COP 31

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COP31 Day 11: Second Draft Cover Decision Stripped of Fossil Fuel Language as Technical Negotiations Grind to a Halt

By YTJN

Antalya, 19 November 2026 – The eleventh day of COP31, themed İmece: Enhancing Implementation, was defined by two competing realities: the release of a drastically pared-back second draft of the cover decision, and a day of intense, behind-closed-doors technical negotiations that largely deferred contentious issues to future sessions.



The Second Draft Cover Decision: A "Lowest Common Denominator" Text

The COP31 Presidency released its much-anticipated **second draft of the cover decision**. Shrinking from 144 paragraphs to just **80 paragraphs,** the new text has removed critical language on fossil fuels, adaptation finance, and legally binding financial obligations.

The Major Casualties:

- **Fossil Fuels:** All mention of "fossil fuels" has been completely deleted. There is no longer any reference to "accelerated action to phase out fossil fuels," nor is there a reference to the COP28 Dubai agreement on transitioning away from fossil fuels. Brazil's voluntary fossil fuel and deforestation roadmaps have also been removed.
- **Finance:** The draft has dropped the **$120 billion adaptation finance goal.** It has also removed all references to a "work programme" on climate finance and, critically, removed references to the "**legally binding financial obligations"** on developed countries.
- **Trade**: Language on trade has been significantly weakened. The first draft "expressed serious concerns" over the proliferation of unilateral trade measures and **called on developed countries to phase out these measures, such as the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), by 2027**. The new draft merely "**notes the concerns"** and the call for phase-out has been **deleted entirely.**
- **Food and Nutrition:** All references to food, food systems, or nutrition have been deleted.
- **Kyoto Protocol:** The suggestion for a third commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol has been removed.

What Survived or Was Added:

- **Electrification**: The draft retains the call to increase the share of electricity in global final energy consumption to **35% by 2035.**
- **IPCC**: The draft "**invites**" the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to present all three working group reports ahead of the next Global Stocktake in 2028.
- **Adaptation**: The draft calls for tripling adaptation finance by 2035, but leaves the baseline and funding commitments unclear. It proposes an "Antalya-to-Addis Ababa Roadmap on Adaptation and Resilience Finance" to find predictable and larger sources of money.

> **"This is not the final text."**
>
> **MURAT KURUM**
> *COP 31 President*

Technical Negotiations: Forwarding, Deferring, and Kicking the Can

While ministers negotiated the political declaration, technical negotiators spent the day locked in parallel consultations, with most items ending in procedural outcomes rather than substantive agreements.

- **National Adaptation Plans (NAPs):** Parties agreed to forward the informal note on NAPs to SB 66 for further consideration.

Explainer: What is SB 66?

SB 66 refers to the 66th session of the Subsidiary Bodies (the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, or SBSTA, and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation, or SBI). Because COP31 negotiators could not reach a final agreement on NAPs, they are deferring the issue to the next scheduled technical meeting in June 2027 in Bonn, Germany. This is a common COP tactic—"kicking the can down the road" to avoid a complete breakdown of the agenda item.

- **Host of the Climate Technology Centre (CTC):** The G-77/China called for providing at least **USD 50,000 per National Designated Entity (NDE), with Senegal, Somalia, and Uganda** stressing that the current support of USD 5,000 is inadequate. Japan, Norway, Canada, and the UK opposed specifying an amount.
- **Agriculture**: The agriculture track **failed to reach consensus** and was kicked to intersessional discussions in Bonn in 2027.
- **Article 6.2:** Negotiators stripped out all bracketed options for funding sources and worked with an abbreviated text that merely asks the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) to continue considering the issue in June 2027.



Uganda Secures $3.5 Million Green Climate Fund Readiness Support

In a major national development announced during COP31, the **Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) of Uganda, Mr. Ramathan Ggoobi**, announced that **the Green Climate Fund (GCF)** has approved a **USD 3.5 million** readiness support package for Uganda over a period of 48 months.

Approved on **6 November 2026,** the proposal is titled "Uganda Direct Access Readiness Support – Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development Institutional Capacity, Pipeline and Knowledge Sharing Support". Coming under the **GCF Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme**, the grant aims to strengthen the Ministry's capacity to coordinate Uganda's engagement with the GCF, build a pipeline of climate projects ready for financing, and promote the sharing of knowledge and lessons among stakeholders. The GCF funding commitment is expected to be **signed no later than 31 December 2027.**



MINISTRY OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PUBLIC NOTICE

GREEN CLIMATE FUND APPROVES USD 3.5 MILLION READINESS SUPPORT FOR UGANDA

The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, as Uganda's National Designated Authority to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), wishes to inform the public and all stakeholders that the GCF has approved Uganda's readiness proposal titled *"Uganda Direct Access Readiness Support – Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development Institutional Capacity, Pipeline and Knowledge Sharing Support"*.

The proposal was approved on 6 November 2026 for **USD 3,500,000** over a period of **48 months**. The support comes under the GCF Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme, which provides grants that help countries strengthen the institutions, plans and project pipelines they need to access climate finance.

The programme will strengthen the Ministry's capacity to coordinate Uganda's engagement with the GCF, build a pipeline of climate projects ready for financing, and promote the sharing of knowledge and lessons among stakeholders. The GCF's funding commitment is to be signed no later than 31 December 2027.

The Ministry thanks the Green Climate Fund for its continued partnership and all institutions that contributed to the preparation of this proposal. Enquiries may be directed to the Climate Finance Unit at cfu@finance.go.ug.

Ramathan Ggoobi
PERMANENT SECRETARY/SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY & NDA FOCAL PERSON





Connecting the Dots: This announcement directly reinforces the discussions held at the YTJN side event on Wednesday. **Ms. Patriciah Roy Akullo from the MoFPED Climate Finance Unit** had encouraged young people to develop green project concepts, noting that the Ministry was ready to support youth in applying for GCF funds. This $3.5 million readiness support is a critical step in building the institutional capacity and project pipeline needed to turn those youth-led concepts into funded realities.

Private Sector: A Unified Call for Electrification

On the penultimate day of COP31, a broad coalition of businesses and investors made a significant intervention. Led by the **We Mean Business Coalition, more than 120 companies, investors, and business groups** issued a joint statement urging governments to deliver an ambitious deal to accelerate the electrification of the global economy. Signatories included **Siemens, BNP Paribas, Fortescue, ING, Nestlé, and the Principles for Responsible Investment.**

They argued that a strong political signal on the **"35 by 35" goal** is an economic necessity, and pushed for clear language that encourages massive clean energy investment. However, they expressed concern that the current draft text does not explicitly state that the electricity must come from renewable sources, leaving a loophole that could allow continued reliance on coal. As Andrew Prag of the We Mean Business Coalition stated, "Electrification is an economic priority, and business needs certainty to invest".

Civil Society: Demanding Accountability

Civil society organizations were equally active, using a mix of public actions and petitions to pressure negotiators.

- 350.org presented a petition with over **200,000 signatures** to the Australian and Turkish governments at the Australian Pavilion, demanding a firm commitment to phase out fossil fuels and deliver a just transition. They also held a **boxing-themed public action** to highlight the call for an electrification target based on renewable energy, not fossil fuels.
- **Greenpeace** and other NGOs strongly criticized the second draft cover decision. Jasper Inventor, head of the Greenpeace delegation at COP31, called the text "**inacceptable**" (unacceptable). Andreas Sieber, Head of Political Strategy at 350.org, said the current COP "is not a failure of technical negotiations. It is a brazen abdication of political responsibility".





Why This Matters for Youth

1. **The GCF Readiness Support is a Concrete Opportunity:** The $3.5 million readiness support announced by Mr. Ggoobi is exactly the kind of institutional backing needed to make Ms. Akullo's invitation at the YTJN side event a reality. Young people must now actively engage with the MoFPED Climate Finance Unit (cfu@finance.go.ug) to ensure youth-led green projects are included in the pipeline this grant is designed to build.
2. **The Debt Trap Is Now Locked In**: The removal of the $120 billion adaptation finance goal and the "legally binding financial obligations" from the cover decision means the global financial architecture remains heavily skewed toward loans.
3. **Fossil Fuel Phase-Out Is Off the Table:** The complete deletion of fossil fuel language from the text is a catastrophic outcome for intergenerational justice, prioritizing the economic interests of petrostates over the survival of the planet.



WHAT TO WATCH ON FRIDAY 20 NOVEMBER

Final Negotiations and Closing Plenary

The conference is scheduled to close at 18:00 local time, but the pattern of recent COPs suggests overtime is highly likely. The core unresolved questions are:

- **Will the cover decision pass?** Given the deep dissatisfaction from the LDCs, AOSIS, and the EU regarding the removal of finance and fossil fuel language, the Presidency faces an uphill battle to achieve consensus. Panama has already stated it will formally object to any decision that does not meet its principles.
- **The Climate Finance Work Programme (CFWP):** Will the CFWP survive as a standalone agenda item in the final gavelling, or will it be kicked to COP32? Watch for whether the G77 and China can hold the line on Article 9.1.
- **The Rules of Procedure Fight:** The Russian Federation has introduced a proposal on how objections are handled. Will this be adopted or kicked to the next session?