

Key COP29 outcomes



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Overview of COP29

The 2024 UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) took place from November 11-24, 2024 in Baku, Azerbaijan. The conference was characterized by five key expectations:

- All developing countries expected the adoption of a new global climate finance goal;
- The E.U., United States, and small islands states sought a strong platform to push for higher ambition of emission reductions and to advance the global energy-related targets agreed at COP28;
- The E.U. especially wanted to finish rules for the Paris Agreement offset mechanism (Article 6);
- China, India, Saudi Arabia and other major emerging economies wanted to avoid being pushed towards higher mitigation ambition;
- The African states prioritized a strong outcome on adaptation.

The focus on climate finance permeated the conference, as countries used finance considerations as bargaining chips across all negotiating tracks. The meetings began with an agenda fight as China, India and others sought to discuss unilateral trade measures in reaction to the EU carbon border adjustment mechanism, which they see as an illicit trade barrier. Others sought more ways to reflect climate finance on the agenda. Consequently, one day of negotiations was lost. But delegates were determined to succeed, at least to reduce the disruption expected in 2025 from political upheaval around the world.

Thus, by its second day, the conference settled into a stable mode of work, though countries struggled to advance the negotiations in the first week. The Azerbaijani Presidency had to take much riskier steps to compensate for this. In the second week, pairs of ministers were assigned to lead work on the finance goal, mitigation ambition, adaptation, and Article 6. On Thursday, the Presidency issued a first package of draft outcomes, built on recommendations from technical negotiations and ministers. The presidency organized a meeting, which resulted in most countries criticizing the initial package. But the Presidency published two more iterations, while constantly consulting with all groups of Parties. Through this, a balance was found, and the outcomes were adopted early on Sunday, November 24. Some countries, including India, Nigeria and Bolivia, tried to block the adoption of the finance goal, and were severely unhappy with the outcomes and the process.

Key decisions taken at COP29

The main substantive outcome of COP29 was named the Baku Climate Unity Pact, comprising:

- **[New global climate finance goal](#)** | It calls on “all actors” to raise at least \$1.3 trillion per year, and on developed countries to lead the mobilization of at least \$300 billion, by 2035. The decision also refers to development finance reform, centrality of public sources, enhanced access, as well as reporting on finance. It launched a “Baku-Belem Roadmap to 1.3T”—a conversation to scale up finance in 2025.
- **[Mitigation work programme](#)** | This decision identified technical options to reduce emissions in cities and encouraged collaboration between governance levels. Parties and observers were invited to propose topics for mitigation dialogues in 2025. A digital platform, to be designed in 2025, will enable exchanging information on mitigation actions.
- **[Global goal on adaptation](#)** | Countries gave instructions to the ongoing work by technical experts on indicators to measure progress towards global resilience. It builds up UNFCCC adaptation work with a permanent agenda item on adaptation, a Baku Adaptation Roadmap, and a high-level dialogue. The purpose and linkages between these various tracks are unclear, except that all should enhance the implementation.

Other key decisions were adopted in relation to:

- **[Article 6.4](#)** | This decision defined the missing aspects for the Paris Agreement’s mechanism: authorization and registration of emission credits, sharing proceeds for adaptation, and transition of existing forestry activities to this new mechanism. Work on standards, tools, guidelines, baselines, adjustments, additionality should be expedited and be closely informed by technical and scientific expertise through e.g. expert panels.
- **[Non-market approaches \(NMAs\) \(Article 6.8\)](#)** | This decision is about the implementation of a work programme on NMAs (such as actions addressing biodiversity and climate, and/or enhancing value systems). Governments concluded the first phase of the work and welcomed a new online platform for NMAs. The next phase will consider ways to overcome barriers to NMAs, to use NMAs to implement NDCs, and to capture them on the new online platform, based on inputs from countries and observers by March 31, 2025.
- **[Gender and climate change](#)** | The decision noted that gender balance has either stayed the same or declined across the UNFCCC and has been inconsistent, but that country delegations have been gender-balanced recently. The decision extends the Lima Work Programme on Gender for 10 years and launches a new gender action plan, inviting proposals for its scope, and encourages Parties to appoint gender focal points, enhance reporting and integrate gender in climate finance. The decision also emphasizes the centrality of gender consideration in UNFCCC operations and the work of the secretariat.
- **[Research and systematic observation](#)** | In this main science-related item of COP29, Parties recognized the new publications by IPCC, WMO, GCOS and other scientific bodies, encouraged the application of revised GCOS monitoring principles, and emphasized the importance of support for enhanced observation systems in developing countries e.g. through SOFF (Systematic Observation Financing Facility).
- **[Indigenous peoples platform \(LCIPP\)](#)** | A new 2025-2027 workplan for this platform was approved, and the secretariat will explore options for enhancing the participation of Indigenous representatives and for providing interpretation for Indigenous languages. The workplan focuses on convening knowledge holders, regional engagement, and collaboration with UNFCCC workstreams.

There were several key issues that could not be concluded. On all of these, Parties did not reach consensus and will continue next year based on the latest materials discussed at COP29:

- **Logistics of the global stocktake** | This item was supposed to improve the Paris Agreement’s process to consider the state of the global climate effort every five years.
- **GST Dialogue** | This item was about how the international community should follow up on the energy-related targets and other efforts identified at COP28. China, India and Saudi Arabia saw this as an effort to pressure them to be more ambitious.
- **Just Transition Work Programme** | This discussion was about ensuring that ambitious climate action does not lead to unjust consequences for specific groups (or countries).
- **Host of COP31** | The group of Western European and other countries was expected to announce the host of COP31. Australia and the Pacific countries offered to host a “Pacific COP” in 2026. However, Türkiye maintained a competing bid, highlighting their geographical centrality, facilities, and the fact that it does not export fossil fuels.

General observations about the outcomes

- The finance goal has several ambiguities, and many developing countries protested its lack of ambition, in particular the \$300 billion figure, the invitation to developing countries to contribute finance, the gap between finance needs recognized in the decision and the amounts to be mobilized, and the way it was adopted over opposition.
- The mitigation work programme decision is very limited, but more could not be reached as China, India, Saudi Arabia and others sought to avoid any platforms that could be used to pressure them to more ambition. It does, however, continue the mitigation conversation and there is symbolic value in an agreement on this contentious topic.
- Regarding the non-concluded global stocktake dialogue, developed countries and AOSIS insisted that it should provide a platform to encourage countries to be more ambitious, while developing countries wanted a dialogue focused on strengthening climate finance. However, China, India and Saudi Arabia opposed international conversation on ambition, insisting that under the Paris Agreement, climate targets are nationally determined.
- The decision on adaptation sets potentially unrealistic requirements for the experts working on the global indicators and establishes new workstreams that seem to convolute the adaptation conversations. Symbolism matters here as well, developing countries want major decisions on adaptation at each COP to enhance balance with mitigation.
- With COP29, the design of the Article 6.4 mechanism appears to be complete, and it can start operating. This might be a significant outcome, if the environmental integrity of the mechanism is ensured. Future work will be increasingly guided by its Supervisory Body. Woodwell will seek opportunities to provide scientific expertise to the methodological work and monitor how forestry-related CDM projects are transferred to the new mechanism.
- The NMA agenda put some emphasis on nature-based solutions and will be on Woodwell’s radar, e.g. through opportunities to submit proposals for NMAs to the online platform.
- COP29 also provided much-needed continuity for the UNFCCC work on gender. However, proposals to enhance national reporting of gender-disaggregated data did not advance due to opposition by (in particular) African countries, who cited capacity constraints and conceptual unclarity.

- On science-related negotiations, India, China and Saudi Arabia opposed references to 2024 as being on track to be the warmest year on record, citing that highlighting just one year is scientifically problematic. The same countries also refused to acknowledge that satellite measurements of GHGs could complement national emission inventories.
- Woodwell engaged with the UNFCCC Indigenous platform by hosting LCIPP representatives at the pavilion, providing a good start for future interactions, possibly through workshops and dialogues to be organized by the Brazilian Presidency of COP30.

Outlook towards COP30

COP29 mostly tied up loose ends that have been complicating the UNFCCC for several years: the new climate finance goal and Article 6. However, the dissatisfaction with the finance goal among developing countries might create problems in 2025, it remains to be seen if the Article 6.4 mechanism will have environmental integrity, and no new solutions were found for mitigation ambition. In addition, the global climate policy landscape is now dotted with dialogues and round tables that are supposed to discuss finance, ambition, adaptation, etc., creating a potential distraction from the “ambition homework” that governments should now be undertaking. In 2025, these challenges will be complicated by the intentions of some countries to leave the Paris Agreement.

In 2025, the main milestone is the deadline for new NDCs on February 9. These will show how well the ambition mechanism of the Paris Agreement is working. However, the global climate regime lacks any robust follow-up mechanism for these because, under the Paris Agreement, ambition is nationally determined. The “Troika” of Presidencies of COP28, 29 and 30 will continue its work, but so far has not generated any visible results, and its hands are similarly tied by the paradigm of national determination. Brazil will take a more leading role in 2025 and might benefit from close ties to all major economies and the developing world. In a nutshell, the COP30 Presidency has inherited a major ambition challenge, but has very few tools to respond to it. Positively, Brazil has experienced negotiators and knows how to navigate the UNFCCC.

The official agenda for COP30 was supposed to be modest, but several things not agreed at this COP will need to be taken up again. The issues that should be concluded include: the global resilience indicators, the arrangements for the global stocktake dialogue, as well as just transition. However, the clear expectation is that the COP should do something about mitigation (though nobody knows what exactly), and developing countries, especially those that took home grievances from COP29, will consider the climate finance conversation far from over.

The UN process remains the main framework for coordinating and enabling global climate collaboration. It is slow and it gravitates towards the lowest common denominator, but it continues to bring together the most influential global actors—national governments—to work to bridge their differences.

