

But there is a serious flaw in the proposal. It promotes electrification without ensuring that the additional electricity comes from renewable sources, or that it replaces fossil fuels.

Electrification is not automatically decarbonisation. A factory switching from coal to renewable electricity is a major climate achievement, but building new gas-fired power stations to meet rising electricity demand could increase electrification while prolonging dependence on fossil fuels.

At COP28 in Dubai, governments agreed to transition away from fossil fuels. Three years later, COP31 should be taking that commitment forward, not creating a target that could be achieved without delivering it.

The pledge acknowledges renewable energy but does not explicitly require additional electricity demand to be met by renewables. This is a dangerous omission. A target intended to accelerate the clean energy transition must not provide political cover for expanding fossil fuel infrastructure.

There is another fundamental weakness in the proposal. It is a global target that does not adequately address the enormous differences between countries.

For wealthy economies, electrification largely means replacing existing fossil fuel technologies. Petrol cars become electric vehicles, gas boilers are replaced by heat pumps, and factories switch from fossil fuels to electricity.

For Africa, the challenge is different. More than 600 million Africans still lack access to electricity. We are not simply replacing one energy system with another. In many places, we are building an energy system that does not yet exist. Electrification for Africa must therefore mean providing universal access to reliable, affordable electricity while using renewable energy to drive economic development.

That means electricity for factories, irrigation, food processing, hospitals and schools. It means creating jobs, strengthening African manufacturing, and reducing dependence on imported fossil fuels.

Africa possesses 60 per cent of the world's best solar resources, yet receives just 2 per cent of global clean energy investment. That extraordinary imbalance illustrates how far the world remains from an equitable energy transition.

The 35 by 35 target could theoretically be achieved through rapid electrification in China, Europe and other major economies while hundreds of millions of Africans remain without power. That might count as success on a global spreadsheet, but it would represent a profound failure of climate justice.

A credible goal must therefore measure not only electricity consumption but whether access is expanding, power is affordable and developing countries are benefiting.

Where is the money?

Perhaps the most troubling weakness of the pledge is its failure to answer the question that matters most for developing countries: who will pay?

The International Energy Agency estimates that achieving the electrification ambition will require more than $1 trillion in additional annual investment in electric technologies across transport, buildings and industry. Expanding electricity grids and generation will require substantial further investment. Yet the pledge contains no quantified financing commitment or agreement on how costs will be shared. The launch of the Electrify Now Finance Coalition at COP31 is welcome, particularly its focus on developing countries. But creating another coalition is not the same as delivering affordable finance at the scale required.

Electrification also requires grids, storage, transmission lines and skilled workers. In rural communities, decentralised renewable systems can provide electricity without waiting for national grids to expand. We cannot keep asking developing countries to embrace ambitious global targets while failing to provide the means to achieve them.

Make 35 by 35 worth delivering

None of this is an argument against electrification. Quite the opposite. Power Shift Africa strongly supports accelerating the transition to clean electricity. We believe Africa can become one of its greatest beneficiaries. But if Türkiye and Australia want 35 by 35 to become a defining achievement of COP31, they must strengthen it.

The goal must explicitly prioritise renewable electricity and the displacement of fossil fuels. It must recognise different national starting points, with universal electricity access central to its success. And it needs a credible financing plan, including grants and affordable lending, rather than relying on hopes that private investors will provide the money.

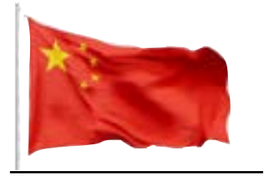
The 20th century was built around combustion; the 21st century will be built around electricity. But the transition will not be judged by how much electricity the world consumes, but by where that electricity comes from, who can access it, and who benefits from the economic opportunities it creates.

A target that increases electricity consumption without reducing fossil fuel dependence is not enough. And a global electrification revolution that leaves Africa behind cannot be called a success. COP31 has an opportunity to get this right. Türkiye and Australia need to make sure it does.

Mohamed Adow is the director, Power Shift Africa.



CHINA WITHDRAWS FROM HOSTING COP33: Beijing's withdrawal will pave the way for other Asian countries to compete for the hosting rights. Under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) rules, an Asian country is rotationally scheduled to host COP33. While local governments in South Korea have expressed interest, the national government has yet to clarify.



the team

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from negotiation rooms

Early divisions as Parties struggle to plug finance and ambition shortfalls

Finance has emerged as one of the most contentious issues in Antalya, particularly in relation to the proposed roadmap for tripling adaptation finance, and in talks this week every developing country intervention raised the need to address the increase in adaptation finance, but the European Union, the United Kingdom and Japan declined to discuss finance in the GGA negotiating room

OUR VERDICT?
The broad willingness to negotiate offers a starting point, but the divisions over institutional design, finance and governance demonstrate that political convergence remains fragile. Antalya's success will ultimately depend on whether Parties can bridge these differences and agree on an outcome that strengthens implementation and responds to developing countries' priorities.

Negotiations on finance opened this week with Parties expressing a willingness to engage on a broad package of climate priorities, but by midweek significant differences remained over institutional arrangements, financial commitments and the level of ambition needed to advance implementation of the Paris Agreement.

The challenge for the Antalya conference is to secure a balanced and robust outcome that strengthens processes under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), while delivering progress across just transition, mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage.

The proposed package includes operationalising the Just Transition Mechanism, agreeing on the future of the Mitigation Work Programme (MWP), launching the Technical Taskforce under the Belém-Addis Vision (BAV), developing a roadmap for tripling adaptation finance, completing the transition of the Adaptation Fund, improving coordination among loss and damage institutions, mobilising resources for the Santiago Network, and fully capitalising the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD).

Despite a relatively constructive start, discussions with those following the process indicate that consensus will be difficult to secure on several of these issues. On the Just Transition Mechanism, negotiating groups have broadly recognised the issue as a priority for COP31. Some Parties have also supported establishing a mechanism under the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA), with both political and technical functions. However, positions appear to have moved backwards since the Australia intersessional discussions. Norway and Japan have expressed caution towards creating a new institutional structure, highlighting the continuing divide over the mechanism's mandate and design.

The future of the MWP has generated somewhat greater convergence. No Party has proposed terminating the programme, while there is broad support for developing a multi-year workplan to guide its future activities. Nevertheless, we understand that disagreements persist over reporting arrangements and how the programme should relate to the second Global Stocktake (GST2). These questions will be central to determining whether the MWP can deliver a more coherent and sustained contribution to mitigation ambition.

Progress on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) faces a different set of challenges. Following the application of Rule 16 at the sixty-fourth session of the Subsidiary Bodies (SB64), negotiations have restarted from a blank text. Meanwhile, Parties remain divided over the composition of the Technical Taskforce envisaged under the BAV. The taskforce is intended to advance technical cooperation and implementation, but differences over its membership and institutional configuration threaten to complicate agreement on its launch.

Finance has emerged as one of the most contentious elements of the discussions, particularly in relation to the proposed roadmap for tripling adaptation finance. In talks this week, every developing country intervention raised the need to address the increase in adaptation finance, underlining the importance attached to predictable and accessible resources. However, the European Union, the United Kingdom and Japan declined to discuss finance in the GGA negotiating room.

The divide raises questions about how Parties will translate the political commitment to scaling up adaptation support into a credible roadmap, particularly given the persistent gap between developing countries' needs and the resources currently available.

On the Adaptation Fund, Parties have indicated their intention to conclude the transition process during the current session. However, disagreement over the composition of the Fund's board remains a significant obstacle. Resolving this institutional question will be important to ensuring that the transition is completed with sufficient political support.

Loss and damage negotiations have also begun to address outstanding institutional questions. Co-facilitators have been mandated to prepare draft text covering the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) and the report of the Santiago Network. The discussions are expected to focus on improving coordination and complementarity among the institutions responsible for addressing climate-related loss and damage.

Resource mobilisation remains a major concern, particularly for the FRLD. The scale of demand is stark, as while $2.8 billion in requests have been submitted through the Barbados Implementation Modalities (BIM), only $350 million is currently available. The funding gap illustrates the considerable distance between the needs of vulnerable developing countries and the resources available to respond to climate impacts. Yet the European Union, the United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand have resisted calls for new guidance to the Fund, adding another layer of difficulty to negotiations.

For developing countries, the credibility of the loss and damage architecture will depend heavily on whether institutional coordination is matched by adequate and predictable financial support. The Santiago Network's ability to provide technical assistance will similarly depend on effective resource mobilisation.

POWER TALK

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: WHAT LEADERS SAID AT OPENING



Africa comes to Antalya with one clear message: implementation depends on means of implementation. Our continent contributes the least to this crisis and is among the most exposed to its impacts. African countries have put forward ambitious NDCs and adaptation plans, but most of that ambition depends on finance that has not yet arrived. An implementation COP must therefore be a COP that delivers on finance.

4. In this spirit, the African Group requested the inclusion of three items in the supplementary provisional agendas. These items do not reopen any outcome. They follow directly from what we agreed together in Belém, and from the existing arrangements between the COP and the Green Climate Fund. **Nana Dr. Antwi-Boasiako Amoah, Chair of the African Group of Negotiators on Climate Change.**



There is much common ground between climate action and the national interest. Using energy more efficiently makes energy supplies more secure. Investing in water strengthens food security. Clean technologies create opportunities for industry and employment. Resilient cities strengthen our economies. Well-designed climate action is an investment in prosperity, security and competitiveness. **COP31 President Murat Kurum**



Respect for nature lies at the heart of our civilization. Earth is a sacred trust that must be protected and cared for... This culture, which considers bread as fertility, water as holy, and a tree as life, serves as our compass in our environmental and climate policies. This is how we as Türkiye approach the issue. Properly fulfilling our responsibilities in the fight against climate change, we are working to become a part of the solution rather than the problem. **His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Türkiye.**

the watchdog

France slams the brakes on finance, resists reopening global funding deal

A central concern at COP31 is the persistent gap between climate finance commitments and the funding actually reaching vulnerable countries, particularly in Africa, but France is insisting on the need for more information to understand why existing resources are not reaching their intended destinations and what obstacles are preventing access to the billions

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT

France this week called for greater transparency and accountability in international climate finance, arguing that existing financial flows need closer scrutiny before countries are asked to make further commitments.

At a meeting on Tuesday, France outlined its position on climate finance, the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) and the question of broadening the contributor base, with the discussion revealing Paris's preference for improving the transparency of existing funding arrangements rather than reopening negotiations on the global climate finance target.

France said it does not want to reopen the NCQG, although it is prepared to listen to China's position. Rather than seeking a new $50 billion commitment from Beijing, France said it is prioritising improved reporting and greater transparency on financial flows already in place.

A central concern at COP31 is the persistent gap between climate finance commitments and the funding actually reaching vulnerable countries, particularly in Africa, but France insisted on the need for more information to understand why existing resources are not reaching their intended destinations and what obstacles are preventing access to finance.

Practical proposals discussed during the pre-COP process focused on addressing barriers to accessing climate finance, particularly the high cost of capital in developing countries. Among the measures considered was the use of de-risking mechanisms to reduce investment risks and make financing more affordable. Facilitating access to existing funds was also identified as a priority.

These proposals reflect growing recognition that the availability of climate finance alone does not guarantee that developing countries can access or effectively use it. Improving the conditions under which funding is provided will therefore remain an important part of the debate.

The meeting also addressed the politically sensitive question of whether the group of countries expected to contribute to international climate finance should be expanded.

France discussed several possible criteria for determining contributions, including gross domestic product (GDP), population size and historical responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions. These factors could provide a basis for assessing countries' capacity and responsibility to contribute. However, the question of how to apply such criteria remains politically contentious, particularly in discussions involving emerging economies and developing countries.

Taxation was another issue raised during the meeting. France indicated that discussions on potential international taxation measures should take place within the G20 framework, suggesting that the issue should be addressed through broader economic and political coordination.

France appeared reluctant, however, to support taxation measures directly targeting individual companies, with Total mentioned as an example.

Where the bottlenecks arise

1 **Long, demanding application processes:** Funds often require countries or institutions to gain accreditation before they can apply for a project. Requirements vary among funds, and the IMF estimates accreditation can take at least two years, followed by roughly another year for project approval.

2 **Limited institutional capacity:** Applicants must demonstrate sound financial management, procurement, auditing, governance and environmental and social safeguards. Some national institutions lack the staff, systems or track record to meet these standards or manage projects once approved.

3 **A shortage of fund-ready projects:** Proposals need credible technical plans, climate-risk data, cost estimates and evidence that projects fit national strategies and fund priorities. Weak data and limited project-preparation expertise can leave urgent needs without proposals that meet those tests.

4 **High borrowing costs and debt constraints:** Many climate funds offer loans as well as grants. High debt levels limit a country's ability to take on even concessional loans, while tight fiscal space and costly borrowing make it harder to provide the co-financing some projects require.

5 **Intermediaries and transaction costs:** Funding often passes through international agencies or development banks rather than directly to local institutions. This adds steps and costs, and funders also favour larger projects or established intermediaries over smaller projects and countries perceived as riskier.

6 **Uneven capacity to reach funds:** Countries with stronger institutions and more experienced teams are better positioned to navigate applications and prepare projects. As a result, complex procedures can favor applicants already equipped to meet them.



This is my point: A delegate speaks during one of the events on the opening day of the summit, on Monday.

CHARLES ISABOKE POWER SHIFT AFRICA

On a rather funny note: Have you heard this?

It's not all doom and gloom in Antalya. Away from the negotiation rooms, we have been following what's happening outside, in the corridors, and in the streets. Here's our selection of five interesting, amusing and slightly ridiculous stories from the first days of this COP.

The climate summit where nobody could get there: COP31's opening days turned into a transport comedy. Journeys that should have taken 50 minutes lasted three or four hours. Roads were closed for VIP motorcades, shuttle buses became overcrowded and tram services were disrupted. One Brazilian delegation reportedly spent four and a half hours travelling just 22 kilometres. For many, saving the planet was easier than reaching the conference.

Five hours to get a name badge: Some delegates discovered that attending a global climate summit required extraordinary stamina before they had even entered the building. Registration queues lasted more than five hours, with frustrated participants struggling to collect their accreditation badges. The UN secretariat eventually suggested that people without urgent business inside should postpone collecting theirs. A rather unfortunate first impression for an international conference.

The translators who became waiters: Some summit workers arrived expecting to translate for international delegates, only to find themselves reassigned to the catering area. The Turkish news site Bianet spoke to two workers who said their roles changed shortly before the conference, amid staffing confusion. The result was an awkward mismatch: delegates needing English-language help, and would-be translators serving food instead.





The world's most expensive climate-summit lunch? Food prices became an unexpected talking point inside the conference venue. A report by Bianet put basic meal options at around 750 to 850 Turkish lira, enough to make even seasoned conference-goers look twice at the menu. At a summit discussing climate justice and the cost of global crises, lunch itself became a small affordability debate for delegates.

Greta, flat whites and the forbidden plastic fork: Greta Thunberg (right) accused the host countries of greenwashing, while a separate media storm focused on Australian taxpayer-funded flat whites and rumours about plastic cutlery, which was reportedly banned at the venue. The mix was almost too perfect for a climate-summit satire: arguments over fossil-fuel politics alongside arguments over coffee bills and disposable forks, all under one conference badge everywhere, naturally.



Climate justice coalition urges governments to establish Belem–Antalya Mechanism at COP31

bam!



International coalition of trade unions, Indigenous Peoples, feminist groups and civil society organisations calls on governments to turn last year's just transition commitment into concrete action at the UN climate summit in Antalya.

An international coalition representing workers, Indigenous Peoples, feminist movements, young people and frontline communities has called on governments to establish the Belém-Antalya Mechanism (BAM) for Just Transition at COP31, warning that last year's climate commitments risk becoming empty promises without concrete action.

In an open letter addressed to all parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the organisations urged governments to agree on the mechanism's mandate, governance and institutional arrangements at COP31 in Antalya.

The call follows a commitment made at COP30 in Belém, Brazil, to develop an international mechanism supporting a just transition, with the aim of making it operational by COP32. The coalition describes that agreement as a major breakthrough following years of campaigning by trade unions, Indigenous Peoples, feminists, youth organisations and social movements.

The proposed BAM is intended to strengthen international cooperation and help countries pursue climate action that protects workers' rights, livelihoods and communities, while addressing inequalities between countries and within societies.

The coalition argues that the urgency has increased amid record global temperatures, expanding fossil fuel production, rising energy costs and widening inequality. It warns that communities least responsible for the climate crisis continue to bear its greatest consequences.

The letter sets out three priorities for governments. First, the mechanism must advance human and labour rights, decent work, gender equality, social protection and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including their right to free, prior and informed consent and self-determination.

Second, the BAM must have dedicated institutional arrangements and a mandate to provide technical and financial support for just transition strategies, coordinate relevant bodies within and beyond the UN system, and facilitate inclusive knowledge exchange.

Third, workers and affected communities must have meaningful representation in decision-making. The coalition insists that those whose livelihoods are directly affected by the transition must have a seat at the table.

Mwanahamisi Singano, Global Policy Director at the Women's Environment and Development Organization and the Women and Gender Constituency, said COP31 offered an opportunity to demonstrate the value of international cooperation by delivering justice, upholding human rights and honouring existing commitments.

Lidy Nacpil of the Asian Peoples' Movement on Debt and Development (APMDD) and the Demand Climate Justice Constituency warned that some governments from the Global North were attempting to weaken the proposed mechanism and delay its implementation.

She called for a mechanism that provides practical support, gives rights-holders a role in decision-making and becomes fully operational by COP32.

Trade unions have also backed the demand. Bert De Wel of the International Trade Union Confederation said labour rights, social dialogue and effective support for implementation were essential to ensuring that climate policies benefited workers and their communities.

Anabella Rosemberg, Senior Adviser on Just Transition at Climate Action Network International, said governments must ensure that the agreement reached in Belém was not lost in further negotiations.

The coalition argues that a properly implemented just transition could deliver decent jobs, secure livelihoods, food and energy sovereignty, healthier communities and a liveable environment. It is urging governments to make COP31 the moment when the Belém commitment becomes an operational mechanism, placing workers, communities and human rights at the centre of climate action.



In a nutshell: 3 demands in the letter

1 Put rights and justice at its heart: BAM must deliver on the commitments made at COP30, advancing human and labour rights, decent work and quality jobs, gender equality, intergenerational equity and the rights to health, development and a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. It must fully respect the individual and collective rights of Indigenous Peoples, including self-determination, Free, Prior and Informed Consent, and protections for Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation and initial contact.

2 Provide the support needed to deliver a Just Transition: BAM must have the mandate and institutional arrangements to provide technical and financial support for Just Transition strategies, coordinate relevant bodies within and beyond the UN, and facilitate inclusive, regionally balanced knowledge exchange that respects scientific integrity and methodological diversity.

3 Give workers and communities a seat at the table: BAM must be inclusive and democratic, ensuring that rights-holders and marginalised groups can meaningfully shape decisions affecting their lives and livelihoods. The principle is simple: nothing about us without us.

As world leaders gather for COP31, wealthy nations claim they cannot afford to meet their climate finance commitments, even as military spending soars; and that means the real obstacle is not a lack of money, but a lack of political will



BY PETER WANYANGI



AND KUDAKWASHE MANJONJO



‘mis-marching’ orders

Splashing billions for wars but pinching the pennies on climate

As world leaders converge in Türkiye for COP31, a familiar question hangs over the negotiations: where will the money come from to help developing countries tackle climate change?

In recent years, wealthy nations have decried severe strain on their national budgets and the difficulty of meeting international climate commitments, yet when military spending comes into play, these constraints suddenly disappear.

In 2025 NATO members spent $1.58 trillion on defence, and then at COP29 in Baku developed countries agreed to mobilise only $300 billion for developing countries by 2035. The staggering difference reveals what wealthy nations truly prioritise.

Across Europe, governments are rewriting borrowing rules and expanding defence budgets. In 2025, for instance, the UK government announced plans to cut its overseas aid budget from 0.5 percent to 0.3 percent of national income by 2027 to help fund increased defense spending. Since Britain’s international climate finance comes from its aid budget, this decision will effectively slash resources available to help vulnerable countries confront climate impacts.

That same year, Germany changed its borrowing rules to allow greater spending on defense and infrastructure, and created a €500 billion fund. Meanwhile, its international climate finance fell short of the €6 billion target by €1.3 billion. The message is difficult to ignore: when developed country governments consider something important, they always find ways to finance it.

That hasn’t been the case for financial commitments to help some of the world’s poorest and climate-vulnerable countries cope with climate impacts, and the question facing COP31, therefore, is not simply whether rich countries can afford to meet their climate commitments, but whether they are willing to prioritise them.

Europe’s security concerns are real and valid. No serious argument about climate finance should dismiss them. That said, we must not forget that climate change is also a security threat that’s destroying lives and livelihoods across Africa. As the planet warms up, impacts will not be confined to national borders. In the future, governments will face even more difficult spending choices. But if they can rewrite financial rules to respond to military threats, why can’t they demonstrate similar ambition in confronting the global climate crisis?

This matters enormously for Africa, where governments need money to protect communities, strengthen food systems, expand clean energy, and build resilient economies. To implement their national climate plans, African countries need an estimated $277 billion annually. In 2021 and 2022, however, the continent received an average of $44 billion in climate finance, leaving communities exposed to floods, erratic weather, and unpredictable farming seasons for communities. For governments, this financing gap means choosing between investing in climate resilience and other urgent development needs.

Worse still, wealthy countries largely provide climate finance as loans rather than grants, thus saddling poor nations with crippling debt as they seek to protect their communities from a crisis they did little to cause. In 2023, 65 percent of Africans lived in financially constrained countries that spent more on interest payments than on health or education.

Building flood defenses helps save lives, and cushioning communities against drought protects livelihoods. These interventions may not generate income, but they are critical for survival, a forcing the world’s poorest people to borrow simply to live is neither just nor a sustainable response to climate change.

The Paris Agreement addresses this fundamental question of fairness by obligating developed countries to provide financial resources to their developing counterparts to tackle climate change. The obligation recognises both their historical responsibility for global emissions and greater financial capacity. Consequently, climate finance isn’t an act of generosity but a requirement under international law.

At COP31, developed countries must do more than regurgitate past promises. They must set out credible plans to deliver climate finance, protect international funding from aid cuts, and prioritise grants over loans for climate-vulnerable and debt-distressed countries.

Recognising the urgency of the moment and the need for global solidarity isn’t enough. The recognition of collective climate action will ring hollow if wealthy countries keep treating climate finance as an optional expense while funding war by the trillions.

The world isn’t short of resources to respond to climate change; its priorities just happen to be elsewhere. And so, as world leaders gather in Antalya, their biggest test is whether they have the political will to reconsider their priorities for the sake of the people and planet.

Peter Wanyangi is a Climate Finance Project Officer and **Kudakwashe Manjonjo** a Just Transition Advisor at Power Shift Africa.

press briefing

ACTION AND AGENDA

Civil society urges Australia, Türkiye to put fossil fuel roadmap at heart of negotiations

Groups call on Türkiye to use its presidency to encourage governments to develop stronger national plans for phasing out fossil fuels, aligned with their respective responsibilities for limiting global heating to 1.5°C and grounded in social justice

WHY THIS MATTERS

The dispute over the roadmap comes at a critical moment for international climate diplomacy. The COP28 agreement to transition away from fossil fuels marked a significant political breakthrough, but translating that commitment into implementation remains a major challenge. For civil society organisations, COP31 in Antalya must provide the next step of moving the transition away from fossil fuels from a broadly accepted ambition into the formal negotiating process, with measurable national plans, milestones and mechanisms for international support. As the presidencies take responsibility for the next phase of negotiations, campaigners are saying that their success will be judged by whether they can turn Brazil's roadmap into a process that governments are prepared to follow.

Civil society organisations have called on Australia and Türkiye to integrate the roadmap for transitioning away from fossil fuels into the formal COP31 negotiations, warning that the initiative risks losing momentum unless governments move swiftly from political pledges to concrete commitments.

The appeal came as COP30 President André Corrêa do Lago formally handed over Brazil's Roadmap for Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels in Energy Systems to representatives of the incoming Australian and Turkish COP31 Presidencies at an event at the climate summit venue in Antalya on Tuesday.

The handover followed a series of positive interventions from senior UN officials, former COP presidents and ministers, who welcomed the roadmap and praised Brazil for its leadership in translating the commitment made at COP28 to transition away from fossil fuels into a framework for action.

However, civil society representatives expressed disappointment with the response from the incoming presidencies. Australia offered no clear indication of how it intended to advance the initiative, while Türkiye said it would consider the roadmap without setting out how it might feature in the COP31 process.

The response raised concerns among campaigners that the roadmap could remain a political declaration rather than become a basis for negotiated action at next year's climate summit.

"COP31 needs to put the transition on a political track, not leave it as a talking point," campaigners said, arguing that the next presidency must establish a clear process for translating the roadmap into national commitments and international cooperation.

Emel Türker Alpay, climate and energy campaigner at Greenpeace Türkiye, said COP31 offered Türkiye an opportunity to ensure that Brazil's work continued beyond the COP30 summit in Belém.

"Brazil has turned the COP28 promise to transition away from fossil fuels into a roadmap the world can act on. COP31 is now the place to decide how and when that transition will happen," she said.

Alpay called on Türkiye to use its presidency to encourage governments to develop stronger national plans for phasing out fossil fuels, aligned with their respective responsibilities for limiting global heating to 1.5°C and grounded in social justice.

She also challenged Türkiye to demonstrate leadership through its domestic energy policies, arguing that a host country without a coal exit date would struggle to lead international efforts to move away from fossil fuels.

"Antalya can be the COP where the fossil fuel roadmap starts delivering, if the Presidency chooses to lead," she said.

The pressure on Australia is particularly significant given its position as both a major fossil fuel producer and exporter and a country seeking to establish itself as a leader in renewable energy and multilateral climate diplomacy.

Kathryn McCallum, director of strategy at Climate Action Network Australia, said governments had used the COP30 plenary to urge Australia and Türkiye to take the roadmap forward.

She described the Brazilian initiative as an action-oriented framework that should be incorporated into the negotiations rather than sidelined.

"Australia wants to be seen as a middle power and a champion of multilateralism. To do this it needs courage to take on the big issues like the roadmap for the transition away from fossil fuels at COP31," McCallum said.

She argued that Australia's experience in renewable energy and clean energy industrial policy gave it the capacity to play a leading role, but said its position as one of the world's largest fossil fuel producers and exporters also brought significant responsibilities.

"We will not accept a COP that fails to address fossil fuels. Fossil fuel phase-out must be reflected in the formal negotiations and outcomes, not left outside the negotiating room," she said.

McCallum also highlighted a proposal delivered by civil society organisations during the plenary for the COP30 and COP31 Presidencies to jointly issue an Antalya Call for Roadmaps.

The proposed initiative would encourage countries and regions to develop ambitious transition plans, backed by international cooperation and clear milestones. Campaigners also want these roadmaps integrated into the second Global Stocktake, the UN climate process assessing collective progress towards the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Adam Bandt, chief executive of the Australian Conservation Foundation, said Australia must demonstrate leadership on fossil fuel supply if COP31 is to deliver meaningful progress.

As the world's third-largest fossil fuel exporter, Australia should stop approving new coal and gas projects and develop its own domestic roadmap for transitioning away from fossil fuel production and exports, he said.

Bandt pointed to proposed developments, including the Browse and Beetaloo gas projects and Hunter Valley Operations, arguing that Australia's expansion of fossil fuel production undermines its international climate leadership.

"It's no longer enough to talk about solar panels and batteries while massive coal and gas projects like Browse, Beetaloo and Hunter Valley Operations line up for approval," he said.

He urged the Australian government to build on Brazil's initiative by developing a national plan to end coal and gas exports.



CHARLES ISABOKE POWER SHIFT AFRICA

BRIEFLY SPEAKING



"Australia wants to be seen as a middle power and a champion of multilateralism. To do this it needs courage to take on the big issues like the roadmap for the transition away from fossil fuels at COP31." **Kathryn McCallum, director of strategy at Climate Action Network Australia.**

mitigation

Africa pushes for stronger mitigation finance in the next phase of the MWP

At meetings this week, there was no proposal from any Party to terminate the MWP as discussions instead centred on how its mandate and activities should evolve, with many Parties identifying 2030–2032 as a possible point for evaluating progress.

The future of the Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme (MWP) is emerging as an important negotiating issue at COP31, with African countries and the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) pressing for a continuation that delivers more tangible implementation support, particularly through finance, investment and regional engagement.

Following the absence of an agreed outcome at SB64, the MWP will need to be continued through a decision by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA) here in Antalya. Power Shift Africa understands that Germany and South Africa, acting as co-facilitators, are preparing an informal note based on submissions from Parties.

At meetings earlier in the week, there was no proposal from any Party to terminate the MWP. Instead, discussions centred on how its mandate and activities should evolve, with many Parties identifying 2030–2032 as a possible point for evaluating progress. Although the second Global Stocktake (GST2) provides a potentially important reference point, securing an explicit link between the MWP and the GST may prove politically difficult.

For Africa, the central question is whether the programme can move beyond exchanges of experience and technical discussions towards a more effective framework for accelerating mitigation implementation in developing countries. The AGN, alongside the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), placed particular emphasis on the need to address mitigation finance, reflecting the persistent gap between countries' mitigation ambitions and their capacity to implement them.

Pairing dialogues

One area of growing convergence was the need to connect the MWP's technical dialogues more directly with investment opportunities. Several Parties supported pairing dialogues with investment-focused events, involving multilateral development banks (MDBs), organising regional dialogues or regional breakout sessions, and helping developing countries develop bankable projects.

These proposals are particularly relevant to African countries, where access to affordable finance, project preparation capacity and investment mobilisation remain significant barriers to the implementation of mitigation measures. For the AGN, ensuring that the continuation of the MWP responds to these challenges will be important in determining whether the programme can deliver meaningful value for developing countries.

The emphasis on regional engagement also offers an opportunity to make the programme more responsive to national and regional circumstances. Regional dialogues could help identify shared implementation challenges, facilitate cooperation and connect countries with potential sources of finance and technical assistance. However, their effectiveness will depend on whether they are supported by concrete follow-up and investment opportunities.

Although there was broad support for a multi-year workplan, Parties differed over the level of ambition and the institutional arrangements required. Sources told us that AILAC, AOSIS, the European Union, EIG, Canada and the United Kingdom supported a stronger MWP; Switzerland proposed establishing a permanent CMA mitigation committee; while other Parties opposed the creation of a new institutional body or favoured continuing the programme largely in its existing form.

There were also differences over the substantive focus of future activities. Some Parties favoured discussions on broad mitigation opportunities and challenges, while others preferred concentrating on high-impact sectors. China and other Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDCs) raised concerns about the cross-border effects of unilateral trade measures, seeking to ensure that these issues are also reflected in the programme's discussions.

South Korea presented a detailed framework proposing that Parties first agree on the design and structure of the MWP before determining the substantive content of its reports. This approach could provide a basis for resolving disagreements over the programme's direction and establishing a more predictable workplan.

Reporting arrangements remain another area of contention. Some Parties support annual reports to the CMA, while others favour reporting over a longer, multi-year period. South Korea proposed that reports identify barriers, opportunities, effective practices and the conditions under which particular approaches have worked, and that they should also clarify which actors need to take action and when, without ranking or comparing Parties' performance.

China, Saudi Arabia and India have argued that any formal outcomes must remain non-prescriptive and non-punitive, while respecting national sovereignty and national circumstances. These concerns will be particularly important for developing countries seeking to maintain the distinction between international cooperation on mitigation and externally imposed expectations regarding domestic policy choices.

The relationship between the MWP and GST2 is also expected to remain politically sensitive. Although the stocktake could provide a useful reference for identifying implementation gaps and informing future activities, Parties may struggle to agree on a formal institutional link. The relationship with Article 6.8, meanwhile, will continue to be addressed through a separate negotiating track.

LONG STORY, SHORT

Why this is **a key test** for COP31

For African and other developing-country groups, the negotiations present an opportunity to secure a more practical and implementation-oriented MWP.

A multi-year workplan, earlier agreement on topics, stronger regional engagement and closer links between technical dialogues and investment mobilisation could improve the programme's effectiveness.

However, the outcome at COP31 will depend on whether Parties can reconcile competing views on the programme's mandate, reporting arrangements and institutional structure. Above all, Africa's emphasis on mitigation finance will need to feature meaningfully in the continuation decision.

Without stronger attention to financing constraints and the development of investable projects, the MWP risks remaining primarily a forum for discussion rather than becoming a more effective instrument for supporting mitigation implementation in developing countries.



CHARLES ISABOKE POWER SHIFT AFRICA



CHARLES ISABOKE POWER SHIFT AFRICA

taking stock

COP31 is about more than climate change, but Africa's future as well

As world leaders gather in Türkiye for the latest UN climate summit, Africa has a chance to demand greater support while seizing the enormous economic opportunities of the clean energy transition. But success will depend on turning years of international promises into action



BY MOHAMED ADOW

Thousands of politicians, diplomats and campaigners have gathered in Antalya, Türkiye, for COP31, the annual United Nations climate summit. They have come from almost every country in the world to confront one of humanity's greatest challenges: climate change.

These summits are remarkable. Unlike meetings of wealthy nations such as the G7, every country has a seat at the table. Kenya has a voice alongside the United States and China. Small island nations threatened by rising seas can challenge the world's biggest polluters. African countries can demand action from governments whose decisions affect our future.

This is the strength of the COP process. Climate change is a global problem demanding a global solution. No country can tackle it alone. Negotiations are difficult, and progress can be slow, but they give every nation a chance to help shape the response. The Paris Agreement, reached at a COP in 2015, showed what such cooperation can achieve.

For most Africans, the discussions in Antalya may seem distant. Yet their outcomes matter to a Kenyan farmer facing drought, a family whose home is threatened by floods, and a young person seeking work in the industries of tomorrow. COP31 is an opportunity to shape Africa's future.

A world off track

Climate change is already disrupting lives across our continent. From the Horn of Africa to the Congo Basin, and the deserts of the north to the Cape, communities face droughts, unpredictable rainfall, floods and extreme heat. In Kenya, a failed rainy season can destroy a harvest. Floods can cut communities off from markets, schools and healthcare.

Africa has contributed only a small fraction of the emissions responsible for this crisis. Yet we are paying a heavy price. Under the Paris Agreement, governments have committed to keeping global warming well below 2°C and pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C. That difference may sound small, but every fraction of a degree increases the risks of crop failures, water shortages and destructive weather.

Unfortunately, global emissions remain dangerously high. Scientists warn that temperatures are likely to temporarily exceed 1.5°C. Some governments are now questioning whether the world should effectively give up on that goal and settle for 2°C.

That would be a disastrous mistake. Struggling to meet a target is not a reason to abandon it. Accepting more warming means accepting more suffering, especially for those who did least to cause the problem. Africa must defend the 1.5°C goal and demand stronger action.

Wars, economic uncertainty and geopolitical tensions make this harder. Wealthy governments say their budgets are stretched and they cannot afford climate support. Yet they find enormous sums for military spending when national security is at stake. As the UK Foreign Secretary, Ed Miliband, said at the COP this week, climate change threatens the national security of all countries, through food supplies, water, infrastructure and economic stability. It deserves comparable urgency.

Africa's fight for climate finance

One of the biggest issues at COP31 is money. African countries need investment to protect their people from climate impacts and build modern economies. But many are already struggling with debt. Climate finance can pay for flood defences, drought-resistant agriculture, early warning systems, renewable power and electricity networks. It is not charity, but part of the international cooperation needed to tackle a shared crisis.

The United Nations Environment Programme estimates that developing countries will need $305 billion annually by 2035 simply to adapt to climate change. Yet international public adaptation finance remains a small fraction of that amount.

At last year's summit in Brazil, governments agreed to at least triple adaptation finance by 2035. The challenge now is to turn that promise into money reaching communities. African negotiators wanted a dedicated agenda item at COP31 on delivering the commitment. That was not achieved, but the issue is not going away. African countries and civil society campaigners will be raising the tripling pledge wherever finance is discussed throughout the talks. They will be pressing for clear commitments, deadlines and accountability.

How the money is provided also matters. Too often, climate finance comes as loans that deepen the debts of countries already under pressure. Vulnerable nations should not have to borrow heavily to protect themselves from a crisis they barely caused. More support must come through grants and affordable finance, and reach those who need it most.

Africa's clean energy opportunity

But Africa's agenda cannot be limited to asking wealthy countries for support. The global shift to clean energy offers an extraordinary economic opportunity.

For generations, our development has been constrained by inadequate electricity, imported fuels and an economic model in which raw materials leave Africa while much of the value is created elsewhere. The clean energy revolution gives us a chance to change that.

Our continent has abundant sunshine, wind and geothermal resources. Kenya has already shown what is possible with geothermal power and other renewables. Solar technology is the cheapest form of energy in the world, creating opportunities to bring affordable power to communities that have waited decades for reliable supplies.

Hundreds of millions of Africans still lack electricity. Without it, businesses struggle, hospitals cannot provide essential services and factories cannot create jobs. Expanding renewable energy is therefore about development as much as climate action.

COP31 has emphasised electrification,



including a proposed global goal to increase electricity's share of energy use to 35% by 2035. The ambition is welcome, but fairness matters. In wealthy countries, electrification often means replacing petrol cars or gas heating with electric alternatives. For many Africans, it means getting electricity for the first time. A global goal must recognise these different starting points.

It must also expand renewable generation. Replacing petrol and diesel with electricity made from coal and gas is not the transformation we need. Africa should invest in renewable power, grids, storage and industries that use clean electricity.

Africa is blessed to have minerals needed for batteries, electric vehicles and renewable technologies. But instead of exporting raw materials and importing finished products, we should process these resources, manufacture goods and create skilled jobs here. The energy transition must not become another story of Africa supplying resources while others capture the profits.

Freedom from fossil fuel shocks

The war involving Iran and disruption to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz have exposed the dangers of dependence on oil and gas. When fuel prices rise, African transport and food become more expensive, and government budgets come under pressure.

Renewable energy offers greater independence. The sun does not become more expensive because a shipping route is disrupted. Once built, renewable systems can supply power without the constant uncertainty of international fuel markets or the whims of warmongering U.S. presidents. But the grids and storage require investment.

Moving away from fossil fuels therefore makes economic sense, quite apart from the climate benefits. COP31 must advance a fair global transition away from coal, oil and gas, with wealthy countries providing investment and technology to help poorer nations.

Equally, African governments must not use international unfairness as an excuse to delay their own renewable energy ambitions. We should be leading this transformation, not watching from the sidelines.

From promises to progress

After three decades of negotiations, progress remains too slow. But abandoning the COP process would leave smaller and poorer countries with fewer ways to hold powerful nations accountable. The answer is to make cooperation deliver more.

Success at COP31 should not be measured by the length of its final agreement or the number of speeches. It should be measured by whether governments honour their commitments, whether promised finance actually arrives and whether countries leave Türkiye with credible plans to accelerate climate action.

Africa has responsibilities too. Governments must develop credible plans to expand renewables, strengthen infrastructure, attract investment and ensure benefits reach ordinary citizens. We need stronger regional cooperation, including electricity networks that allow countries to trade clean power across borders.

Next year, the UN climate summit will move to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. That offers Africa an opportunity to demonstrate that we are not simply victims of climate change, but a source of the solutions. The groundwork must begin now so that Africa can speak with a united voice.

As talks continue in Antalya, our leaders should demand protection of the 1.5°C goal, delivery of promised finance and a fair chance to build prosperous clean economies. Africa is not asking for permission to develop, nor should we wait indefinitely for others to act.

We have the resources, talent and ambition to build a better future. COP31 must help turn that potential into reality.

Mohamed Adow is the Director of Power Shift Africa.

just transition

Transition from fossil fuels gathers political support... almost

There is a risk that the discussion around international roadmaps will remain largely aspirational unless countries establish clear processes for taking the work forward, thus the role of the COP31 presidencies is important in maintaining political engagement, clarifying the intended scope of the roadmaps, and identifying how they can complement, rather than duplicate, existing national and international processes

The third round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs 3.0) represents an important opportunity to translate the outcomes of the first Global Stocktake (GST1) into more ambitious national climate policies and implementation plans. The GST, concluded at COP28 in Dubai, established a collective direction for accelerating the energy transition, including transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly and equitable manner, tripling renewable energy capacity globally, doubling the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030, and accelerating efforts towards net-zero emissions. It also spoke to the importance of halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030, strengthening adaptation action, and scaling up climate finance.

NDCs 3.0 were therefore expected to demonstrate how countries would translate these collective outcomes into concrete domestic measures, with clear targets, policies, timelines and means of implementation.

Against this background, discussions on the transition away from fossil fuels (TAFF) roadmap at COP31 so far have projected a significant political signal, with demonstrated considerable support for developing a more coherent international approach to implementing the fossil fuel transition agreed at COP28.

Discussions so far have been anchored on the need to connect the transition away from fossil fuels with clean electrification, recognising that the expansion of renewable electricity, alongside the development of grids, storage and other enabling infrastructure, is essential to reducing dependence on fossil fuels across the wider economy.

Electrification of transport, buildings and industry will be particularly important, provided that electricity generation itself comes from clean sources. Without a corresponding transformation of power systems, electrification risks shifting rather than eliminating fossil fuel dependence.

Discussions so far have also reflected growing political momentum behind the development of international roadmaps to guide the transition. Several countries, alongside UN Secretary-General António Guterres, have called on the two COP31 presidencies to take forward the work on TAFF roadmaps and maintain momentum towards the second Global Stocktake (GST2). This support is important, given the persistent gap between the collective direction established at COP28 and the practical measures required to implement it.

International roadmaps could help provide a shared framework for understanding the scale, pace and sequencing of the transition, while addressing questions of equity, energy security, economic diversification and support for developing countries. They could also help identify areas where international cooperation is needed, including technology deployment, infrastructure investment, and the management of the social and economic consequences of fossil fuel dependency.

The next steps remain uncertain, particularly regarding how the momentum generated in Antalya will be translated into national roadmaps, sectoral transition plans or other concrete initiatives. There is a risk that the discussion around international roadmaps will remain largely aspirational unless countries establish clear processes for taking the work forward. The role of the COP31 presidencies is therefore important in maintaining political engagement, clarifying the intended scope of the roadmaps, and identifying how they can complement, rather than duplicate, existing national and international processes.

Domestic policies

Equally, governments need to demonstrate how their NDCs 3.0 reflect the GST1 energy outcomes through credible domestic policies, including renewable energy deployment, fossil fuel dependency reduction, grid investment and measures to ensure a just transition.

Progress on adaptation and resilience remains another critical test of whether countries are responding adequately to GST1. The Stocktake reinforced the need to accelerate adaptation planning and implementation, strengthen resilience to climate impacts, and improve support for vulnerable countries and communities. However, adaptation and finance negotiations began this week with many of the familiar discussions and disagreements that have characterised previous negotiating cycles.

This is concerning, given the urgency of the adaptation challenge and the increasing impacts of climate change, particularly in countries with limited fiscal capacity and high exposure to climate risks. Greater attention is needed to translate adaptation commitments into practical action, including through national adaptation plans, early warning systems, climate-resilient infrastructure, water and food security measures, and locally led adaptation.

FROM THE CORNERS OF BILATERALS

Kenya joins the **Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative**



In a significant development at COP31 in Antalya, Kenya has signed on as a partner of the Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative, adding its voice to the growing international movement calling for a managed, equitable and just transition away from fossil fuels.

Kenya's decision signals growing political support for international cooperation on addressing fossil fuel dependence, particularly as countries grapple with the need to align their energy systems and development pathways with the goals of the Paris Agreement. The initiative seeks to establish an international framework for cooperation to halt the expansion of fossil fuel production, phase out existing production in line with climate science, and support a just transition for workers, communities and countries dependent on fossil fuel revenues.

The move is particularly significant in the context of Africa's climate and development priorities. African countries continue to face disproportionate climate impacts despite contributing relatively little to historical global emissions. At the same time, the continent faces legitimate demands for energy access, industrialisation, economic development and climate finance. Any credible pathway away from fossil fuels must therefore address these inequalities and ensure that developing countries have the resources, technology and policy space needed to pursue sustainable development.

Kenya's endorsement also adds momentum to efforts to move the fossil fuel phase-out discussion beyond individual national commitments towards a more coordinated international approach. It reinforces the argument that the transition requires cooperation, differentiated responsibilities and adequate support for countries with limited fiscal and institutional capacity.

At COP31, where questions of implementation, ambition and climate finance remain central to the negotiations, Kenya's decision places renewed emphasis on the need to translate commitments to a just transition into concrete international cooperation and action.

mitigation

Irony of ironies: Zambia is burning coal to plug gap left by drying hydro dams

Burning more fossil fuel as a solution to a problem caused by climate change is a glaring irony, especially when you consider that solar power fits perfectly with seasonal changes in Zambia – solar peaks in summer when hydropower falls away as rainfall drops, while the opposite is true in winter



BY NEIL OVERY

One of the defining features of the COP process to date has been the failure of developed countries, those predominantly responsible for climate change, to provide sufficient public climate finance, as they are legally bound to do in terms of Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement, to developing countries for mitigation and adaptation. This failure is currently playing out in Zambia, which provides a casebook example of how the developed world's failure to meet its commitments has profound climate consequences not only for Zambia, but for the rest of the world.

It is estimated that since 1851 Zambia has emitted 0.19% of total global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, while in 2024 it emitted 0.17% of global GHG emissions. It is thus fair to conclude that Zambia is not in any meaningful way responsible for the ongoing climate crisis.

Despite this, Zambia is enduring the crippling impacts of climate change. In particular, the country is experiencing periods of prolonged drought, enduring serious droughts in 2015/16, 2018/19, and in 2023/24, when the government declared a 'National Disaster and Emergency'.

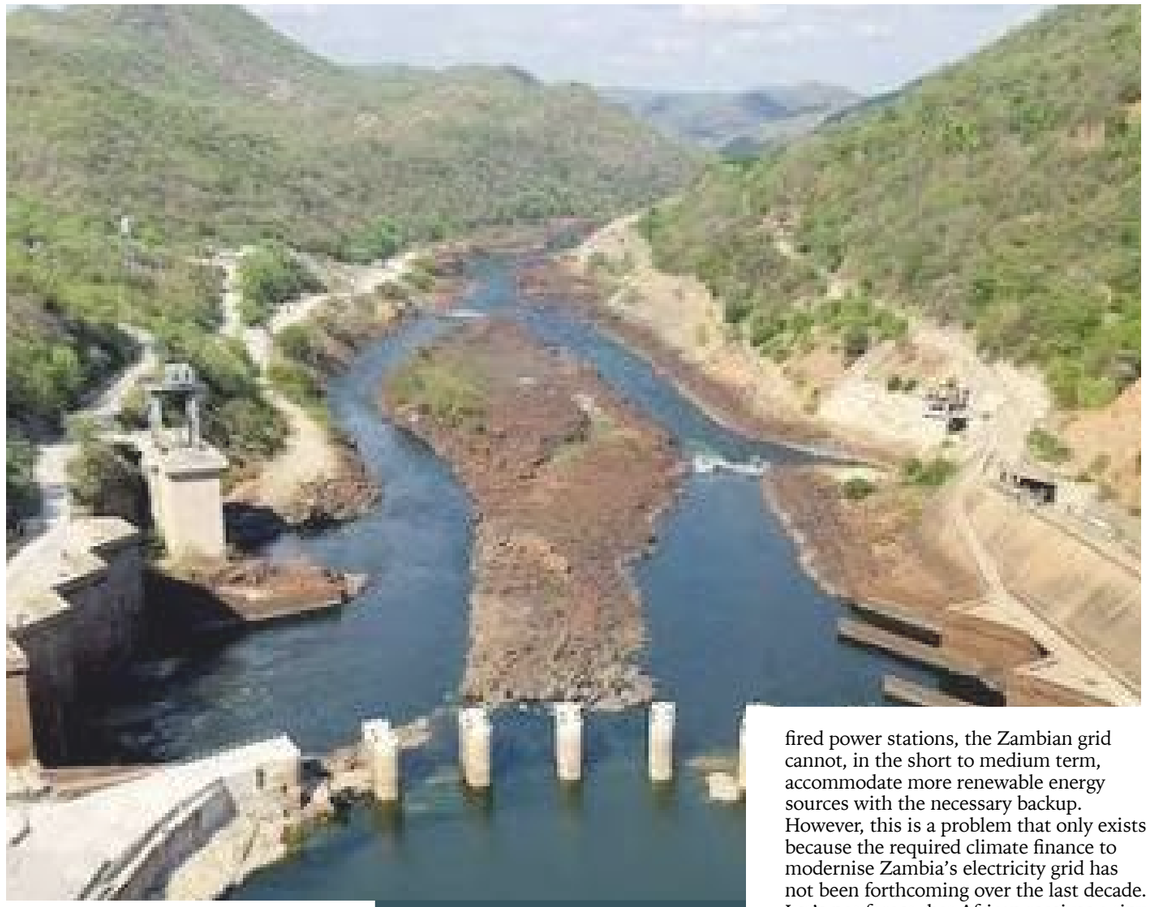
The World Bank reported in April this year that extreme drought risk is likely to increase fivefold in Zambia by 2050, while experts predict that the current 'Super El Niño' (global warming has led to more frequent and extreme El Niño events) is likely to trigger drought in Zambia into 2027.

These extreme droughts obviously have a serious impact on Zambia's food security, but they also have a very significant impact on Zambia's ability to generate electricity because of its reliance on hydropower, which provides 85% of Zambia's electricity. During periods of severe drought, like in 2024, severely reduced water flows from the Zambezi and Kafue rivers resulted in extremely serious power cuts, sometimes resulting in less than three hours a day of power, that lasted well into 2025.

Zambia has recognised this crisis, noting in its 2023 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), which sets out the country's electricity generation roadmap to 2050, that the country needs to significantly diversify its power generation. According to the plan, it will do so by building 1,500MW of new utility-scale non-hydropower renewables by 2030, climbing to a total renewable capacity of 12,500MW by 2050.

This is, of course, excellent news. However, the IRP also notes that by 2030 an additional 600MW will come from new coal, with another 1,200MW of new coal added between 2030 and 2050. The IRP notes that this new coal will add 6 million additional tonnes of GHG per year by 2050. To which can be added severe localised pollution for communities living near coal power stations and coal mines.

The irony of burning more fossil fuel as a solution to a problem caused by climate change is, of course, glaring. This is especially so considering that solar power fits perfectly with seasonal changes in Zambia; solar peaks in summer when hydropower falls away as rainfall drops, while the opposite is true in winter. The question that must be asked, therefore, is: why is Zambia building more coal-fired power stations?



In short, it is doing so because the required finance for the development of renewable energy sources and necessary grid upgrading has not been made available to it by developed countries in terms of the Paris Agreement. This very point is made in Zambia's IRP, which notes that the additional emissions from coal could be avoided 'through clean energy alternatives in future provided that concessional external funding sources are identified'.

Because grant-based or highly concessional funding has not been made available in anything like the required amounts in the decade since the Paris Agreement, Zambia is turning to coal with significant equity and technical support from Indian and Chinese firms, largely interested in firming up electricity generation in Zambia to protect their pre-existing commercial and mining (critical mineral) interests in the country.

Another reason why coal generation is expanding is that the need to develop new generation is clearly urgent. While utility-scale renewables can be built more quickly than traditional coal-fired power stations, the Zambian grid cannot, in the short to medium term, accommodate more renewable energy sources with the necessary backup. However, this is a problem that only exists because the required climate finance to modernise Zambia's electricity grid has not been forthcoming over the last decade. Let's not forget that African receives a tiny percentage of clean energy investment, absorbing only 2% of the global total in 2025.

The implications for Zambia (including how it will meet its Nationally Determined Contributions) and the rest of the world of burning yet more coal are obvious and contradict repeated calls from climate scientists, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres to 'end the deadly addiction to coal'.

The Zambian story is a clear indication that 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; and mechanisms for delivery, such as the Green Climate Fund, must be strengthened to ensure resources reach the most vulnerable in a timely and predictable manner.

BRIEFLY SPEAKING

0.19%

It is estimated that since 1851 Zambia has emitted 0.19% of total global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, while in 2024 it emitted 0.17% of global GHG emissions. It is thus fair to conclude that Zambia is not in any meaningful way responsible for the ongoing climate crisis. Despite this, Zambia is enduring the crippling impacts of climate change. In particular, the country is experiencing periods of prolonged drought, enduring serious droughts in 2015/16, 2018/19, and in 2023/24, when the government declared a 'National Disaster and Emergency'.

from the rooms

On GGA, it feels like deja vu from Bonn

Despite consistently acknowledging the importance of finance for adaptation, the EU, UK and Norway continue to insist that any clarification of the tripling commitment, including its baseline, quality and delivery pathway, should be addressed under the Climate Finance Work Programme

In the GGA rooms at COP31 in Antalya, it feels like SB64 all over again. The same divisions are resurfacing, with Parties appearing entrenched in their respective positions and little indication of a willingness to bridge the gap.

On the institutional arrangements for the GGA, Developed Country Parties remain committed to their preference for an expert-only technical task force, comprising experts selected by the SB Chairs and relevant UN agencies whose work relates to the GGA targets.

Their position reflects a preference for a primarily technical process, with the task force providing the expertise needed to support implementation and further work on the targets.

Developing countries, meanwhile, remain unwilling to compromise on their call for some form of political oversight by Parties. For them, the process cannot be left entirely in the hands of technical experts. Party oversight is essential to ensure accountability, political ownership and alignment with the priorities and circumstances of developing countries.

On tripling

Despite consistently acknowledging the importance of finance for adaptation, the EU, UK and Norway continue to insist that any clarification of the tripling commitment, including its baseline, quality and delivery pathway, should be addressed under the Climate Finance Work Programme (CFWP). They remain opposed to any form of discussion on finance in the GGA rooms, effectively seeking to keep the two processes separate.

Developing countries, including the G77 and its members, are open to discussing clarification of the tripling commitment under the CFWP. However, they are concerned that this approach could weaken or dilute the demand for grant-based public finance for adaptation, to be provided by developed countries to developing countries. This concern is particularly relevant given the ongoing debate under the CFWP about addressing climate finance in the context of Article 9 as a whole, rather than maintaining a specific focus on Article 9.1 and the obligations of developed countries.

Ideally, developing countries would prefer to anchor the tripling commitment within the GGA architecture. This would help ensure that the GGA does not become a largely technical exercise, disconnected from the financial resources required for its implementation

Nevertheless, their immediate strategy remains to keep pushing for tripling in every relevant negotiating space. The calculation is straightforward: keep the demand alive, maintain political pressure and ensure that it eventually lands somewhere in the final outcome



CHARLES ISABOKE POWER SHIFT AFRICA

Trust is now a currency in finance talks

Climate finance negotiations this week continued to expose deep divisions between developed and developing countries, with limited substantive progress despite efforts to move discussions forward. At the heart of the disagreement is a fundamental question about the nature of climate finance: developing countries continue to call for predictable, adequate and grant-based public finance, while several developed countries prioritise efficiency, mobilisation of private investment and blended finance.

These competing approaches reflect wider disagreements over responsibility, the fulfilment of existing obligations and the financial means required to implement climate commitments.

So far, progress has been largely procedural. Parties have agreed to streamline negotiating texts and continue consultations, but there is little substantive convergence on funding levels, contributor obligations or delivery timelines. Meanwhile, headline figures on global climate finance risk obscuring a growing allocation crisis. Although overall climate finance has increased, adaptation finance reportedly declined by 20%, reaching approximately $63 billion annually. This raises serious questions about whether existing financial flows reflect the priorities and needs of countries most vulnerable to climate impacts.

Debt is another major fault line. Loans continue to dominate several public climate finance channels, prompting developing countries to question whether climate finance is enabling the implementation of national climate plans or adding to already unsustainable debt burdens.

Access remains equally challenging. Accreditation to climate funds does not automatically translate into finance reaching communities and projects, and limited project-preparation capacity, complex application procedures, lengthy approval processes and high borrowing costs continue to prevent developing countries from accessing resources at the scale and speed required.

Adaptation finance has also become politically exposed. The proposal to establish a standalone agenda item on tripling adaptation finance was not adopted. Although the issue remains open for discussion under other negotiating tracks, its treatment risks becoming fragmented, weakening the political focus on a critical financing priority.

Similar divisions are evident under Article 2.1(c). Developed countries are keen to move towards implementation, while developing countries want greater clarity on how the process will lower capital costs, improve adaptation finance and avoid creating additional financial burdens.

Discussions on the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and Global Environment Facility (GEF) further expose these tensions. Developing countries are calling for predictable replenishment, fulfilment of outstanding pledges and adequate grant resources, while several contributors emphasise access, delivery efficiency and private finance mobilisation.

Ultimately, trust is becoming a negotiating issue in its own right. Disagreements over participation, submissions and the drafting process shape whose priorities are reflected in negotiating texts. Without greater transparency, accountability and recognition of developed countries' financial obligations, procedural progress is unlikely to translate into the substantive outcomes developing countries need.

green industrialisation

From minerals to power: Building Africa's industrial might



BY CHRISTIAN HOUNKANNOU

A few years ago in the Democratic Republic of Congo, I watched trucks carrying cobalt leave the country almost exactly as it came out of the ground. The ore would be refined, processed, and manufactured elsewhere. The higher-value jobs, skills, and economic gains would travel with it. That image has stayed with me because it reflects a pattern that has defined Africa's place in global supply chains for decades: exporting raw materials while importing much of the value they create.

Today, the global energy transition gives Africa a chance to change that story. Africa is home to some of the world's most important reserves of critical minerals, including cobalt, copper, manganese, graphite, and lithium, all essential for batteries, electric vehicles, and renewable energy technologies. As demand for these resources grows, the question is not whether value will be created, but where that value will remain.

As leaders gather at COP31 to discuss pathways towards a cleaner and more resilient global economy, Africa's role in the transition deserves greater attention. Too often, conversations about critical minerals focus on securing supply for global markets rather than on the development opportunities for producing countries. For Africa, the transition is not only about replacing fossil fuel infrastructure, but also building the renewable energy systems needed to power homes, schools, hospitals, businesses, and industries.

This is particularly important in a continent where millions of people still lack access to reliable electricity. Africa has a unique opportunity to expand energy access and industrial development at the same time. Achieving the continent's goal of reaching 35% electrification through renewable energy by 2035 will require investments that connect clean energy deployment with local manufacturing, mineral processing, value addition, and decent job creation, especially for young people. The regions supplying the minerals that power the global energy transition should also share in its benefits.

That means moving beyond extraction. More processing, refining, and manufacturing should take place closer to where minerals are produced.

Too often, conversations about critical minerals focus on securing supply for global markets rather than on the development opportunities for producing countries, but for Africa the transition is not only about replacing fossil fuel infrastructure, but also building the renewable energy systems needed to power it



Retaining more value within African economies will create jobs, strengthen industrial capacity, and build the skills needed to compete in emerging clean energy industries.

But industrialisation cannot happen without power. Renewable energy offers the most practical pathway forward, provided it is designed to benefit both industry and surrounding communities. Too often, industrial facilities have reliable electricity while nearby communities remain without access. A more inclusive approach is possible.

Renewable energy investments linked to mineral processing will also power local businesses, support agricultural processing, improve public services, and create opportunities for women entrepreneurs and young innovators. Initiatives such as Watts Up Africa have shown how energy access can unlock wider economic opportunities when communities are treated as partners rather than bystanders.

Regional cooperation could further strengthen these opportunities. The growing collaboration between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia on battery value chains demonstrates how African countries can work together to capture more value from their resources, build industries, and create jobs. Similar approaches could help strengthen regional supply chains across the continent.

This vision should be central to discussions at COP31. International partnerships and climate finance should support not only the extraction of critical minerals, but also renewable energy deployment, industrial development, workforce skills, and local economic growth. The energy transition must help African countries industrialize and prosper rather than reinforce old patterns of dependency.

Africa does not need to choose between contributing to the global energy transition and advancing its own development ambitions. It can do both. The goal should be how to ensure that Africa's mineral wealth powers not only the world's clean energy future, but also the continent's own industrial transformation, energy access, and shared prosperity.

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the last word

As ministers take over, Antalya must provide just transition that works for Africa

By Wednesday night, negotiations on the Belém-Antalya Mechanism had stalled over procedure as Parties demanded updated written text rather than informal discussions, and now with technical negotiations closing, ministers are set to inherit difficult decisions next week



BY AMOS WEMANYA

Ask a farmer in Turkana, Kenya; a coal worker in Mpumalanga, South Africa; or a young engineer in Lagos, Nigeria what a just transition means. Their answers will not be about governance structures or negotiating procedures, but jobs, affordable electricity and whether the shift to clean economies will improve their lives or leave them behind. At COP31 in Antalya, governments must decide whether the promised just transition mechanism will deliver real change or become another talking shop.

Last year in Belém, years of pressure from workers, Indigenous Peoples, women, youth and Global South governments secured an agreement to establish a just transition mechanism. Campaigners called it the Belém-Antalya Mechanism (BAM). It was a victory, but the agreement left its structure and functions unresolved. Negotiations in Bonn produced no agreed text, and then Antalya inherited a promise without a blueprint.

When negotiations opened on Tuesday, governments showed some convergence around a two-tier mechanism under the Paris Agreement: a political body driven by countries and an implementation arm responding to national needs. But agreement on structure masks deep disagreements over what the mechanism should deliver.

The African Group was unequivocal, saying that Africa came to Antalya for a mechanism, not another process. Existing initiatives are fragmented and have failed to deliver support at scale, the AGN added. Three years of dialogues have improved understanding, but understanding does not finance transitions. Poverty eradication, economic diversification, value addition and finance remain among the least-addressed priorities.

By Wednesday night, negotiations had stalled over procedure. Parties demanded updated written text rather than informal discussions. With technical negotiations nearing closure, ministers will inherit difficult decisions. The political atmosphere is equally challenging. Africa's proposal for a standalone agenda item on tripling adaptation finance failed to secure consensus. Although climate finance remains on the agenda, the message is troubling. A COP claiming to prioritise implementation cannot sideline the money needed to deliver it.

The numbers expose the injustice. Around 79% of national climate plans reference just transition, yet only a quarter estimate its cost. Annual financing needs range from $50 billion to $420 billion. More than 90% of Just Energy Transition Partnership financing takes the form of debt or guarantees, while grants account for roughly 4%. African governments paid approximately $163 billion in debt service in 2024. And, despite holding 60% of the world's best solar resources, Africa attracts just 2% of global renewable energy investment.

A transition financed through more debt is not justice, but a continuation of the old economic model dressed in green. Neither is a transition that exports African cobalt and lithium while importing expensive finished batteries. That is green extractivism as African resources power other economies while African communities inherit pollution and miss out on jobs.

Antalya's success must meet four tests. First, governments must establish BAM with a clear mandate to mobilise finance, technology and capacity-building support, and make it operational by COP32 in Addis Ababa. Finance must prioritise grants and non-debt-creating instruments, consistent with the Belém decision.

Second, governance must guarantee balanced representation between developed and developing countries, meaningful African participation and decision-making space for workers, women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and affected communities. More than 700 organisations have demanded this. Nothing about us without us.

Third, BAM must confront structural barriers: unsustainable debt, expensive capital, unfair credit ratings, unilateral trade measures and the exclusion of African industries from clean technology value chains. Supporting local manufacturing and mineral processing is essential. Not every transition priority can generate commercial returns, nor should it have to.

Fourth, the existing just transition work programme must continue with stronger accountability, transparent priorities and meaningful outcomes. It must complement implementation, not become an excuse to postpone it.

As ministers prepare to take over negotiations, Colombia's delegate offered a powerful reminder: this mechanism's success will be measured not by its complexity, but by the lives it improves. Will BAM deliver finance, decent jobs, affordable energy and economic opportunities, or merely produce more meetings?

WE ARE HAVING THE SAME FIGHT, ONLY IN A DIFFERENT CITY

Africa's adaptation battle in Antalya is about who decides and who pays

AS THE FIRST WEEK of COP31 draws to a close, adaptation negotiations in Antalya are looking painfully familiar. The same disputes that stalled progress in Bonn in June have resurfaced, with little sign of a breakthrough.

For Africa, this is more than another diplomatic deadlock. Droughts, floods and extreme heat are already destroying harvests, displacing communities and stretching national budgets, and what governments decide in Antalya will determine how adaptation progress is measured, who sets the rules and, crucially, who pays.

At COP30 in Belém, countries adopted 59 indicators to track progress towards the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA). The task now is to develop the methods and technical details needed to make these indicators operational ahead of COP32 in Addis Ababa, where adaptation is expected to take centre stage.

But even this technical exercise has become a political battleground. Developed countries want a small, expert-led task force. Developing countries insist that governments must retain political oversight. The African Group of Negotiators (AGN) has proposed a task force of around 40 experts, nominated through regional groups, with geographical and gender balance.

This disagreement goes beyond institutional arrangements. Indicators are not politically neutral. Those who design them influence what counts as adaptation progress, whose efforts are recognised, and potentially which actions qualify for financial support. Africa wants a meaningful say in decisions that will shape its adaptation priorities. The bigger battle is over money. In Belém, governments called for efforts to at least triple adaptation finance by 2035, yet in Antalya, negotiators cannot even agree on where to discuss how that commitment will be delivered.

There is no dedicated agenda item on tripling adaptation finance, leaving the African Group extremely disappointed. The G77 has indicated willingness to discuss the commitment under the Climate Finance Work Programme (CFWP), but there are concerns to this approach. The Climate Finance Work Programme addresses finance under Article 9 of the Paris Agreement broadly, rather than focusing specifically on Article 9.1, which obliges developed countries to provide financial support to developing countries.

That distinction matters. Put simply, grants from rich-country governments could get mixed in with private flows, development-bank loans and South–South support. Many African countries are in or close to debt distress, and for them an adaptation loan is not the same as adaptation finance.

Developing countries want the tripling commitment anchored in the GGA negotiations. Their argument is that adaptation goals mean little without the finance to achieve them. With no agreed negotiating space, the strategy is now to raise adaptation finance in every relevant room until governments are forced to confront the issue.

And, finally, there is some good news! There is some progress on national adaptation plans (NAPs). The latest draft decision records 83 developing countries with NAPs including 12 new submissions this year, the largest annual increase so far. Seven are from Africa: Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Libya, Nigeria and Tanzania.



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