The COP31 Chronicle

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SPECIAL REPORTS AND ANALYSES

AFRICA'S AGENDA IN ANTALYA



PHOTO | UNFCCC

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretary-general Simon Stiell displays a copy of the Paris Agreement during the opening plenary yesterday.

As COP31 opens in Antalya, a Mediterranean crossroads where civilisations, empires and continents have met for centuries, Africa brings its own history of unequal exchange and resilience, and the shared hope that delegates will use the next two weeks to turn the lessons of history into climate justice for generations yet unborn

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.

GOING GAGA OVER GGA?
Regarding Global Goal on Adaptation, Antalya must turn the promises of the indicators from Belem into action **Pg 16**

HOW SUMMIT CAN HELP US PLUG INTO PLANET POWER:
A new report on energy shows that, while Africa is ready for a renewable energy future, it is being pulled back by inadequate finance, poor industrial policy support, and scant implementation mechanisms, and Antalya should bring us all closer to a future where renewable energy powers industries, creates decent jobs, strengthens energy sovereignty, and improves people's lives.
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Delegates queue for up to **five hours** for badges

Delegates attending COP31 this morning complained of long queues under the blazing sun, with many spending as long as five hours to get to the end of the badge collection queue. The delay offered a frustrating first hurdle for participants arriving to attend the climate summit, where leaders have called for faster action on global warming. With little shade and temperatures climbing, some delegates fanned themselves or searched for water as the line crawled forward, inch by inch. By early afternoon the slow-moving queue had stretched outside the venue, turning the formalities of accreditation into an endurance test before negotiations had even begun. UNFCCC guidance says delegates must collect their badges onsite before entering the conference. Later in the evening, the secretariat sent our a message urging "those who do not have essential business onsite" to "to defer their badge collection until tomorrow, Tuesday, 10 November".



Turn pledges into action, leaders say as talks open

In a global first, Türkiye and Australia are leading a joint COP31 partnership, with Türkiye overseeing the presidency and action agenda and Australia guiding formal negotiations

The COP31 climate summit opened today with UN climate chief Simon Stiell and the talks president Murat Kurum urging governments to move beyond setting targets and deliver practical results on clean energy, climate finance and resilience.

Stiell said the conference must be an "implementation" COP, translating existing global goals and national plans into concrete steps. While renewable power is becoming competitive—he said 90% of large renewable projects are now cheaper than fossil-fuel alternatives—progress remains too slow and uneven.

The UN Climate Change executive secretary called for action to expand renewable capacity, strengthen electricity grids, cut methane emissions and improve access to adaptation finance. He said methane reduction and electrification together could lower projected global warming by half a degree. Stiell also cited the economic case for renewables, saying they saved about $500 billion globally last year and a further $265 billion in the first half of 2026.

Kurum framed climate policy as inseparable from food, energy, health and development, warning that crises are in recent days compounding one another. Droughts, floods and extreme heat are disrupting food supplies, industry and economies far beyond the places directly affected, he said.

The Turkish COP president said the summit's guiding principles are "dialogue, consensus and action," with success measured by whether decisions improve people's lives. He pointed to lower household energy bills, resilient cities, clean public transport and support for farmers as tangible outcomes of climate negotiations.

Türkiye and Australia are leading a joint COP31 partnership, with Türkiye overseeing the presidency and action agenda and Australia guiding formal negotiations. Kurum said the proposed Climate Implementation Bridge would connect countries' needs with finance, technology and expertise.

Finance is expected to be a central challenge, and Kurum urged countries to deliver on commitments made in Baku, including at least $300 billion annually for developing countries by 2035, alongside the broader goal of scaling public and private climate finance to $1.3 trillion a year. Stiell said negotiations should clarify how to meet those commitments without reopening earlier agreements.



Earlier in Antalya, African Group of Negotiators on Climate Change Chair had told a media briefing that, "for Africa, COP31 is particularly pivotal for implementation and represents a solid foundation towards COP32, which will be hosted on the African continent".

"For the AGN, COP31 is pivotal for implementation, and the Group expects to see ambition in climate finance and the means of implementation" said Dr Antwi, adding that, "in this regard, the African Group has submitted agenda items addressing climate finance and implementation."

Both Stiell and Kurum said the need to protect vulnerable communities and build trust between countries is urgent, with Kurum noting that promised funding must arrive on time and produce results and Stiell warning that climate impacts are already imposing severe human and economic costs.

The summit, taking place in Antalya from Nov. 9 to 20, will also address adaptation, mitigation and a just transition. Stiell cautioned that no single conference can solve the climate crisis, but said COP31 must build on previous progress and accelerate implementation.

In their own words: What various leaders have previously said on the global climate crisis



William Ruto, President of Kenya: In the face of impending catastrophe, whose warning signs are already unbearably disastrous, weak action is unwise. No action is dangerous. **At COP27, 2022.**



Ban Ki-moon, Former UN Secretary-General: There is no Plan B because we do not have a Planet B. **At UN climate negotiations, 2014.**



Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland: Climate change is a fundamental problem that we must solve and not merely pass on to the generations to come. **In a speech in June 2015.**



Barack Obama, former president of the United States: We are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change and the last generation that can do something about it. **At Georgetown University, 2013.**



Kofi Annan, Former UN Secretary-General: Climate change is a threat to peace and security. Sceptics are out of step, out of arguments, and out of time. **In 2006.**



Mia Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados: The difference between 1.5 degrees and 2 degrees is a death sentence for people in the Caribbean and other vulnerable regions. **At COP26, 2021.**

yay or nay

WHERE THE WORLD MADE OR SHED CLIMATE PROGRESS IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FUND ADVANCES CLIMATE PROJECTS: The African Development Fund has advanced climate initiatives towards financing and implementation, following regional project preparation workshops in Nairobi and Pretoria. The initiative aims to strengthen climate resilience across vulnerable African countries, helping translate climate ambitions into practical, locally relevant projects.

EL NIÑO THREATENS VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES: A strengthening El Niño threatens to intensify climate-related hardship across Africa. Forecasts warn of drought risks in Southern Africa and flooding across parts of East Africa. Vulnerable communities face mounting threats to agriculture, food security, water supplies and livelihoods.

AFRICA–EUROPE PARTNERSHIP SUPPORTS GREEN INNOVATION: The African Union–European Union research partnership reported progress in sustainable energy innovation, with more than €50 million mobilised through joint programmes. Forty-seven projects involving over 270 organisations are developing solutions including smart grids, clean cooking, renewable-energy recycling and sustainable agricultural technologies.

AFRICA'S CLIMATE FINANCE GAP WIDENS: Kenya's President William Ruto in September warned that Africa faces an annual climate adaptation financing shortfall of US$200–400 billion, threatening the continent's ability to respond effectively to climate change. Limited funding hampers investment in flood defences, drought preparedness, resilient agriculture and early-warning systems. Declining development assistance and reduced international funding commitments further complicate efforts, leaving climate-vulnerable countries struggling to protect communities.



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editor's note

Africa comes to Antalya with both hope and ambition

Ten years after the Paris Agreement, Africa arrives in Turkey as, first, a region bearing some of the heaviest climate costs, and, second, a rights-holder and solution provider that is ready to take the mantle of leadership, both figuratively and literally

MOHAMED ADOW

Friends, welcome to our first edition of our dedicated coverage of COP31. This publication is meant to give compass to the tens of thousands of delegates attending this conference, and to also discuss, in great detail, the agency of Africa's various positions at the negotiation rooms here.

It is not exhaustive; nothing in these spaces ever is. But it is a great addition to the wide body of knowledge upon which these talks are predicated, and I hope you will find it a worthwhile companion. Its overarching argument is that the success of the next two weeks of talks will be judged by two things; the appetite to deliver on the promises we have made, and the ability to move beyond the culture of declarations that has sullied previous conferences.

Ten years after the Paris Agreement, Africa enters these negotiations as, first, a region bearing some of the heaviest climate costs, and, second, a rights-holder and solution provider that is ready to take the mantle of leadership, both figuratively and literally. Recent forecasts of a strong



El Niño have left several countries in East, West and Southern Africa preparing to adapt with limited resources. This shows just how fundamental it is to operationalise the Belém Adaptation Indicators.

But indicators can only measure adaptation; while finance is what resources it. Giving effect to them must therefore steer us towards the goal of at least tripling adaptation finance by 2035, with clarity on the baseline and milestones along the way.

To adapt to — and recover from — existing and forthcoming climate catastrophes requires finance, and the accessibility to these resources is even more pressing in these times. Africa needs an estimated $190-277 billion a year to meet its 2030 climate goals yet received $43.7 billion in 2021/22.

On loss and damage, the gap between promise and delivery is starker. Of the $822 million pledged to the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage, less than half has been received.

Meanwhile, requests from developing countries total $2.8 billion, and 81 of those requests come from Africa. This finance must be public, predictable, and grant-based. There should be no loans for countries already constrained by debt. And, as we have seen around the world lately, consistent and accessible flows of finance are the difference between diminished livelihoods and loss of lives on one hand, and a financially just future on the other.

We at Power Shift Africa have had a commendable journey advocating for a just transition in energy access and industrialisation. At COP31, our advocacy will be buttressed by how to build on this momentum, and together with our partners and leaders, how to push for a Just Transition Mechanism that converts concept to design.

COP31 also marks the launch of the second Global Stocktake, the five-year review of collective progress under The Paris Agreement that will run until 2028. It is also a staging point for COP32 in Addis Ababa in 2027, and what Africa secures in Antalya will shape the agenda it carries home. The work is ready to begin; what remains is for the finances to flow.

Our series of expert analyses, opinions and commentaries build on these... and much, much more. It is my honour and pleasure to now invite you to sink your teeth into them!



the team

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World leaders call for stronger climate cooperation: At the 81st United Nations General Assembly, UN Secretary-General António Guterres urged governments to strengthen international cooperation on climate change. He called for national transition plans aligned with the 1.5°C goal, including clear timelines and protections for affected workers and communities.

Climate negotiations expose divisions over fossil fuels: Governments at UNGA81 debated the pace of the transition away from fossil fuels. Pacific nations advocated faster emissions reductions, while energy-producing countries emphasised affordability and energy security. The discussions exposed the challenge of balancing climate ambition, economic development and fairness in the global energy transition.

Sea-level rise gains international recognition: UNGA81 discussions debated the existential threats facing coastal communities and small island nations from rising sea levels. Leaders foregrounded adaptation, displacement and legal concerns. However, implementation and adequate financing remain essential to protect vulnerable populations, preserve livelihoods and address the long-term consequences of coastal erosion and inundation.

Pacific nations demand urgent climate action ahead of COP31: Pacific leaders renewed calls for faster emissions reductions and increased climate finance ahead of COP31. At an October pre-COP meeting in Fiji, representatives from 30 countries supported a declaration urging deep, rapid and sustained emissions cuts. Their message underlines the urgency of protecting vulnerable island communities from rising seas.

UN prepares special event on climate resilience: The UN General Assembly President scheduled a special climate event for 16 October, ahead of COP31. Discussions addressed adaptation, loss and damage, climate finance, technology transfer and early-warning systems, with particular attention to vulnerable countries, including least-developed nations and small island developing states.

diplomacy

AGN Chair on red and green lines at COP31

Statement by the Chair of the African Group of Negotiators, Nana Dr Antwi-Boasiako Amoah, during COP31 Presidency virtual informal consultations, dellivered on 14 October, 2026

I am speaking on behalf of the African Group of Negotiators. We thank the incoming COP31 Presidency for convening these consultations so early, and for its open, inclusive approach. For Africa, keeping 1.5 degrees within reach and speeding up implementation depend on the same thing. Developing countries need the means to act, and the multilateral system has to deliver on what it has already agreed. With that in mind, the African Group sees priority outcomes in three clusters.

FIRST, FINANCE: Under the Climate Finance Work Programme agreed in Belém, CMA8 must move into substantive discussion of how we engage with Article 9.1. Its provisions are clear, and they cannot keep being put off. Let's deliver on what we agreed on. Second, we need a clear signal on replenishing the Green Climate Fund. The arrangements between the COP and the GCF already provide the mandate: the COP is to assess the funds developing countries need to implement the Convention, and that assessment should inform resource mobilisation. This is not a new issue, we ask that the existing mandate be used. Third, on the Adaptation Fund, the text is ready. The COP should mandate the Board to begin transition arrangements so the Fund can serve the Paris Agreement, given the share of proceeds from Article 6.4.

SECOND, ADAPTATION: We need to agree on arrangements for a task force that builds on what we learned while developing the indicators. This work is purely technical, and we believe it can be concluded in the first week. Let me reassure Parties that the African Group is not seeking a permanent body. We emphasise the agreement on a two-year process focused on metadata and methodologies. We also need room to discuss the tripling of adaptation finance by 2035, and the pursuit of the Global Goal on Adaptation, in line with Articles 9.1, 10 and 11 of the Paris Agreement. That means talking about baselines and trajectory. This matters for trust in the multilateral system. We cannot simply set aside what we agreed before.

"Africa has considerable experience in developing adaptation plans, assessing climate risks and working with communities to strengthen resilience. That experience must inform how we understand and measure global adaptation progress. We should not be satisfied with a framework that tells us how vulnerable we are. We need one that helps us understand whether we are becoming more resilient, why progress is occurring and what is required to sustain it. That, in my view, is the real test of the Global Goal on Adaptation."



THIRD, CLIMATE AND DEVELOPMENT: Operationalising the Just Transition Mechanism, and continuing work under the Just Transition Work Programme, is a crucial outcome for the African Group. COP31 must set clear parameters for the Mechanism's institutional arrangements, following a two-tier approach with a technical dimension and a political dimension. Above all, it must address how the just transition will be financed. That means being clear about what the UNFCCC process can do, what external actors can do, and the modalities that connect the two.

We look forward to more engagement in the Climate Change and Trade Dialogue. Parties face a real challenge in agreeing how the dialogue's outcomes will feed into the high-level roundtable expected from the Subsidiary Bodies. That process must be owned by Parties, not left only to the Chairs.

Presidency, the African Group stands ready to work with you and all Parties toward a COP31 that delivers implementation, finance and trust.

I thank you

FROM THE CHAIR'S DESK

AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES ON ADAPTATION AND THE GGA

Abridged statement by Nana Dr. Antwi-Boasiako Amoah, Chair, African Group of Negotiators on Climate Change (AGN), at GGA workshop in Accra, October 2026.

When the conversion on the Global Goal on Adaptation under the UNFCCC began, one of the fundamental questions confronting negotiators was how the international community could assess adaptation progress when countries face different climate risks, development circumstances and institutional capacities.

We have made considerable progress. The UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience established 11 targets, and the adoption of the 59 Belém Adaptation Indicators at COP30 provided a common basis for assessing collective progress. However, we have now reached a more demanding stage.

We have agreed on what we want to measure. We must now establish whether what we have agreed can actually tell us what we need to know. This is why Ghana's effort to pilot the indicator testing is important. It allows us to examine the indicators from the perspective of those who will use them in national planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting.

When a country reports progress under the Global Goal on Adaptation, what exactly should that progress mean? Does it mean that a National Adaptation Plan has been developed, climate risk assessments undertaken or adaptation programmes implemented? Or does it mean that communities are becoming less vulnerable and better able to manage climate impacts?

All these elements are important, but they do not tell us the same thing. A country may have a comprehensive adaptation plan yet face difficulties implementing it. An early warning system may exist without reaching vulnerable communities in time. Farmers may receive climate-smart agriculture training without sufficient evidence that their livelihoods have become more resilient.

This distinction matters because adaptation is inherently context-specific. Unlike mitigation, where greenhouse gas emissions provide a relatively common measure of progress, adaptation outcomes depend on the nature of climate risks, the populations exposed and the effectiveness of interventions.

Throughout the GGA negotiations, African countries have supported the establishment of a credible framework for assessing collective adaptation progress. For too long, adaptation has lacked the visibility and common assessment framework available to mitigation. The UAE Framework and the Belém Adaptation Indicators represent important progress in addressing this gap.

However, the adoption of the indicators has not resolved all questions concerning their methodologies, applicability, data requirements and practical use. For Africa, three principles remain essential.

1 **These indicators remain country-driven and responsive to national circumstances.** Countries have invested considerable resources in National Adaptation Plans, sectoral strategies and monitoring frameworks. The GGA should build on these systems rather than create parallel reporting arrangements.

2 **Make sure that global comparability is not at the expense of national relevance**. Countries face different hazards, levels of exposure and institutional capacities. A common framework must allow sufficient flexibility to reflect these differences while supporting a credible collective assessment.

3 **Measurement must be useful for implementation**. Indicators should help governments identify adaptation gaps, improve investment decisions and determine where additional support is required.

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The operationalization of the GGA must be accompanied by appropriate finance, technology development and transfer, and capacity-building. At the same time, stronger evidence can help countries identify investment priorities, demonstrate results and make more credible cases for adaptation support. As we approach COP31 in Antalya, such evidence will be particularly valuable. The operationalization of the Belém Adaptation Indicators requires greater technical clarity on methodologies, national applicability, reporting arrangements and implementation support.

Africa's engagement will be stronger when our positions are informed by practical experience rather than technical discussions alone.

Let me conclude by emphasizing that the Global Goal on Adaptation has reached an important stage in its development. We now have an agreed framework and indicators. Our responsibility is to ensure that they can be applied in ways that are meaningful, credible and useful to countries.

This requires us to be constructive but also critical, recognizing the progress made while examining the limitations that remain.

the watchdog

New report alert: Africa should not have to adapt to an unjust climate financing system

Build better infrastructure, they say. Improve early-warning systems, they urge. Develop drought-resistant crops, they preach. Strengthen disaster preparedness, they yell. All of these things matter a lot, but they do little to answer the harder question of why some people and countries are so much more vulnerable in the first place, argues our new report that puts recognition, participation, distribution and restoration at the centre of any just transition for adaptation



BY MOHAMED ADOW

What does it mean to ask a continent to adapt to a crisis it did little to create? For Africa, that question has stopped being philosophical as it is answered every day in flooded communities, failed harvests, disappearing livelihoods and public budgets stretched by disasters they cannot afford.

Africa produces a negligible share of global emissions, but between 1970 and 2021 it accounted for around 35 per cent of climate-related deaths worldwide. The continent is therefore confronting a brutal contradiction that is exemplified by the fact that those who have contributed least to the climate crisis are carrying some of its heaviest costs.

And that explains why, for us, it is worrying that much of the climate debate treats adaptation as a technical exercise. Build better infrastructure, they say. Improve early-warning systems, they urge. Develop drought-resistant crops, they preach. Strengthen disaster preparedness, they yell. All of these things matter, but they do not answer the harder question of why some people and countries are so much more vulnerable in the first place.

Mohamed Adow is the director, Power Shift Africa.



That is the question we have spent the last couple of years trying to answer, and it culminates in our recently launched thought-provoking report that shows that Africa's vulnerability is not an accident of geography, but has instead been shaped by history, economics and power. Colonial extraction, unequal development, debt dependency, global economic asymmetries and exclusion from international decision-making have all constrained the resources and choices available to African countries, and climate change is intensifying those existing inequalities, the report, titled *A Just Transition for Adaptation: A Framework and Vision for Africa*, shows.

I say it is 'thought-provoking' because it asks us to rethink adaptation itself; not as a collection of projects designed to help people cope with climate impacts, but as a question of justice, power and structural change.

That distinction might not sit well with some people, but for Africa it matters, because there is a danger in asking vulnerable countries simply to become more "resilient". Resilient against what? How can you ask people to toughen up while letting them be strangled by a system that continues to reproduce the very inequalities that have made resilience so difficult?

If you want to know where the problem is, see where the money is coming from and where it is going. That becomes quite stark when you consider the fact that Africa's annual adaptation needs are close to $70 billion but its adaptation finance flows are only around $14 billion. At the same time, a growing proportion of climate finance is being delivered through commercial loans rather than grants. That means countries already under severe fiscal pressure are being asked to borrow to protect themselves from climate impacts they did little to cause.

There is something deeply wrong with a system in which climate-vulnerable countries are spending more of their own public money on adaptation than they receive in international support, because that system turns climate injustice into a financial transaction, with those least responsible carrying more of the cost.

And, as the new report shows, the problem goes beyond finance. Africa's land, minerals, forests and other resources have become central to the global transition towards lower-carbon economies. Carbon markets and green industrial projects may offer genuine opportunities, but without African ownership, participation and accountability, there is a risk that old patterns of extraction will simply be repackaged in the language of the green economy, and that is why we argue that a transition can be low-carbon and still be unjust.

It is precisely because of this risk that the report's idea of a 'Just Transition for Adaptation' becomes important as it expands the idea beyond the familiar focus on emissions and energy systems. It asks what justice looks like when the goal is not simply to reduce carbon, but to enable societies to withstand a changing climate without reproducing the inequalities that made them vulnerable.

The report places four dimensions of justice at the centre: recognition, participation, distribution and restoration.

Recognition means taking African realities and knowledge seriously; participation means giving affected communities a genuine voice in decisions about their land, resources and futures; distribution asks who actually receives adaptation finance, technology and protection; and, finally, restoration recognises that present-day vulnerability has a history.

This report, therefore, is an invitation to change the terms of the conversation on just transition. Africa definitely needs adaptation, but that should not mean endlessly adjusting to an unjust system.

FREE

HOT OFF THE PRESS

The arguments in this article are based on our new report, **A Just Transition for Adaptation, now available to download** at **www.powershiftafrica.org.**

In Antalya, let's cut the long **blah blah blah** of pledges and bring out **the fat wallets**

The expectation is that international cooperation will deliver fairness in practice. Africa needs finance that arrives when it is needed, comes in forms countries can afford, flows through institutions they can access and matches the scale of the climate challenge. Developed countries must fulfil their commitments, multilateral funds must become more responsive, global climate finance targets must be supported by transparent systems for measuring delivery, and the international community must recognise that the quality of finance matters as much as its quantity



BY MERCY JOHN

In a drought-affected village in the Horn of Africa, a farmer watches the clouds gather over a field that has already endured months without reliable rain. The planting season is uncertain, the cost of seeds and fertiliser has risen, and the next harvest is far from guaranteed. Climate information could help the farmer decide when to plant. An irrigation system could protect crops against another dry spell. Drought-resistant seeds could reduce the risk of losing the harvest altogether. But each solution requires finance, infrastructure and institutions capable of delivering support before the next crisis arrives.

Across Africa, the persistent gap between the resources required to protect lives and livelihoods and the finance available to do so consigns hundreds of millions of smallholders farmers to lives of penury every year. The continent requires between $143 billion and $277 billion annually to meet its climate action and Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) needs, but receives only about 4 per cent of global climate finance flows.

As negotiators prepare for COP31 in Antalya, Türkiye, climate finance stands as the ultimate test of the international climate regime. Ten years after the Paris Agreement, Africa approaches COP31 as a rights holder demanding that developed countries fulfil their treaty obligations.

At the heart of this demand is a principle often overlooked in discussions about climate finance. Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement obliges developed countries to provide financial resources to developing countries to support both mitigation and adaptation. The International Court of Justice's 2025 advisory opinion on states' obligations in respect of climate change has further clarified the broader legal responsibilities of states in addressing climate change. Yet, despite these commitments, finance reaching vulnerable countries remains inadequate, difficult to access, and too often delivered on terms that compound existing financial pressures.

Africa arrives at COP31 amid severe macroeconomic headwinds, including high borrowing costs, constrained fiscal space, and mounting debt burdens. When climate finance is delivered primarily through market-rate loans or loans with only limited concessional terms, it creates the unjust paradox of climate-vulnerable countries being forced to incur additional debt to protect themselves against impacts they have contributed least to causing.

One way to translate commitments into practical support is to strengthen the multilateral funds established under the UN climate regime. The Adaptation Fund, for example, has enabled developing countries to access finance directly through accredited national institutions, reducing their reliance on international intermediaries. However, the Fund needs a more stable and predictable revenue base as it moves away from its historical reliance on proceeds from the Clean Development Mechanism. COP31 should advance pathways towards stronger and more balanced governance, reliable funding sources, including the share of proceeds under Article 6.4 of the Paris Agreement, and a clear framework for expanding grant-based adaptation support. The objective must be to equip the Fund to respond to the scale of the adaptation challenge facing developing countries.

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is equally important. As its third replenishment approaches, the Fund has an opportunity to secure stronger multi-year commitments from public contributors and ensure that resources reach the countries and communities that need them most.

For African governments, lengthy accreditation processes, complex applications and slow disbursement can mean the difference between a project that builds resilience and one that remains on paper. COP31 should therefore be an opportunity to press for predictable replenishment, streamlined access requirements, and clear timelines for approving and disbursing finance. Billions of dollars in pledges mean little if countries cannot access the money when they need it.

The urgency is even greater when it comes to loss and damage. The establishment of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) was a major achievement after years of demands from climate-vulnerable countries. But establishing a fund is only the first step; it must have sufficient resources to address the scale of losses already being experienced.

Funding requests, announced pledges and actual contributions paid into the Fund must be clearly distinguished to provide an accurate picture of its financial capacity. The central concern remains that voluntary contributions alone cannot guarantee the predictable support countries need after devastating floods, droughts, storms and other climate-related disasters.

Africa must press for a reliable replenishment system, substantially increased public contributions and arrangements that enable support to reach affected countries quickly, without adding to their debt burdens. Communities recovering from climate disasters should not face the additional burden of borrowing to rebuild homes, restore livelihoods and repair essential infrastructure damaged by events they had limited means to prevent.

Accountability will be as important as the money itself. The Standing Committee on Finance (SCF) has a key role in improving understanding of climate finance flows and assessing progress under the UN climate regime. COP31 should help resolve outstanding questions about its mandate and strengthen its capacity to assess whether collective commitments are being met.

Seats at the high table are no longer enough for young people, we want **the microphones now**

BY MERCY JOHN

Global climate negotiations can no longer afford to treat demographic realities as a footnote. The world has 1.8 billion people aged between 10 and 24, the largest youth generation in history, with 90 per cent living in developing countries.

This is the generation that will live longest with the consequences of today's climate decisions, yet young people remain underrepresented in the institutions that shape them. Globally, only 2.8 per cent of parliamentarians are under 30, while 37 per cent of parliamentary chambers have no members under 30.

Young people are not alone in this struggle. Women, workers, farmers, Indigenous Peoples, local communities and other frontline groups bear a disproportionate share of climate impacts. Their knowledge of changing rainfall patterns, failing harvests and shifting coastlines is deep and practical, yet their participation in climate governance remains limited.

Youth and other non-Party stakeholders have gradually become important to the UNFCCC climate process, including through the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action and the High-Level Climate Champions. Notably, COP31's Presidency has included Youth and Education in its Action Agenda, with the ambition of accelerating youth participation towards meaningful influence and a genuine contribution to formal climate processes.

The agenda also encompasses international youth cooperation, green workforce development, climate literacy, and high-level youth dialogue.

Young people should have a voice not only in discussions about the future, but also in decisions on finance, investment and implementation. They must help shape the pathways that will determine whether that future offers decent work, affordable energy, sustainable economies, and resilient communities.

Meaningful youth participation is also a question of livelihoods. Three in four young people in sub-Saharan Africa lack secure employment opportunities. In 2025, an estimated 67 million people aged 15–24 were unemployed globally, while more than 257 million were not in employment, education or training.

The disparities between economies are stark: approximately four in five young adults aged 25–29 in developed countries are in regular paid employment, compared with only one in five in low-income countries. These figures are particularly concerning for Africa, where the median age is around 19 and the population is growing rapidly, yet opportunities for young people remain inadequate.

Climate finance is a powerful engine of youth employment. Sustainable investment in renewable energy and climate adaptation will create substantial opportunities for decent work and improved livelihoods, particularly across developing countries. Adaptation is often framed primarily as a cost of protecting vulnerable communities, but investment in resilience will also generate livelihoods and productive economic activity.

Young people and other climate-vulnerable groups must be empowered to shape, lead and implement solutions across the Action Agenda. In adaptation, communities understand their own risks, while youth-led initiatives combine local knowledge with new technologies to strengthen resilience where it is needed most.

In clean energy, young entrepreneurs are already developing and operating decentralised renewable energy systems that bring power to communities beyond the reach of conventional electricity grids. In food systems, young people and women play important roles in agriculture. In resilient cities, young residents have a direct stake in how drainage, transport, housing and extreme heat are managed. Young people are ready to contribute to this transformation.

The measure of success will not be how many young people attend COP31, but whether their priorities and contributions are reflected in the decisions, financing commitments and implementation plans that emerge from it.

power briefing

NAIROBI, KENYA

CLEAN COOKING TRANSITION GAINS MOMENTUM AMID FUNDING GAP

Africa has secured $900 million in additional private-sector commitments to expand access to clean cooking, while $750 million of an earlier $2.2 billion pledge has been disbursed, and now leaders are calling for faster implementation to address a crisis affecting nearly 900 million people across the continent.

The progress was announced during a high-level virtual summit on clean cooking held on July 9, convened by the governments of Kenya, Norway and the United States, alongside the African Union, African Development Bank and International Energy Agency (IEA). The meeting reviewed progress since the first Summit on Clean Cooking in Africa, held in Paris in May 2024, and outlined priorities ahead of a planned in-person summit in Nairobi in early 2027.

IEA Executive Director **Fatih Birol** said the $750 million disbursed from the original pledge had supported projects in 30 African countries, including liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) infrastructure in Kenya, stove manufacturing in Nigeria, and fuel storage in Tanzania.

He also reported that 120 new clean cooking policies had been developed since the Paris summit. However, four in five African families still rely on traditional cooking methods, contributing to dangerous household air pollution and premature deaths, particularly among women and children.

Kenyan President **William Ruto** reiterated his government's commitment to universal clean cooking access by 2028, and estimated that achieving the target would require nearly $400 million for households and a further $600 million to transition institutions to cleaner cooking systems.

Ruto welcomed the new private-sector commitments and the integration of the Clean Cooking Alliance into the IEA, with Kenya among its 12 inaugural member governments.

KIGALI, RWANDA

JOURNALISTS URGED TO RESHAPE FOOD SECURITY REPORTING

African journalists have been urged to move beyond crisis-driven reporting on hunger, drought and climate disasters and focus on the systems, solutions and policies shaping the continent's food security. The call came during the Africa Journalists' Climate Training (AJCT 2026), organised by Power Shift Africa in Kigali, Rwanda, from 27–30 August, bringing together 25 journalists from 10 African countries to strengthen reporting on food systems, climate change, adaptation and resilience.

Held alongside the Africa Food Systems Forum 2026, the training addressed mounting pressures on African agriculture, including extreme weather, rising food prices, conflict and soil degradation.

The training challenged journalists to rethink narratives that portray Africa primarily as a continent of hunger and vulnerability. Instead, participants were encouraged to investigate the entire food value chain, from land and seed to production, processing, transport, trade and consumption. Discussions also highlighted the role of farmers, women, young people and Indigenous communities as knowledge-holders and decision-makers in developing solutions, including agroecology and locally driven approaches to food sovereignty.

Beyond reporting climate impacts, journalists were urged to scrutinise government commitments and adaptation finance by investigating where funding goes, who benefits and whether promised investments deliver results.



Recommendations included strengthening specialised climate and food-systems reporting, improving access to reliable data, building networks between journalists and experts, and supporting evidence-based solutions journalism.

The training comes as African countries prepare to push for greater attention to food security, water and livelihoods at COP32 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 2027.



PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA

AFRICA URGED TO UNITE ON CRITICAL MINERALS IN INDUSTRIALISATION AND ECONOMIC SOVEREIGNTY PUSH

Africa must move beyond exporting raw minerals and adopt a coordinated continental strategy to build domestic industries, strengthen economic sovereignty and secure a greater share of the value generated by the global energy transition, a new report notes.

One Voice, One Strategy: A Continental Blueprint for African Strategic Minerals, Joint Industrial Policies, and Diplomacy, published by Southern Africa Resource Watch (SARW) in September, argues that fragmented national approaches have weakened Africa's bargaining power, leaving much of the processing, manufacturing and technological development associated with its mineral wealth concentrated outside the continent.

Its launch, in Pretoria, South Africa, brought together discussions on how African countries can translate longstanding continental ambitions into coordinated action, with economic sovereignty emerging as a central theme.

Presenting the report, lead author **Dr Fadhel Kaboub** argued that Africa remains trapped in a colonial-extractivist economic model characterised by limited domestic value addition. He called for a pan-African joint industrial policy, arguing that individual countries cannot build competitive industries at the necessary scale in isolation.

The report positions critical energy transition minerals as strategic assets for Africa's own development, with opportunities to establish industries spanning battery production, electric vehicles, renewable energy technologies and green steel.

Central to this approach is beneficiation, or processing and refining minerals locally before they enter global markets. The strategy argues that Africa must capture more economic value from its resources rather than continue exporting them primarily in raw form.

NEW YORK, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

As adaptation risks grow, so must the finance, say experts

Climate adaptation is advancing in farms, cities, hospitals and communities, but financing and support systems are failing to keep pace with escalating climate impacts, experts warned at a high-level discussion convened on the sidelines of the 81st United Nations General Assembly (UNGA81) and New York Climate Week.

Hosted by the UN Foundation, DanChurchAid, E3G and the Talanoa Institute, the event brought together government representatives, UN officials and climate experts to examine how adaptation and Loss and Damage responses can be accelerated as global warming threatens livelihoods, economies and human security.

Martin Krause, Director of the United Nations Environment Programme's Climate Change Division, said the growing likelihood of global warming exceeding 1.5°C made adaptation unavoidable, even as efforts to limit further warming remained essential.

"No matter how much we are able to mitigate in the next 5, 10 or 20 years, we need to adapt to a new reality," he said, calling for faster, transformative responses backed by significantly greater and more accessible finance.

Discussions focused on strengthening international cooperation, integrating climate risks into national economic planning, and ensuring funding reaches communities facing the greatest threats.

Manjeet Dhakal, representing the Least Developed Countries Group and Climate Analytics South Asia, called for faster, simpler access to adaptation and Loss and Damage finance, drawing attention to the devastating floods in Nepal. "Sympathy needs to be translated into action," he said.

Julia Gardiner, Chair of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Implementation, said international agreements must deliver practical results, while Alice de Moraes Amorim, Programme Director of Brazil's COP30 Presidency, argued that adaptation should become a core part of development planning rather than remain a separate policy track.

Speakers also noted the economic consequences of climate risks. Kaveh Zahedi of the Food and Agriculture Organization stressed the importance of resilient crops, anticipatory action and accessible climate information for farmers, while Zambia's Stanley Nkhuwa called for climate risks to be embedded in national budgets and economic decision-making.

opinion & analysis



BY AMOS WEMANYA

Tripling adaptation finance is the floor, not the ceiling...

Antalya must turn the promise to triple adaptation finance into a measurable commitment backed by clear milestones and transparent accountability. That means establishing a dedicated negotiating space, agreeing on a $40 billion baseline for 2025, setting interim targets, and reporting openly on progress. And governments must recognise at least $120 billion a year by 2035 as a minimum, with public grants at the core of delivery.

As a powerful El Niño intensifies, Antalya must ensure that adaptation finance reflects the scale of the climate crisis, rather than the limits of what wealthy countries are willing to pay. The world is not climate-safe, and Africa's experience this year should leave little room for doubt.

Since December, floods across southern Africa have affected more than 2.36 million people. In Mozambique alone, more than 100,000 people were displaced, some for as long as two months. In March, flash floods killed at least 66 people in Nairobi, Kenya, just as drought devastated herds in northern parts of the country. One pastoralist told reporters he had lost 80 of his 100 animals.

Worse lies ahead. Forecasters have described a very strong El Niño, with temperatures in September crossing the 2°C threshold, and even as we debate the future of the planet here in Antalya, the World Meteorological Organization expects the phenomenon to intensify towards the end of the year. Southern Africa faces the prospect of drought and failed rains, while the Greater Horn of Africa braces for floods, landslides and disease outbreaks. The most severe consequences for food security may not emerge until 2027.

El Niño is a natural phenomenon, but the vulnerability it exposes is not. It is unfolding on a planet already heated by decades of greenhouse gas emissions, where communities have too often been denied the finance needed to prepare and protect themselves. And that's why, in the coming days and across negotiation rooms, adaptation finance must be a defining test of whether multilateralism can deliver for those most exposed to climate change.

The gap is the real measure

The numbers tell a stark story. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that developing countries will need $310–365 billion annually for adaptation by 2035, yet international public adaptation finance reached just $26 billion in 2023. That means estimated needs are already 12 to 14 times current flows.

Africa faces an especially severe shortfall. The continent needs roughly $70 billion a year but received only $14 billion in 2021–22. And around 57% of that funding came in the form of loans. African governments are already spending more from their constrained national budgets on adaptation than they receive in international support.

At COP26 in Glasgow, developed countries pledged to double adaptation finance to approximately $40 billion a year by 2025. By 2024, flows had reached $34.7 billion, still short of the target. Of the $101 billion in public climate finance provided that year, $68 billion was delivered as loans and just $29 billion as grants. Adaptation continues to receive only around a quarter of climate finance, despite longstanding commitments to balance support for adaptation and mitigation.

The pattern shows that finance remains far below what is needed, commitments are not being met on time, and too much of the support offered adds to the debt burdens of countries already struggling to cope with climate impacts.

Why tripling cannot be the ceiling

At COP30 in Brazil, governments agreed to "at least triple adaptation finance by 2035". The commitment matters, but its ambition must be judged against the scale of the need. Three issues are critical.

First, the commitment lacks an agreed baseline. Without a clear starting point, it is difficult to measure progress or hold governments accountable for delivery. African negotiators are right to insist on a baseline of $40 billion in 2025. On that basis, tripling would mean at least $120 billion annually by 2035.

Second, even $120 billion would cover only a fraction of the estimated requirement. It represents roughly one-third of UNEP's projected adaptation needs for developing countries. Treating that figure as the final destination would institutionalise a funding gap that is already severe, even as temperatures rise and the costs of adapting to their consequences mount.

Third, the track record gives little reason for confidence. Developed countries have yet to meet their earlier commitment to double adaptation finance. They cannot credibly celebrate a promise to triple support without first demonstrating that they can honour existing commitments.

The priority must be to secure, quantify and deliver the tripling commitment. But it must not become a ceiling on ambition. It should be a stepping stone towards meeting assessed adaptation needs, with the scale of finance determined by what vulnerable countries and communities require, rather than what wealthy-country treasuries consider politically convenient.

Build resilience, not debt

How adaptation finance is delivered matters as much as how much is provided. A loan to rebuild a road destroyed by floods leaves a vulnerable country paying for a crisis it did little to cause. When debt repayments compete with spending on hospitals, schools and essential public services, climate finance risks deepening the very vulnerability it is supposed to reduce.

The $120 billion annual floor should therefore be anchored in public, grant-based finance, in line with Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement. Private finance and other mobilised flows under Article 9.3 should supplement this support, not substitute for it. Debt cancellation should also be recognised as an important means of creating the fiscal space countries need to invest in adaptation.

Timing and accessibility matter, too. Finance must reach communities before disasters strike, not years after the damage has been done. In Nepal, a Green Climate Fund proposal to protect communities from glacial lake outburst floods took about seven years to secure approval. Communities cannot afford to wait seven years for protection from climate hazards that may materialise within months.

Antalya must therefore prioritise direct access to finance for national and local institutions, alongside stronger support for locally led adaptation. Funding arrangements should enable countries and communities to identify their own priorities and act on them, rather than forcing them through lengthy processes that delay urgent protection.

What Antalya must deliver

Antalya must turn the promise to triple adaptation finance into a measurable commitment backed by clear milestones and transparent accountability. That means establishing a dedicated negotiating space, agreeing on a $40 billion baseline for 2025, setting interim targets, and reporting openly on progress. And governments must recognise at least $120 billion a year by 2035 as a minimum, with public grants at the core of delivery.

But tripling must not become an excuse to sidestep the wider financing gap. Adaptation finance must continue to grow beyond this floor as developing countries' needs evolve and the consequences of global temperature overshoot intensify. The Global Goal on Adaptation must reinforce accountability by tracking the support actually delivered, without imposing additional conditions or disproportionate reporting burdens on vulnerable countries.

This is a matter of responsibility, not generosity. Countries whose wealth was built through fossil-fuel-driven development have an obligation to support those bearing the heaviest consequences of a crisis they did least to create. It is also a matter of shared interest. Heatwaves in Europe, wildfires in North America and devastating floods across continents demonstrate that climate impacts respect no borders.

Amos Wemanya is Senior Climate Advisor at Power Shift Africa.

BELEM GAVE US A PLAN... AND A PROBLEM

At COP30 in Brazil, governments pledged to at least triple adaptation finance by 2035. However, the commitment's ambition depends on a clear baseline, adequate funding and credible delivery. Using the $40 billion baseline proposed by African negotiators for 2025 would mean at least $120 billion annually by 2035. Yet this would cover only a fraction of developing countries' projected adaptation needs. Developed countries have also failed to meet their earlier commitment to double adaptation finance. The priority must be to deliver the pledge without treating it as a ceiling, ensuring finance reflects vulnerable countries' actual needs.



funding adaptation

Going gaga over GGA? Antalya should turn promises into action

LONG STORY, SHORT

Five of the best: What Africa wants on adaptation

1 **Finance that reaches the ground:** Turn the call to at least triple adaptation finance by 2035 into a credible implementation commitment, with clear baselines, milestones and accountability.

2 **Indicators that reflect African realities:** Make the 59 Belém Adaptation Indicators practical, transparent and relevant to different national circumstances, with robust methodologies and metadata.

3 **A seat at the decision-making table:** Ensure African experts, developing countries and least developed countries are meaningfully represented in the technical taskforce shaping adaptation measurements.

4 **A more coherent adaptation system:** Connect the Global Goal on Adaptation, the Baku Adaptation Roadmap and existing UN climate processes to reduce fragmentation and improve implementation.

5 **Dedicated support for vulnerable countries:** Mobilise the Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility and Adaptation Fund to provide accessible financial and technical support for adaptation implementation.

lest you forget

Belem gave us

59

indicators

At COP30 in Belém, Brazil, countries adopted 59 Belém Adaptation Indicators, concluding two years of technical work under the United Arab Emirates–Belém work programme. The indicators were intended to help countries assess progress towards global adaptation goals. But the agreement came with unresolved concerns; both developed and developing countries questioned the final list and the process through which last-minute revisions were introduced without adequate contributions from Parties.

When floodwaters sweep through communities, homes disappear, livelihoods are washed away and families are forced to leave behind everything they know. For thousands of people across Africa, this is no longer an occasional disaster, but a familiar reality of living with a changing climate.

During a single season in 2024, floods and landslides displaced more than 700,000 people across Kenya, Tanzania and Burundi. The devastation offered a stark reminder of what is at stake for a continent whose communities face mounting climate risks while often lacking the financial resources to prepare for them.

Against this backdrop, Africa approaches COP31 with a pressing question: can years of international climate negotiations finally deliver the support needed to help vulnerable communities adapt? The answer to that question depends on whether governments are willing to move beyond ambitious declarations and secure tangible progress on adaptation finance, national planning and the implementation of global climate commitments.

The challenge is considerable. Only 27 of Africa's 54 countries have submitted National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), according to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's NAP Central platform. These plans are essential for identifying climate risks and setting priorities, but preparing and implementing them requires technical expertise, institutional capacity and funding that many countries struggle to secure.

Meanwhile, international support for countries already experiencing climate-related losses remains far below the scale of identified needs. By September 2025, the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage had received $397.74 million against pledges totalling $822.06 million. Across 119 countries, funding requests in the pipeline amounted to $2.8 billion. These figures reveal a troubling disconnect between the immediate need for climate action and the uncertain flow of the resources required to deliver it.

Making adaptation count

At the heart of Africa's preparations for COP31 is the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), established under the Paris Agreement to strengthen countries' capacity to adapt to climate change and build resilience. The goal is important because adaptation is about more than responding to disasters after they happen. It means helping farmers withstand prolonged droughts, strengthening infrastructure against floods, improving early-warning systems, and ensuring that communities can cope with climate shocks without losing their livelihoods.

Yet agreeing on how to measure progress has proved difficult. At COP30 in Belém, Brazil, countries adopted 59 Belém Adaptation Indicators, concluding two years of technical work under the United Arab Emirates–Belém work programme. The indicators were intended to help countries assess progress towards global adaptation goals.

But the agreement came with unresolved concerns. Both developed and developing countries questioned the final list and the process through which last-minute revisions were introduced without adequate contributions from Parties.

The dispute continued at the June 2026 Bonn meetings, known as SB64, where talks stalled over the governance and composition of a technical taskforce tasked with developing methodologies and metadata for the indicators. Countries also remained divided over whether the GGA negotiating text should explicitly refer to the COP30 call to at least triple adaptation finance by 2035.

For Africa, these disagreements go to the heart of whether global adaptation policy will reflect the realities of vulnerable countries or produce targets that are difficult to implement on the ground. Indicators may help measure progress, but they cannot build a flood barrier, restore degraded farmland or finance climate-resilient infrastructure. Without adequate resources, measuring adaptation risks becoming an exercise in documenting vulnerability rather than reducing it.

The money question

The call to at least triple adaptation finance by 2035 is therefore emerging as one of the most consequential issues facing African negotiators in Antalya. Developing countries have long argued that adaptation commitments must be matched by predictable, accessible and adequate finance. For countries facing competing demands on limited public budgets, the difference between a pledge and money actually delivered can determine whether a climate plan becomes reality.

Africa's position is that the tripling commitment should be treated as an implementation obligation linked to the GGA and the wider New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance. Negotiators will need clarity on the baseline against which the increase is calculated, the milestones for measuring progress, the relationship with the wider climate finance goal, and the types of finance that will count towards delivery. They are also likely to stress developed countries' obligations under Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement to provide financial resources to assist developing countries with mitigation and adaptation.

The underlying concern is that adaptation goals cannot be separated from the means required to achieve them. If countries agree on what resilience should look like but fail to agree on how it will be financed, the most vulnerable communities risk being left with ambitious international targets and few practical means of meeting them.

Shaping resilience discourse

Finance is only part of the challenge, as Africa also wants its experiences and expertise to shape the international frameworks intended to guide adaptation. The proposed technical taskforce responsible for refining the Belém indicators will play an important role in determining how progress is assessed, and African countries therefore have a strong interest in securing meaningful representation for experts from developing countries and least developed countries.

Their participation matters because climate vulnerability is not experienced uniformly. Indicators that work in one national context may fail to capture the pressures facing countries with limited infrastructure, large agricultural populations or constrained public institutions.

African negotiators are expected to push for a party-led process, balanced regional representation and strong oversight by governments, with technical experts and UN agencies providing support rather than replacing countries' decision-making roles. The continent will also seek stronger links between the GGA, the Baku Adaptation Roadmap and the wider UN climate adaptation architecture.

Better coordination could help translate global agreements into national action, while making it easier to identify and address the political, technical and financial barriers that prevent countries from accessing adaptation support.

Climate funds, including the Green Climate Fund, the Global Environment Facility and the Adaptation Fund, will also come under pressure to provide dedicated support for developing countries implementing the United Arab Emirates Framework for Global Climate Resilience and its indicators.

A longer road to climate justice

For Africa, COP31 is both a negotiating challenge and an opportunity to define what successful climate action should mean for a continent already experiencing its consequences. The immediate priorities are how to protect the gains made on adaptation and loss and damage, secure credible financing commitments, ensure African experts help shape the indicators, and strengthen the institutions that connect global agreements with local implementation.

The stakes extend beyond Antalya. Addis Ababa is scheduled to host COP32 in 2027, giving Africa an opportunity to build towards a stronger and more unified negotiating position.

But the credibility of that ambition will depend on what happens first.

For communities displaced by floods, farmers confronting unpredictable rainfall and governments struggling to finance resilience, the measure of progress will not be the number of decisions adopted at a summit, but whether those decisions help people withstand the next disaster, recover more quickly, and face a future in which climate shocks no longer threaten to erase years of development.

That is the real test awaiting COP31.

farm to fork

ag·ri·cul·ture (noun): 'the science or occupation of farming'. (Alas, fight over definitions is now settled)

As a dedicated UN climate work programme on agriculture approaches its conclusion at COP31, African countries are pushing for a shift from dialogue to delivery, with smallholder farmers, food security and adaptation at the centre, but beneath the technical discussions lies a deeper disagreement over how climate action in agriculture should be framed and defined. Seriously?

For millions of farmers around the world, and especially in Africa, the changing climate is felt, not in negotiating rooms, but in the fields as rains that arrive late, crops that wither under extreme heat, and floods that wash away a season's work. And, as we have seen in recent days, when harvests fail, the consequences reach far beyond the farm, threatening household incomes, food supplies, and the livelihoods of entire rural communities.

These pressures are placing agriculture at the heart of Africa's climate priorities as negotiators square it out in negotiations rooms.

For African countries, these meetings carry particular significance; the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Security (SSJWA), the only dedicated agriculture and food security workstream under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), is due to conclude at COP31. Parties must now decide what comes next for international cooperation on climate-resilient agriculture and food security.

The outcome could shape whether the next phase of climate action delivers practical support to the people who produce food, or leaves them navigating worsening climate risks with inadequate resources.

Agriculture remains central to livelihoods, rural economies and food security across Africa, but much of the continent's farming is rain-fed, leaving smallholders particularly exposed to droughts, floods, heat stress and unpredictable rainfall. For these farmers, adaptation is the difference between sustaining a harvest and losing a year's income.

From workshops to action

Established to strengthen the implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security, the SSJWA has spent four years facilitating discussions, sharing knowledge, and identifying opportunities to connect countries' needs with available support. Its work has included technical workshops, the synthesis of submissions from governments and observers, and an online portal intended to facilitate knowledge exchange and match implementation needs with funding opportunities.

But as the programme approaches its conclusion, we now must confront the question of how these discussions can translate into sustained action on the ground.

At SB64, Parties held the second of two mandated workshops focused on identifying needs and accessing the means of implementation for climate action in agriculture and food security. A "World Café" exchange brought farmers, Indigenous Peoples, women and young people into discussions about the challenges and opportunities facing food producers. Parties also agreed to continue considering reports from earlier work, including a workshop on systemic and holistic approaches to agriculture, food systems and food security, alongside a synthesis of activities undertaken by UNFCCC bodies and financial institutions.

These discussions will feed into COP31, and Parties are now expected to consider the programme's progress and outcomes and determine the future direction of agriculture and food security negotiations. For African countries, the priority is to ensure that the conclusion of the SSJWA marks a transition towards implementation, rather than another cycle of consultations and procedural delays.

What does 'agriculture' mean?

Beneath the technical discussions lies a deeper disagreement over how climate action in agriculture should be framed. Developing countries have sought to preserve the programme's



emphasis on "agriculture and food security", adaptation and the means of implementation. Some developed countries, meanwhile, have pushed for greater attention to broader "food systems" or "agrifood systems" approaches.

Although these concepts overlap, the distinction matters in climate negotiations. A broader food-systems approach could encompass emissions across the entire value chain, from production and processing to transport and consumption. Developing countries fear that an excessive focus on emissions reduction could shift attention away from adaptation, food security and the financial support farmers need to cope with climate change.

For African smallholders, whose contribution to global emissions is limited but whose exposure to climate impacts is substantial, negotiators argue that climate action should reflect national circumstances and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

The concern is not that emissions should be ignored, but that mitigation objectives should not overshadow the urgent need to protect livelihoods, strengthen resilience, and end hunger.

Who pays for it?

Finance remains one of the most persistent barriers to turning agricultural climate commitments into practical outcomes. Developing countries are calling for new, additional, predictable and grant-based funding, alongside technology transfer and capacity-building support. They also want simpler access to climate finance, particularly through the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund and other funding channels.

For farmers operating on small plots with limited savings, complex application procedures and financing arrangements that create additional debt are putting essential support beyond reach. African priorities therefore include funding that reaches smallholder producers directly, especially women, who play a central role in food production but often face barriers to land, finance, technology and decision-making.

The debate also extends to the type of agricultural practices that international climate support should promote. Developing-country Parties have promotoed agroecology, food sovereignty and locally led approaches, while cautioning against treating these as interchangeable with contested models such as climate-smart agriculture, certain biotechnologies, or technology-intensive farming systems.

For advocates of agroecology, the approach offers a way to build resilience through locally adapted practices while supporting biodiversity, healthier soils, food security and rural livelihoods. African negotiators are also expected to argue that smallholders, pastoralists, fisherfolk, Indigenous Peoples, local communities and young people must be involved in designing climate interventions, rather than being treated simply as recipients of assistance.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

5 priorities for African agriculture in Antalya

1 **Secure a clear successor to the SSJWA:** Agree on an ambitious pathway for agriculture and food security under the UNFCCC, shifting from dialogue and knowledge-sharing towards implementation.

2 **Keep adaptation and food security central:** Protect the programme's focus on resilience, food justice and ending hunger, while respecting national circumstances and differentiated responsibilities.

3 **Deliver accessible climate finance:** Mobilise predictable, additional, grant-based funding, technology transfer and capacity-building support, with simpler access for developing countries and smallholders.

4 **Put farmers at the centre:** Recognise women farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, Indigenous Peoples, young people and local communities as decision-makers and co-designers of climate action.

5 **Back locally led, resilient food production:** Support agroecology, food sovereignty and community-led approaches that strengthen biodiversity, livelihoods and food security. Exercise caution with carbon markets and debt-creating finance where they fail to benefit smallholders or undermine local food systems.

just transition

The battle for jobs, energy access and industrial growth

African countries are pushing to ensure that the global shift to a low-carbon economy delivers development, decent work and economic opportunity... not new burdens for vulnerable communities

Let's start this article with a question: In the transition to a low-carbon economy, who gets the jobs, who controls the resources, and can economic development keep pace with the demands of climate action?

We ask these questions because they lie at the heart of Africa's approach to a just transition. Across the continent, the shift towards cleaner energy and climate-resilient economies presents significant opportunities. Renewable energy is expanding electricity access while investment in manufacturing, mineral processing and new technologies is creating jobs and helping African countries capture greater value from their natural resources.

But those opportunities are not guaranteed. Without adequate finance, technology transfer and deliberate industrial policies, the transition could leave countries dependent on exporting raw materials while importing higher-value products and technologies.

For African negotiators, therefore, the challenge is to ensure that climate action supports the continent's development ambitions, including poverty reduction, industrialisation, decent work, universal energy access and economic resilience.

The Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP) has become an important arena for advancing this vision, and at COP31 the focus has now turned from defining a just transition to determining how international cooperation can help make it happen.

A just transition is often discussed in terms of workers moving away from high-emissions industries towards cleaner alternatives. For Africa, however, the concept reaches much further as it encompasses the transformation of entire economies and societies, ensuring that climate action does not deepen existing inequalities or undermine countries' development priorities.

That means creating decent jobs, expanding access to affordable energy, strengthening social protection, and investing in industries that support long-term prosperity.

It also means recognising work that is often overlooked. As climate change intensifies, communities are already investing labour in restoring ecosystems, managing water resources, adapting agricultural practices, and protecting public health. Much of this work is informal, community-based or unpaid, but it still plays a critical role in reducing vulnerability.

At COP30 last year, Parties agreed to establish a Just Transition Mechanism (JTM), opening a new phase in efforts to strengthen international cooperation. The next challenge is to establish how the mechanism will operate, what functions it will perform, and how it will support countries and communities facing the practical costs of economic transformation.

Ambition meets implementation

At SB64, Parties devoted considerable attention to the terms of reference for reviewing the JTWP, including its scope, objectives and effectiveness. Discussions also continued on the proposed JTM, focusing on governance, functions and implementation arrangements. These were accompanied by a sixth dialogue on just transition and industry, as well as informal intersessional discussions convened under the Australian COP31 presidency.

Although the process advanced, negotiations remained heavily focused on procedural questions, including the review of the work programme and the proposed mapping exercise.

A deeper disagreement concerns what the mechanism should actually do. Developing countries have generally called for an instrument capable of supporting implementation through finance, capacity-building, technology transfer and other means of support, but many developed countries have favoured a more facilitative approach centred on cooperation and sharing experiences.

For African countries, the distinction is fundamental. Dialogue can help governments exchange ideas, identify challenges and learn from different experiences, but countries facing substantial financing constraints also need resources to build infrastructure, develop industries, retrain workers and protect communities affected by economic change.

The central question is therefore is whether the mechanism will have the institutional arrangements and practical support needed to respond to the development realities of the Global South.

Value of Africa's resources

One of Africa's most significant just transition priorities is ensuring that the global energy shift creates opportunities for domestic industrial development. The expansion of renewable energy and electric mobility is increasing the importance of minerals and the supply chains needed to manufacture clean technologies. African countries possess resources that are important to these industries, but extracting minerals alone does not guarantee broad-based economic benefits.

African negotiators therefore have an interest in ensuring that the JTM supports green industrialisation, beneficiation of transition minerals, and the development of domestic manufacturing capacity.

Countries need affordable financing, access to technology, skilled workers and the capacity to develop competitive industries. Trade policy presents another challenge, as measures such as the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) are already affecting the competitiveness of carbon-intensive exports and influencing the costs of industrial development.

African countries are seeking space to discuss the implications of climate-related trade measures, particularly where these could constrain exports, reduce fiscal revenues, or narrow the policy options available to developing economies.

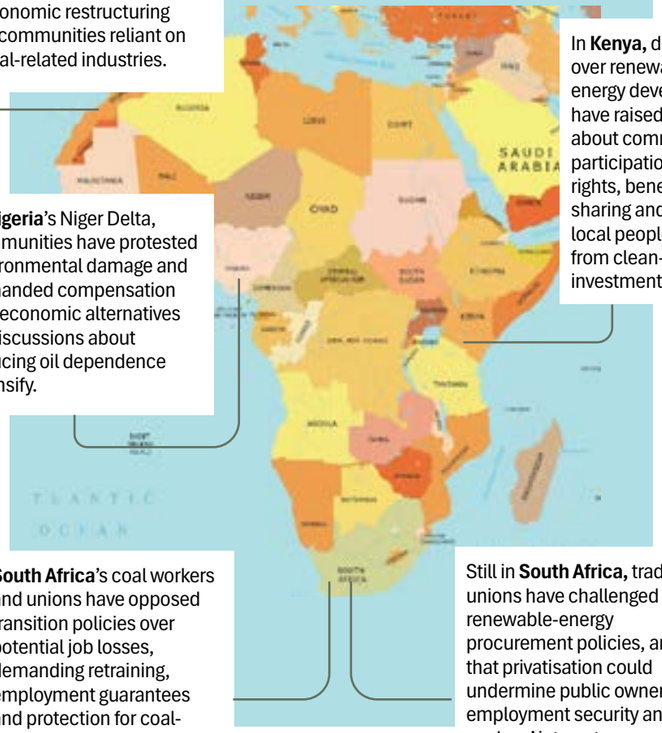
For the continent, a just transition must therefore consider not only how industries reduce emissions, but also whether countries have a fair opportunity to industrialise and participate in emerging clean-technology supply chains.

HOTSPOTS THAT TELL A STORY

In **Morocco,** the transition toward renewable energy has raised concerns about employment security and economic restructuring in communities reliant on coal-related industries.

In **Nigeria**'s Niger Delta, communities have protested environmental damage and demanded compensation and economic alternatives as discussions about reducing oil dependence intensify.

In **Kenya,** debates over renewable-energy development have raised concerns about community participation, land rights, benefit-sharing and whether local people benefit from clean-energy investments.



South Africa's coal workers and unions have opposed transition policies over potential job losses, demanding retraining, employment guarantees and protection for coal-dependent communities.

Still in **South Africa,** trade unions have challenged renewable-energy procurement policies, arguing that privatisation could undermine public ownership, employment security and workers' interests.

Priorities for a just transition

1 **Give the Just Transition Mechanism clear governance**: Define governance arrangements that ensure meaningful representation of developed and developing countries, alongside relevant observer constituencies.

2 **Agree on functions and implementation:** Clarify what the mechanism will do and how it will support countries beyond dialogue, mapping and knowledge-sharing.

3 **Secure the future of the work programme:** Conclude the JTWP review, agree on the mapping exercise, and establish a clear relationship between the programme and the mechanism.

4 **Make green industrialisation a priority:** Support local manufacturing, transition-mineral processing, economic diversification, and decent job creation so African countries can capture greater value from clean-energy supply chains.

5 **Match transition plans with real support:** Secure adequate finance, technology transfer, capacity-building and social protection, while creating space to address the implications of climate-related trade measures such as CBAM.

mitigation

Africa's mitigation challenge, and why these talks must turn ambition into development



At the centre of mitigation negotiations here is the Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme, established in 2021 to accelerate ambition and implementation during this decade

The global transition to a low-emissions future presents a difficult balancing act for African governments, which are being forced to respond to the climate crisis while expanding electricity access, creating jobs, building industries and improving living standards for millions of people.

The challenge is that these priorities cannot be separated. Countries struggling to provide reliable electricity to households and businesses are also considering not only how to reduce emissions, but also how to finance new energy infrastructure, strengthen power grids, and support economic growth.

The Paris Agreement's first Global Stocktake (GST) confirmed that global climate action remains substantially off track. It called for deep, rapid and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and a transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly and equitable manner.

The GST also identified key energy priorities, including tripling global renewable energy capacity and doubling the average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030.

But translating these ambitions into action presents different challenges for different countries. Across Africa, rising energy demand, persistent electricity-access deficits, inadequate infrastructure and limited investment threaten to slow progress. Meanwhile, many economies remain dependent on fossil-fuel revenues and employment.

For African countries, mitigation must therefore support development, energy security, industrialisation and economic diversification.

Between ambition and action

The challenge facing COP31 is how to ensure that countries have the resources, technology and institutional capacity to deliver them. The 2025 NDC Synthesis Report indicates that a large majority of parties that submitted new nationally determined contributions (NDCs) considered the first Global Stocktake, including its mitigation outcomes, when preparing their climate plans. This suggests that the GST has influenced national climate planning, yet significant gaps remain between current action and the emissions reductions required to keep the 1.5°C temperature limit within reach.

For African countries, closing these gaps will require international cooperation that recognises differences in national circumstances and development needs Renewable energy expansion, improved energy efficiency, modernised electricity grids, energy storage and clean cooking offer opportunities to reduce emissions while improving living standards. However, these solutions require substantial investment and support, particularly where infrastructure remains underdeveloped.

At the centre of the negotiations is the Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme (MWP), established in 2021 to accelerate mitigation ambition and implementation during this decade. Designed to complement the Global Stocktake, the programme provides a platform for countries to exchange experiences, explore mitigation solutions and connect projects with potential sources of finance and technical assistance.

Its approach is deliberately facilitative, non-prescriptive and non-punitive, reflecting the nationally determined nature of countries' climate commitments.

With its current mandate running through 2026, the programme's future has become a key issue for COP31.

At SB64, Parties reviewed the programme's effectiveness and considered whether it should continue beyond this year. Discussions exposed a fundamental disagreement over how far the MWP should go in driving implementation. Developed countries, the Alliance of Small Island States and several other parties supported extending and strengthening the programme, including closer links with the GST, multi-year thematic work and a more explicit role in supporting mitigation ambition and implementation.

But African and Arab negotiating groups, the Like-Minded Developing Countries and other developing-country Parties said the programme must retain its existing mandate and cautioned against using it to introduce new mitigation obligations, benchmarks or expectations beyond countries' nationally determined commitments.

For African negotiators, the future of the MWP will be judged by whether it helps countries implement their climate plans. One priority is strengthening the programme's investment-focused events so that countries can move from identifying opportunities to developing projects capable of attracting appropriate support. This means bringing financial institutions, multilateral development banks, the UNFCCC Financial Mechanism and the Technology Mechanism more systematically into the process.

However, African countries also want to ensure that access to support is not restricted to projects that are already commercially attractive to investors. Investments in renewable energy will support local manufacturing, mineral processing, transport electrification and other productive industries, while expanding electricity access will help businesses grow, improve public services and create employment.

But capturing these benefits will require integrated strategies that extend beyond individual renewable energy projects to include electricity grids, storage, energy efficiency, clean cooking and industrial development.

African participation in these decisions will also matter. Governments, regional institutions, technical experts, civil society, Indigenous Peoples, workers, women and young people all have a stake in shaping the transition.

Five African priorities for mitigation

1 **Continue the Mitigation Work Programme:** Secure an extension of the MWP beyond 2026 while preserving its facilitative, non-prescriptive and non-punitive character and respecting nationally determined commitments.

2 **Put finance and implementation first:** Address barriers to delivery through improved access to grant-based and highly concessional finance, technology transfer, capacity-building and project preparation.

3 **Turn opportunities into investable projects:** Strengthen investment-focused events and partnerships with climate funds, development banks and technology institutions without excluding projects that have substantial public benefits but limited commercial returns.

4 **Put energy access at the centre:** Support renewable energy, stronger electricity grids, energy storage, clean cooking, efficiency improvements and electrification of productive sectors.

5 **Connect mitigation with industrialisation:** Promote integrated strategies for local manufacturing, mineral processing, job creation and economic diversification so African countries capture greater value from the global clean-energy transition.

BRIEFLY SPEAKING

For African countries, mitigation must support development, energy security, industrialisation and economic diversification.

letter from nairobi

BY JAMES KAHONGEH

'Want to see the effects of climate change? Look inside tea cups of Kenya

A storm that started deep in the Pacific Ocean swept across East Africa's grazing field and found its way into an ordinary cup of tea. While it is expected that the pressure on Kenya's dairy industry will ease as soon as the rains arrive, climate projections show that extreme weather events will continue to grow in frequency in the coming years, destabilising not only the dairy sector but agriculture as a whole



We are tea country, quite literally. Kenya grows and exports some of the finest tea to the world. For millions of us, tea is more than a beverage; it is the fabric of our culture, a form of politeness, and a lifestyle. Serving tea is perhaps the warmest gesture Kenyans will extend to guests. Which explains why, across the East African country, the morning, late afternoon and hours before bed are never complete without a cup of tea.

Except that our tea isn't the same anymore. A key ingredient has disappeared: milk. Over the last three months, this commodity has become harder to find and more expensive to buy.

But there's more to the milk shortage than our tea thinning. In rural and urban Kenya, milk is a core part of the daily routine. It is consumed whole, is an ingredient in various dishes, and a livelihood for thousands of farmers in the Kenyan highlands.

So, where did our milk go?

The story began in June this year, when the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) announced that El Niño conditions would emerge between June and August 2026, with an 80 percent probability, rising to 90 percent through the remainder of the year. Today, Kenya and most of East Africa are smack in the middle of this extreme weather phenomenon that's expected to peak as we head into 2027.

El Niño connection

El Niño is a climate condition associated with changes in Pacific Ocean temperatures that influence weather patterns around the world. In East Africa, it is often associated with heavier-than-normal rainfall during the October-to-December short rains, with effects varying by season and location. Earlier this year, government officials attributed the milk shortage in the country to drought preceding the anticipated El Niño rains, with the lack of rainfall undermining pasture availability and forcing farmers to rely heavily on purchased feeds.

In many locales, many farmers expect El Niño rains. What many of them don't know is that the immediate challenge of the prolonged dry conditions has as much to do with the phenomenon as the delayed rains.

In recent years, Kenya has experienced both destructive flooding and periods of inadequate rainfall as climate impacts intensify. Heavy rains have damaged farms, disrupted transport and destroyed stored fodder, while prolonged dry spells have left pasture depleted and water scarce. Both have an immediate and direct impact on dairy, a sensitive sector that depends on the availability of feeds and whose profit margins are thin. What and how much a cow eats and drinks determines milk production. When pasture is plentiful and water is readily available, dairy cows produce more milk. When the grass and other herbage dry up, farmers are forced to find alternatives, often turning to commercial feeds that are often out of reach for smallholder farmers, who form the backbone of Kenya's dairy industry.

Animal feeds account for 55 to 70 percent of the total milk production costs. Expensive livestock feeds force farmers to make the difficult choice between spending more on these supplements or accepting lower milk yields.

This has been the case across more than a dozen milk-producing counties, including Nyeri, Kiambu, Nyandarua, Meru, and Nakuru, where degraded natural pasture and expensive animal feed has pushed milk production costs up.

To ease pressure on farmers, the Government of Kenya proposed several measures, including temporarily lifting duty on maize imports for animal feed in June, providing the much-needed relief to them. To sustain milk production, however, such interventions must be accompanied by longer-term measures to help farmers withstand climate-induced extreme weather conditions.

The Kenya Dairy Board has weighed in on the shortage, painting an even grimmer picture. According to statistics from the government agency, formal milk deliveries to processors fell from 84.4 million litres in June 2026 to 81.3 million litres in July. The supply would further decline to 75 million litres in August, putting pressure on processors and retailers attempting to maintain regular supplies to their customers.

By September, a 500-millilitre packet of fresh milk rose by between Sh3 and Sh5, with some brands selling at Sh10 more. Still, the commodity flew off the shelves in a month when common brands disappeared. Other less common brands emerged before they, too, disappeared. By early October, customers were fortunate even to find powdered milk at the local store.

For three months now, supermarkets across Nairobi have been restricting the number of packets customers can purchase, mostly capped at three packets per buyer. For many shoppers, this has been an awkward experience to navigate.

For middle-class shoppers in Nairobi, an increase by a few shillings is seemingly negligible... until the cumulative budget line for milk destabilises the monthly shopping basket in a country where food price inflation has been a major talking point for the last few years. Some family friends have responded to this shortage by cutting down on milk consumption, and others by expunging it from their shopping basket altogether.

While households have felt the pinch, it's small businesses, especially hotels and tea vendors, who have had the most significant dent on their livelihoods. When suppliers raise prices or deliver less milk than usual, traders must either absorb the additional cost or increase menu prices, the latter which has negative consequences on businesses.

This is a challenge that extends beyond individual farms, businesses, and households. It's a climate issue as well as a supply chain issue. When cooperatives and processors receive less raw milk, distributors have smaller quantities to deliver, and retailers struggle to keep their shelves stocked. Consumers are forced to pay more for what's available or go without the commodity.

For now, the test before Kenyan and East African farmers is to survive the period between the current depleted pasture and the return of the rains and fodder.

A storm that started deep in the Pacific Ocean swept across East Africa's grazing field and found its way into an ordinary cup of tea.

While it is expected that the pressure on Kenya's dairy industry will ease as soon as the rains arrive, climate projections show that extreme weather events will continue to grow in frequency in the coming years, destabilising not only the dairy sector but agriculture as a whole.

James Kahongeh leads media and communications at Power Shift Africa.



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lies and deceit

What about China? Five types of disinformation, and how to spot red flags that trigger climate inaction

The fossil fuel industry and lobby invented and used the carbon footprint approach to blame individual consumption instead of admitting that the problem is about the global supply of energy. While in Antalya beware of the latest approach by the deniers, which involves blaming climate scientists for not communicating effectively and not making the public and politicians aware of the true risks

We're living in an age of constant information: tweets, headlines, reels, reports. It's everywhere, all the time. But here's the challenge: not all of it is true. Some of it is intentionally misleading. A lot is AI-generated. From outright climate denial to more subtle greenwashing, disinformation is not just a digital nuisance — it's a real threat.

Disinformation is false, fabricated or manipulated information that intends to deceive, while misinformation is false or misleading information shared without the intent to deceive.

AI is playing an increasingly powerful role in how information and disinformation spread. AI bots are software programmes designed to simulate human behaviour online. They can generate content, post on social media, chat with users and operate at massive scale. AI tools can create realistic-looking fake articles, images, even deepfakes of experts. Bots can amplify these messages to manipulate public opinion, especially during key moments such as elections or climate summits.

Michael Mann, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, has broken down climate disinformation into five key groups. Here's how to spot those five forms of disinformation and counter them with scientific evidence.



1 **Downplay:** Minimising the seriousness of the climate crisis involves classic comments such as "it's not that bad" or "climate change is natural — it's always happened". Downplaying creates complacency. It dulls public urgency, delays policy action and makes the problem seem less immediate than it is. But science shows that this has been the warmest decade on record and global temperatures will continue to increase every year due to greenhouse gas emissions. In 2025 there were 157 incidences of extreme weather around the world with significant consequences for more than 100 million people.

2 **Delay:** This type of disinformation acknowledges climate change as real but argues that action can wait. Comments include "we should wait until the technology is better", "let's not rush into drastic policies", "innovation will solve this eventually" or "we need more research before acting". Delay equals denial in slow motion. It gives the illusion of concern while justifying inaction, letting emissions continue and narrowing the window for meaningful action. It also means that the public and politicians ignore the urgency of climate change and are not preparing. For example, many countries are not even planning to adapt to the changes that are already occurring, such as sea level rise, more frequent heatwaves, drought, wildfires, floods and storms.

3 **Deflection:** Deflection shifts attention away from systemic solutions and toward other issues, often to avoid responsibility or blame someone else. You might hear people say things like "individuals need to do more, stop blaming companies", "until big polluters act, nothing we do matters", "aren't there more urgent problems to focus on?" or even "what about China?". Deflection diverts energy from collective action and structural change. It stalls progress and divides public support. The science clearly shows that the world must decarbonise the entire economy and reach a point by 2050 at which no additional greenhouse gases enter the atmosphere. So every country and every company has to change, and as quickly as possible.

4 **Division:** Division aims to create distrust and polarise the conversation. This turns climate action into a political or cultural wedge. You might hear phrases like "climate change is just a leftist agenda", "scientists are part of a global conspiracy", "they want to take away your freedom in the name of climate", "net zero will make your energy prices go up" and the classic "they're just trying to control you". Division undermines trust in science, institutions and each other. It fuels tribalism, making cooperation harder when it's needed most. The fossil fuel industry and lobby invented and used the carbon footprint approach to blame individual consumption instead of admitting that the problem is about the global supply of energy. The latest approach involves blaming climate scientists for not communicating effectively and not making the public and politicians aware of the true risks.

5 **Doomism:** Doomism promotes the idea that the climate crisis is already beyond saving, leading to apathy instead of action. You might hear comments such as "we're past the tipping point, it's hopeless", "the planet is doomed no matter what we do", "why bother trying?" and "it's too late, nothing we do matters". Doomism paralyses people with despair, just as much as denial. It discourages solutions, undermines collective action, and hands victory to the status quo. Yet there are so many positive solutions that exist which not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also make peoples lives better. A global switch to renewable energy creates local energy security, reduces energy costs and reduces harmful air pollution generated by burning fossil fuels. Getting people to switch to more plant-based diets makes everyone more healthy, reduces healthcare costs and reduces deforestation.

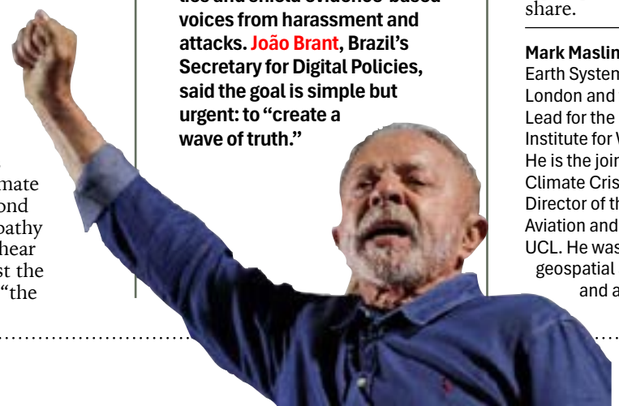
How to spot red flags

Encouraging critical thinking is a powerful antidote to disinformation. Certain red flags can help you spot disinformation that might be misleading or wrong. If a post is designed to provoke outrage or fear, take a moment before reacting. Emotion is often used to bypass critical thinking. Messages that pressure you to "share now" or "spread this before it's deleted" are classic manipulation tactics. Does an article cite reliable data or expert opinion? If there aren't any credible sources, avoid amplifying it. And if there's no transparency about the source, proceed with caution and be wary of anonymous authors. If you spot even one of these signs, pause, verify and think before you share.

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GLOBAL INITIATIVE FOR INFORMATION INTEGRITY ON CLIMATE CHANGE

At COP30 in Belém, Brazil last year, leaders warned that the race to avert catastrophic global heating is being sabotaged by a surge of climate disinformation. The falsehoods, spreading faster than ever online, threaten to derail fragile progress on climate action. Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (below) set the tone at the opening session, declaring that the battle for truth has become just as critical as the fight to cut emissions. COP30 must mark "a new defeat for climate denialists," he said. Twelve nations, including Brazil, Canada, France, Germany and Spain, signed onto the first-ever Declaration on Information Integrity on Climate Change, pledging to fight back against the flood of false content and protect those on the frontlines of truth: environmental journalists, scientists and researchers. The declaration, unveiled under the Global Initiative for Information Integrity on Climate Change, calls for concrete steps to dismantle networks of climate lies and shield evidence-based voices from harassment and attacks. João Brant, Brazil's Secretary for Digital Policies, said the goal is simple but urgent: to "create a wave of truth."



renewable energy

The bright, the breezy, and the flowy: How Antalya can help Africa plug into planet power

A new report on energy shows that, while Africa is ready for a renewable energy future, it is being pulled back by inadequate finance, poor industrial policy support, and scant implementation mechanisms, and Antalya should bring us all closer to a future where renewable energy powers industries, creates decent jobs, strengthens energy sovereignty, and improves people's lives



BY CHRISTIAN HOUNKANNOU

As COP31 kicks off, I have found myself reflecting on a question that comes up repeatedly in conversations with policymakers, campaigners, researchers, and communities across Africa: if our continent is blessed with some of the world's richest renewable energy resources, why are we still struggling to deliver reliable, affordable, and clean energy for all?

It is a question I have reflected on frequently while working on the African Renewable Industry Readiness Index (A-RIRI) at Power Shift Africa, which assesses how prepared 10 African countries are to build inclusive renewable energy economies. And I am now convinced that Africa's greatest challenge is not its resource endowment, but its readiness to turn that potential into shared prosperity.

Working through the findings, it occured to me that Africa does not have a renewable energy resource problem. We have abundant sunlight and wind, extensive geothermal resources, massive hydropower potential, and rich deposits of critical minerals. What we face, therefore, is a readiness challenge.

The countries making the most progress are not necessarily those with the largest resource endowment, but those creating the policies, institutions, infrastructure, skills, and investment environments needed to turn renewable energy potential into real benefits for people.

Too often, discussions about Africa's energy future focus on what the continent has. Less attention is paid to what it takes to transform those resources into jobs, industries, economic opportunities, and better lives. At COP31, that should be the real conversation.

What gives me hope

One of the most encouraging lessons from the A-RIRI findings is that the energy transition is already happening across Africa. I see it in communities gaining electricity through solar home systems long before a grid connection arrives. I see it in entrepreneurs using renewable energy to power businesses and reduce operating costs. And I see it in countries investing in geothermal energy, electric mobility, and local manufacturing.

In Uganda, solar home systems and mini-grids are extending electricity access beyond the reach of conventional infrastructure. In Nigeria, where unreliable electricity has forced households and businesses to rely heavily on diesel generators for decades, growing numbers of people are turning to rooftop solar and battery systems because they are more reliable and affordable.

These examples remind us that the transition is not simply about technology, but people finding practical solutions to improve their lives. And perhaps that is one of the most important lessons for policymakers: people do not embrace renewable energy because it is green. They embrace it because it works.

Energy democracy matters

Another lesson that stood out is that the most successful energy transitions are those that put people at the centre. When communities have access to affordable and reliable energy, the benefits extend far beyond electricity itself. Schools function better, health facilities provide improved services, farmers increase productivity, small businesses grow, and young people find new economic opportunities.

This is why energy democracy is not a luxury but a necessity. A renewable energy transition that merely changes the source of electricity without changing who benefits from it will not deliver the transformation Africa needs. The goal should not be to replicate existing inequalities with cleaner technologies, but to build energy systems that distribute opportunities more fairly, particularly for women, young people, rural communities, and those who have historically been left behind.

The power of infrastructure

If there is one challenge that appears repeatedly across the A-RIRI findings, it is infrastructure. Many countries are investing in renewable energy generation, but transmission networks, distribution systems, and storage infrastructure are not expanding at the same pace. As a result, renewable energy investments are not always translated into reliable and affordable power for households and industries.

Solar panels and wind turbines alone are not enough. Without strong and modern electricity grids, countries cannot fully capture the benefits of renewable energy investments, attract industries that require dependable power, or build energy systems capable of supporting long-term economic growth.

Kenya's experience demonstrates what is possible when renewable deployment is accompanied by broader investments in infrastructure and planning. We need to invest not only in power generation, but also in the systems that allow that power to reach people and businesses.

More value from the transition

Perhaps the finding that concerns me most is the gap between Africa's resource wealth and its industrial position in the global energy transition.

Across the continent, countries continue to export raw materials while importing many of the technologies needed for



renewable energy deployment. At a time when demand for critical minerals is growing rapidly, there is a real risk that Africa once again becomes primarily a supplier of raw materials while value addition, manufacturing, technology development, and job creation occur elsewhere. That would represent a missed opportunity of historic proportions.

The energy transition should not simply help Africa produce clean energy, but to also build industries, process its own minerals, strengthen domestic supply chains, and create decent jobs for millions of young people entering the labour market each year.

When I think about success, I do not only think about the number of megawatts installed, but about factories powered by renewable energy, locally manufactured technologies, and African engineers, technicians, and entrepreneurs driving innovation from within the continent.

Christian Hounkannou is the Energy Campaigner and Coordinator at Power Shift Africa.

Getting the demands right at COP

This is where the findings of the A-RIRI report become particularly important. The assessment shows that Africa's challenge lies in the gap between readiness and implementation, so what should Antalya deliver for the world?

1 **End persistent constraints related to finance, technology transfer, and technical capacity.** COP31 should therefore deliver a Just Transition Mechanism that provides meaningful support for implementation, helping countries move from planning to action.

2 **Plug gaps in industrial readiness across many countries.** COP31 must place green industrialisation at the centre of the conversation, supporting local manufacturing, mineral beneficiation, skills development, and value addition so that African countries capture a larger share of the economic benefits of the transition.

3 **Energy access remains a defining development challenge.** Expanding access to affordable, reliable, and clean energy must remain a central objective of global climate action, particularly in regions where millions remain underserved.

4 **Promote the importance of resilience and social inclusion.** Adaptation, community livelihoods, and local participation must be recognised as essential components of a just transition, not secondary considerations.

5 **Without affordable and accessible finance, the pace of transformation will remain too slow.** International partners and financial institutions must move beyond rhetoric and help address the financing barriers that continue to constrain African ambitions.

people & power

Why the social fabric of adaptation should be knit with Africa's special circumstances



Formal recognition of Africa's particular circumstances under the Paris Agreement remains unresolved, despite extensive scientific evidence documenting the continent's exposure and constrained adaptive capacity. While the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement framework provides specific recognition and provisions for the special circumstances of least developed countries and small island developing States, it has not extended comparable formal recognition to Africa's continent-wide special needs and circumstances

BY AMOS WEMANYA AND PETER WANYANGI

Africa's request for recognition of its "special needs and circumstances" has remained unresolved for a decade now. First raised at COP21 in Paris in 2015, the issue was formally brought forward as a proposed agenda item at COP24 in Katowice in 2018, resubmitted in 2019, and again in 2022, when Zambia proposed it on behalf of the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) at CMA4 in Sharm El Sheikh.

The matter was considered through consultations at CMA5 in Dubai in 2023 and further discussed during COP29 presidency consultations in Baku. Tanzania subsequently carried the issue forward ahead of COP30 in Belém.

As official AGN records show, Parties have continued to face blockages in concluding the matter. At COP30 in 2025, the Presidency proposed a dedicated summit on the matter, to be convened in Africa in 2027.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change fourth assessment report (IPCC AR4), published in 2007, has already given Africa its own dedicated vulnerability chapter. Yet formal recognition of Africa's particular circumstances under the Paris Agreement remains unresolved, despite extensive scientific evidence documenting the continent's exposure and constrained adaptive capacity. While the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement framework provides specific recognition and provisions for the special circumstances of least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS), it has not extended comparable formal recognition to Africa's continent-wide special needs and circumstances.

Beneath this stalemate lies a fundamental question: what does solidarity actually require, of the multilateral system and of society itself, since science has already told us who is most vulnerable and why? Special circumstances recognition is not, therefore, an end in itself. It is a test of whether the principle of solidarity is applied consistently; that those with greater capacity support those with greater vulnerability, at every scale where that vulnerability lies.

The science is more precise than the politics around it usually allows. In the IPCC framework, vulnerability is shaped by exposure, sensitivity and adaptive capacity, not income alone. The IPCC's sixth assessment report (IPCC AR6) identifies West, Central and East Africa among regions facing multiple and compounding climate risks, with high exposure to hazards, climate-sensitive livelihoods, and their adaptive capacity constrained by poverty, debt and thin fiscal space.

Poverty does not create vulnerability by itself. It erodes the capacity of populations already exposed to a shock to absorb and recover from it. That distinction should decide who solidarity is owed to, rather than a flat claim that Africa is poor and therefore vulnerable.

Measured this way, the multilateral case is not in dispute. Africa produces barely four percent of global emissions yet bears a disproportionate share of climate exposure and has among the least capacity to absorb its impacts. That gap will only widen as sub-Saharan Africa is projected to remain the world's fastest-growing region, with its population expected to increase by 79 percent between 2024 and 2054.

This is exactly what the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC) was designed to address. Article 3.1 of the UNFCCC commits developed countries to take the lead because they hold the greatest historical responsibility for cumulative emissions and the greatest capacity to act. Article 4.4 commits them to assist developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in meeting costs of adaptation. The 2024 UN Pact for the Future also reaffirmed the importance of global solidarity in adaptation efforts. Africa is not asking for exceptional treatment outside the treaty; it is asking that the treaty's own promise, already made, finally be kept.

That promise is tested most concretely in the numbers. Three questions decide whether adaptation finance reflects solidarity or merely gestures at it: how much arrives, what form it takes, and who ultimately carries the cost. According to Climate Policy Initiative (CPI), climate finance to sub-Saharan Africa reached $55 billion in 2024, but only $11 billion went to adaptation, down 15 percent from 2023.

More than half of adaptation finance commitments to Africa in the relevant CPI assessment were loans rather than grants, while debt service is projected to average 137 percent of Africa's annual climate finance needs through 2030. A loan may close today's gap while narrowing tomorrow's fiscal space. This matters most for countries already facing the greatest climate risks, and 15 of the 20 countries at the bottom of the 2024 Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) climate vulnerability ranking were African.

The debate over private finance also deserves a sharper question than usual. Instruments that seek to profit from the climate crisis have no place in an architecture meant to embody solidarity rather than extract from it. The World Economic Forum and the IMF argue that de-risked private capital can still be mobilised at scale.

Private capital may suit investments with a reliable commercial return, but drainage systems, early warning networks and public health preparedness are not that, since their payoff is measured in lives and stability, not yield. Where returns are structurally insufficient, the question is who finances the adaptation needs of people least able to attract investment.

The same standard of solidarity Africa demands internationally keeps applying inside every African country making that demand. It applies between richer and poorer households and between formal institutions and the people they fail to reach. Vulnerability is differentiated at community and household level exactly as it is at country level: by exposure, dependency and capacity to absorb a shock. Elderly relatives, children, people with disabilities and displaced families are not vulnerable because they are poor in the abstract. They are vulnerable because a specific shock meets limited capacity to cope.

None of this lets developed countries off the hook. Nor does it blame African institutions for a crisis they did not cause. Historical responsibility for emissions and domestic responsibility for care are different obligations. What they share is one underlying test: that capacity and responsibility should flow toward vulnerability, wherever it is found.

Look at where the shortfall in international recognition and finance actually lands once it reaches the ground. Brookings' 2026 review of 97 national adaptation plans (NAPs) from predominantly low- and-middle income countries found that care work is generally treated within sectoral actions rather than being recognised as a cross-cutting system that underpins resilience. Early childhood care was absent from 96 of the 97 plans reviewed, and a UN Women's parallel review of African Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) found only 5 of 47 mention care-related gender dimensions.

Special summit proposed for 2027, same year that the COP heads to Ethiopia

COP31 meets in Antalya followed by COP32 in Addis Ababa in 2027. A separate African summit on special needs and special circumstances has now also been proposed for 2027. As AGN Chair for 2026 Nana Antwi-Boasiako Amoah has put it, **"a COP held in Africa does not automatically deliver for Africa; it must be shaped by African priorities, evidence and solutions, and it must improve lives beyond the conference halls".**

That test cuts both ways. Africa will help set the tone for how solidarity is discussed in the rooms where this agenda item is finally decided. But hosting also puts the domestic half of the test on display, since a continent asking the world to recognise differentiated vulnerability will be doing so from communities where care work and informal social protection already carry adaptation's unfinished business.

2027 is Africa's strongest opportunity to press for its special circumstances to be formally addressed in the multilateral climate process, if not recognised at COP31. It is also a chance to show, on its own soil, what applying that standard at home looks like, before asking the rest of the world to apply it abroad. Science has already identified who is most exposed and least able to cope. Recognition should lead to solidarity; solidarity should shape finance; and finance should protect, rather than quietly exhaust, the social fabric through which adaptation is already being carried.

Amos Wemanya is a Senior Climate Advisor and **Peter Wanyangi** a Climate Finance Project Officer at Power Shift Africa.



Demand for finance remains urgent: The Loss and Damage Fund's first grant-based call, for $250 million, drew about **176** requests from **119** countries worth $2.8 billion, far exceeding the initial allocation.

Risk of becoming technical talk shop: The Green Climate Fund launched its third replenishment only in July 2026, for 2028–2031, after disputes over who should contribute. At the June 2026 Bonn negotiations, the Climate Finance Work Programme (CFWP) on Article 9, created in Belém to review developed countries' finance obligations, including the $300 billion goal, was left off the draft agenda for COP31's Paris Agreement sessions. The G77 and China warned that it could become a **"talk shop"** confined to the technical June talks, with no path to COP31 decisions.

Warning from the SG: At the UN Climate Summit in New York on 23 September 2026, the UN Secretary-General **António Guterres (right)** warned that "without adaptation, droughts become hunger crises; storms become debt crises; and heatwaves become killers."



Despite commitments, delivery falls short: Successive UN climate change conferences (COPs) have expanded the climate finance architecture into a series of specific commitments, but delivery continues to fall short. **Glasgow** (COP26) urged developed countries to at least double adaptation finance from 2019 levels by 2025, **Sharm El Sheikh** (COP27) agreed to establish a fund for responding to loss and damage which was operationalised in **Dubai** (COP28), **Baku** (COP29) set the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) of at least $300 billion a year by 2035, while **Belém** (COP30) called for efforts to at least triple adaptation finance by 2035 and, for the first time in a COP decision, recognised the likelihood of climate overshoot.

Public budgets are contracting: The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) says net official development assistance fell by about **23%** in 2025, its largest drop on record. At the same time, bilateral flows to sub-Saharan Africa fell by **26.3%**, with a further **11.6%** fall projected for 2026. Because much international public adaptation finance is drawn from these same aid budgets, the cuts reach it directly, and the temptation grows to count loans and mobilised private capital as delivery.

money matters



BY PETER WANYANGI

Funding Article 9.1 in the era of overshoot, and the strong case for grant-based public finance

The Paris Agreement enters its second decade as the world approaches and is likely to temporarily exceed the 1.5°C threshold. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) *Emissions Gap Report 2025* finds that current nationally determined contributions (NDCs), if fully implemented, would cut global emissions only around 12–15% below 2019 levels by 2035, against the roughly 55% cut that 1.5°C pathways require, leaving the world on a course for 2.3–2.5°C of warming this century.

The second decade will be judged on whether Article 9.1 of the Agreement, under which developed countries "shall provide financial resources" to developing countries, is honoured in practice.

That finance is not charity. Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement carries forward developed countries' obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), while Article 9.4 recognises "the need for public and grant-based resources for adaptation". The equity case is reinforced by the sharp disparity between Africa's contribution to historical emissions and its exposure to climate impacts, as sub-Saharan Africa, home to around 15% of the world's population, has produced only about 1.9% of cumulative global carbon dioxide emissions since 1750.

Overshooting makes that obligation more urgent, turning adaptation into an immediate fiscal cost. In 2025 alone, extreme weather affected at least 13 million Africans and killed more than 3,000, yet only 40% of African countries have multi-hazard early warning systems.

These shocks hit public budgets already constrained by high debt-service costs. According to the World Bank, 25 of 48 sub-Saharan countries are in or at high risk of debt distress and interest payments exceed health or education spending in four out of five countries. At the UN Climate Summit in New York on 23 September 2026, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres warned that "without adaptation, droughts become hunger crises; storms become debt crises; and heatwaves become killers." Yet financing adaptation through loans deepens the very debt it is meant to prevent. Countries that borrow for resilience pay twice; first by absorbing losses from a crisis they did little to cause, then by repaying, with interest, the cost of protection.

The form of finance therefore matters as much as its volume. Roughly 90% of tracked adaptation finance to Africa comes from international public sources, yet just over half of commitments are loans, while private capital contributed only a small single-digit share. This does not make private finance irrelevant, but it cannot substitute for public, grant-based finance where benefits are primarily public and returns cannot support commercial investment.

Successive UN climate change conferences (COPs) have expanded the climate finance architecture into a series of specific commitments, but delivery continues to fall short. Glasgow (COP26) urged developed countries to at least double adaptation finance from 2019 levels by 2025, Sharm el-Sheikh (COP27) agreed to establish a fund for responding to loss and damage which was operationalised in Dubai (COP28), Baku (COP29) set the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) of at least $300 billion a year by 2035, while Belém (COP30) called for efforts to at least triple adaptation finance by 2035 and, for the first time in a COP decision, recognised the likelihood of climate overshoot.

Delivery has not kept pace. Adaptation finance to Africa more than doubled between 2017 and 2023, to $14.8 billion, yet that covers only about a fifth of the roughly $70 billion a year that African NDCs require — a figure likely understated by as much as 100%. By UNEP's narrower measure, international public adaptation finance to all developing countries fell from $28 billion in 2022 to $26 billion in 2023, against needs of $310–365 billion a year by 2035. The Belém tripling target sets no baseline year and "calls for efforts" rather than assigning a clear obligation. Because the NCQG draws on public and private sources, meeting its headline figure will not by itself show a comparable rise in grant-based public finance for adaptation.

Public budgets are also contracting. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), net official development assistance fell by about 23% in 2025, its largest drop on record. At the same time, bilateral flows to sub-Saharan Africa fell by 26.3%, with a further 11.6% fall projected for 2026. Because much international public adaptation finance is drawn from these same aid budgets, the cuts reach it directly, and the temptation grows to count loans and mobilised private capital as delivery.

Moving slowly

The multilateral system is moving slowly. The Green Climate Fund launched its third replenishment only in July 2026, for 2028–2031, after disputes over who should contribute. At the June 2026 Bonn negotiations, the Climate Finance Work Programme (CFWP) on Article 9, created in Belém to review developed countries' finance obligations, including the $300 billion goal, was left off the draft agenda for COP31's Paris Agreement sessions. The G77 and China warned that it could become a "talk shop" confined to the technical June talks, with no path to COP31 decisions.

Demand, meanwhile, remains urgent. The Loss and Damage Fund's first grant-based call, for $250 million, drew about 176 requests from 119 countries worth $2.8 billion, far exceeding the initial allocation.

Three risks now threaten the delivery of public, grant-based finance. First, Article 9 could be sidelined, leaving no formal space to hold developed countries to their finance obligations. Second, the tripling goal could become an accounting exercise, met on paper by counting loans rather than new grants. And, third, mobilisation could displace provision, turning Article 9.1's duty to provide finance into an expectation that developing countries will attract private investors, often by taking on more debt and risk.

International public finance cannot replace domestic fiscal effort, but it is essential where countries face financing constraints that reflect both limited fiscal space and a climate crisis to which they have contributed relatively little. Grant-based public finance for adaptation is not a substitute for mitigation; the less the world cuts emissions, the greater the adaptation and loss-and-damage burden becomes. Public finance must therefore support both rapid mitigation where commercial finance cannot close the gap and the adaptation needed for impacts that can no longer be avoided.

Antalya can close these gaps with five decisions. First, place the Article 9 work programme (CFWP) on the COP31 agenda, with a timeline and transparent reporting of how much of the $300 billion goal is public, grant-equivalent finance. Second, give the adaptation tripling target a baseline and a grant-based share, so that it cannot be met by counting loans. Third, scale up contributions to the Adaptation Fund and the Loss and Damage Fund, and set an ambitious target for the Green Climate Fund's third replenishment, prioritising grants and simpler direct access for adaptation. Fourth, for debt already owed, provide relief for climate-vulnerable countries and make clauses that pause repayments when disasters strike standard across public lending. And, fifth, simplify access to international public climate funds and expand direct access for African institutions, with transparent reporting on approval times, transaction costs and the share of finance reaching national and local implementing entities.

The test will not end in Antalya. The $300 billion goal and the tripling target both fall due in 2035, and delivery between now and then will show whether these commitments hold. A climate finance pledge that does not appear in a public budget has not yet been delivered, and the Paris Agreement's second decade will be measured in those budgets.

Peter Wanyangi is a Climate Finance Project Officer at Power Shift Africa.

just transition

Putting people at the centre of the energy transition

Achieving a truly just transition requires a structural redirection of finance away from centralised, extractive, colonial-era energy models toward public-led, community-scale renewable networks



BY KAPWANI KAVENUKE AND CHRISTIAN HOUNKANNOU

Access to reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy remains one of the greatest development challenges facing many communities across Africa. While renewable energy technologies continue to expand across the continent, many communities still have limited understanding of what renewable energy is, how it works, and how it can improve their daily lives.

For many households, energy discussions often focus only on electricity, without considering the broader role that renewable energy can play in improving livelihoods, supporting businesses, reducing household energy costs, improving health, protecting the environment and strengthening community resilience.

At the same time, many communities are expected to participate in decisions about new energy projects despite having limited access to information about renewable energy technologies and the concept of a just energy transition.

Achieving a just transition extends far beyond transitioning fossil fuels for solar panels or wind turbines; it represents a broader social and economic transformation grounded in equity, inclusion, and local ownership.

Without a clear understanding of how these emerging technologies operate and provide tangible benefits, local communities are easily excluded from critical decision-making processes. True fairness in energy development requires ensuring that those experiencing energy poverty are not merely passive beneficiaries of infrastructure, but informed advocates who can articulate their needs, secure equitable terms, and hold developers accountable.

Field assessments by Power Shift Africa in September 2026 showed that the "drop-and-leave" infrastructure mentality remains a persistent structural challenge in the rollout of renewable energy solutions. While communities are overwhelmingly welcoming of renewable energy solutions, a major point of anxiety surfaces the moment a system is installed. Communities are left asking such questions as: Where do these technologies come from? What happens when these technologies break down? Where will I fix it? Who is mechanically trained to repair it?

That means people are left to confront pressing operational uncertainties regarding system maintenance, local repair facilities, and available technical expertise within their communities. When external engineers set up installations and depart without cultivating regional capacity, damaged components rapidly deteriorate from vital assets into unusable technological waste.

Sustainable progress, eventually, remains unattainable because populations are regarded as mere deployment sites instead of self-sustaining networks empowered to oversee their energy resources.





This maintenance gap explains why renewable energy must be treated as a direct doorway for localised economic empowerment. Transitioning to renewable and clean energy is not just a climate strategy, but an industrial and vocational opportunity for the continent. Instead of relying on distant external technicians, true community equipment means training and certifying local mechanics to handle operations and repairs. By establishing local maintenance hubs and spare-part supply chains within the communities themselves, the transition solves two structural challenges at once: it guarantees the longevity of renewable energy infrastructure while simultaneously anchoring high-quality green jobs, technical skills, and financial autonomy directly within the local economy.

In response to these systemic gaps, Power Shift Africa, through the Watts Up Africa campaign, has designed a comprehensive Renewable Energy Community Training Programme paired with an engaging educational handbook. This curriculum fosters hands-on, collaborative learning designed to make complex technical concepts approachable for diverse local audiences. Furthermore, the accompanying manual is deliberately structured for seamless translation into regional dialects, ensuring simple adaptation across varied African contexts.

Through key institutional partnerships, this educational initiative has already successfully empowered more than 100 local stakeholders across Senegal, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, establishing a firm foundation for several transformative impacts, including enhanced technical literacy regarding clean technology systems and foundational principles, and heightened community awareness concerning varied energy options and their direct connection to local economic growth.

The programme has also strengthened institutional governance by equipping citizens with the skills needed to influence local energy policy and planning, deepened local advocacy surrounding the core requirements for an equitable energy transition, and created an expanding grassroots network composed of trained advocates positioned to cascade this vital expertise throughout their communities.

Achieving a truly just transition requires a structural redirection of finance away from centralised, extractive, colonial-era energy models toward public-led, community-scale renewable networks.

Prioritising renewables over fossil fuels is not an idealistic environmental preference, but a vital assertion of economic sovereignty that ensures Africa's development is propelled by its own natural resources and governed by its own people.

WATTS UP AFRICA

TOWARDS 100% RENEWABLE ENERGY

Watts Up Africa is a pan-African movement championing equitable investments and pioneering approaches to clean energy access. The campaign seeks to empower communities in every corner of the continent, foster energy sovereignty, and drive a just transition to 100% renewable energy systems.

Kapwani Kavenuke is the Energy Campaigner while **Christian Hounkannou** is the Energy Campaigner and Coordinator at Power Shift Africa. The booklet referenced in this article is available in English, French and Luganda at **www.powershiftafrica.org**

the last word

As winds of change blow in Zanzibar, Kenya eyes nuclear





Practical sessions at Wind Empowerment International Conference in the tourist haven of the United Republic of Tanzania teaches participants how to build a small wind turbine from scratch using locally sourced materials, including steel sheets, copper wire, and blocks of wood, demystifying the technology and proving what is possible when communities come together

BY KAPWANI KAVENUKE

With over 600 million people across Africa still lacking access to electricity, solving the continent's energy crisis requires us to look closer at the full spectrum of resources available, and reaching the milestones set by frameworks such as Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7), the African Union's Agenda 2063, and regional initiatives like Mission 300 will require deep diversification into other available resources. While solar has beautifully paved the way and shown us what is possible, true energy resilience lies in building these resources into cohesive hybrid options. And one of the most vital yet underutilised solutions in this mix is wind energy.

This is exactly what the Wind Empowerment International Conference (WE2026) set out to achieve. Between October 1 and 4, 2026, Zanzibar became the focal point for decentralised renewable energy, as the summit, co-hosted by Wind Empowerment, Karume Institute of Science and Technology, Barefoot College International, Moving Windmills, KOC Bridges of Peace, and Power Shift Africa gathered practitioners, researchers, students, and community members to bring wind energy knowledge out of the shadows and straight to the people.

The conference dedicated its first two days to building a deep technical understanding of what wind energy is while also teaching about public accountability, the different energy sources available, and the path toward a just transition. However, the true heart of the conference took place during the final two days, shifting entirely away from discussion panels to the practical workshop sessions.

For some participants, this was the first time being exposed to wind energy, and this gap highlighted the vital truth that community awareness is our most important tool. When communities are exposed to the full spectrum of renewable options, they get a broader understanding of what is available and build the confidence and sense of ownership needed to shape their own energy future.

The practical sessions taught participants how to build a small wind turbine from scratch using locally sourced materials, including steel sheets, copper wire, and blocks of wood, demystifying the technology and proving what is possible when communities come together.

At the forefront of bringing this project to light were the Watts Up Africa champions #WindMamas. The Watts Up Africa campaign is a pan African movement for 100 percent clean, homegrown energy solutions by Africans for Africans, aimed at rewriting our own energy destiny.

Kenya wants to build a nuclear power plant, but there are unanswered questions about high-level waste and whether the billions required to keep it safe could become another money pit



BY NEIL OVERY

Kenya's President William Ruto stated in September this year that the nuclear power plant that his government wants to build in Siaya County would generate between 2,000 and 5,000MW of electricity. This means it will produce between 25 and 125 tonnes of High-Level Nuclear Waste (HLW) per year, depending on the eventual power output. This HLW, which is made up of spent nuclear fuel rods, needs to be very carefully stored because it is extremely dangerous. In fact, HLW accounts for 95% of all radioactivity in waste produced by nuclear power stations and contains radioactive elements that remain lethal to life for anything from 300 years (cesium-137, strontium-90) to hundreds of thousands of years (plutonium-239).

In July last year, Kenya's Nuclear Power and Energy Agency (NuPEA) Chief Executive Officer, Justus Wabuyabo, assured Kenyans that they had nothing to worry about because Kenya will use 'current technology' to store its HLW. In October, visiting representatives from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) stated that Kenya was 'committed' to the safe management of its HLW. On the face of it, this all appears encouraging, but nothing could be further from the truth.

Firstly, let's deal with Wabuyabo's assertions. The 'current technology' he is referring to is to place spent fuel rods into on-site cooling pools for about 10 years before moving them into on-site dry storage casks. The fact that this option is 'current technology', rather than being reassuring is, in fact, a damning testimony to the global nuclear industry's failure to provide any safe form of long term HLW storage.

For 80 years the global nuclear industry has been promising an effective means by which to safely manage and store HLW. It once touted reprocessing, but this is not a realistic option as it is spectacularly expensive, and even after reprocessing has occurred, quantities of HLW remain which still need to be safely stored for many thousands of years. This explains why the Union of Concerned Scientists concludes that reprocessing is 'dangerous, dirty, and expensive'. By way of example, Japan has been trying to build a reprocessing plant for HLW since 1993. Originally planned to open in 1997, its official opening has been delayed a staggering 28 times, and it is now at least five times over budget.

Burying HLW underground in deep geological repositories is another touted option. This is currently being attempted at Onkalo in Finland at the enormous expense of upwards of $5 billion, while the United States wasted $15 billion on its now abandoned HLW waste site at Yucca Mountain. Even if it gets buried at places like Onkalo, nobody can possibly know if it will remain safe for hundreds of thousands of years, or what the real long term financial and environmental costs will be.

It is because these options have failed or are entirely unproven, that 'current technology' dictates that HLW must be kept on-site. This explains why the licensing period for dry casks has increased from 20 to 40 to 60 years, and now, according to Wabuyabo, to 100 years.

Wabuyabo also stated that after 100 years of storage on-site, HLW would be sent overseas to the nuclear vendor that is contracted to build the nuclear power station, implying that it would therefore no-longer be Kenya's responsibility. However, only one nuclear vendor, Rosatom, currently accepts and reprocesses HLW in this way, meaning that if this is the proposed HLW option for Kenya, then it will be forced to choose Rosatom to build the proposed nuclear power station. This has potentially very serious implications for contract pricing (what Kenyan's will ultimately pay for their electricity), as it sets up Rosatom as the only potential bidder.

Now we turn to the recent IAEA visit to Kenya. While the IAEA acknowledged Kenya's commitment to the safe management of HLW, the reality is that the IAEA cannot say more because Kenya does not have a policy on HLW. All that exists is a draft 'National Policy and Strategy for Radioactive Waste Management' from 10 years ago. This serious limitation is why the IAEA reported that Kenya must 'finalize the national policies for nuclear energy, fuel cycle and radioactive waste management'.

Secondly, and equally worryingly, the IAEA mission found that the nuclear safety regulator in Kenya was not independent from government. Kenya's 2022 Nuclear Regulatory Act establishes the Kenya Nuclear Regulatory Authority (KNRA), but the executive arm of government controls its entire Board, appointing all its members, including from the Ministry of Energy which is tasked with both promoting and regulating nuclear power, and providing all its funds. In addition, any regulations coming from KNRA are subject to executive approval.

These concerns raise several important questions. How will the KNRA ensure that HLW stored on-site remains safe? Will Kenya be forced into a contract with Rosatom? Where will the billions of dollars come from for the long-term storage of HLW if Rosatom is not the chosen bidder? How will Kenya ensure that future generations will not be burdened by unsafe nuclear waste? How can the building of a nuclear power station start in 2027 when there is no HLW management policy in place? And how can the KNRA be trusted to work in the interests of Kenyans when it is not granted the independence?



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