TWN 17

ANTALYA CLIMATE NEWS UPDATE

PUBLISHED BY THIRD WORLD NETWORK

26 November 2026

Just Transition Mechanism operationalised through phased approach

Antalya, Nov 26 (Hilary Kung) – The Antalya climate talks concluded with Parties agreeing to operationalise the Just Transition Mechanism (JTM) through a "phased approach", following a hard-fought compromise after persistent opposition from developed countries to establishing a constituted body and efforts to limit the scope of the mechanism. The Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP) was among the last issues to be resolved, with negotiations extending two days beyond the scheduled close of COP31, before an agreement was finally reached.

At the closing plenary, convened on the afternoon of 22 Nov, the JTWP decision was adopted to loud applause from Parties and observers alike. The positive reception reflected relief that an agreement had finally been reached after negotiations remained deadlocked until the final hours. At the heart of the impasse were deep disagreements over the governance structure of the JTM. The **G77 and China** had advocated for a dedicated constituted body to oversee and guide the mechanism's implementation, while developed countries sought to limit the JTM to a work plan focused primarily on coordination among existing bodies and the use of existing resources. (For more details, please see TWN Update 13).

Parties ultimately agreed to operationalize the JTM through a phased approach. Its functions, modalities, and operational arrangements will be further developed and adopted at the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (PA) (CMA 9) in Nov 2027. The decision also calls on Parties and non-Party stakeholders to submit views on the JTM by March 15, 2027, and invites the Subsidiary Body (SB) Chairs to consider intersessional work ahead of SB 66 in June 2027.

Meanwhile, the JTWP will continue for a further three years with improved modalities, with its effectiveness and efficiency set for review in Nov 2029, with an explicit mention for Parties to consider either its continuation or integration of its modalities into the JTM.

During the closing plenary, **Ghana** for the **African Group** said that "it envisages the JTWP to be inclusive and progressive to address the interest of the people from Africa", but noted that it is "progressing but not in the

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best interest for the continent". It hoped that "the next phase of JT would deep dive into the core issues…especially for those who will suffer the consequences of climate change".

Fiji for the **Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)** welcomed the adoption of JT text, noting that it "provides for the continuation and strengthening of JTWP and operationalisation of JTM via a phased approach. It said Parties worked hard to navigate divides and bridge divergences. Acknowledging that the decision is "not perfect", it emphasised that "in the spirit of collaboration", it "showed flexibility" to secure "an outcome that Parties can work with" to "ensure the setup of JTM that is truly responsive to Small Island Developing States (SIDs)".

Switzerland also noted that JTWP has "not progressed as much as it had hoped", but reiterated that "even if we discuss JTM, we are mindful to avoid duplication as we strive for [a JTM that is] efficient," adding that JTWP should overtime integrate into JTM to become its policy arm.

United Kingdom (UK) for the **Umbrella Group (UG)** said it is disappointed that "we cannot deliver a full mandate", while noting that the decision provides "a foundation" for Parties to work on and hope to "maintain the momentum" for full operationalisation of the JTM as soon as possible that is "inclusive for the people, workers and communities".

BACKGROUND TO THE PHASED APPROACH

According to sources, a phased approach and intersessional work emerged as the landing zone during the Nov. 20 Ministerial Roundtable on the JTWP. Chaired by **Julia Gardiner** of Australia on behalf of the COP 31 Presidency, the session addressed the outcomes from the ministerial pair consultations conducted by **Krzysztof Bolesta (Poland)** and **Jose Luis Samaniego Leyva (Mexico)**, and the COP 31 Presidency's proposed mode of work going forward.

Gardiner noted the absence of consensus on JTM governance, citing deeply divided views among Parties. Acknowledging that Nov 20 marked the scheduled close of the conference, the Presidency proposed tabling a draft text that captures progress achieved to date, defer unresolved governance issues for further deliberation next year, and include an agreement to preserve and extend the JTWP.

Egypt for the **G77 and China** proposed "building on the phased operationalisation of the JTM, which means agreeing to a formal process and timeline, hopefully intersessional [work before] next SB66, so that the real work [on] recommending draft decision can be done by CMA 9 next year. The G77 wanted to see a practical timeline, that enables speedy interaction by next SB66, started by a round of submissions to capture views on operationalisation of the JTM, and the secretariat to provide a report capturing submissions by next SB66."

On the functions of the JTM, Egypt noted that despite engaging over 15 hours in informal-informal meetings (closed to observers), Parties still could not agree on it, and suggested that the call for submission to include the functions of the JTM before considering them at SB66.

The G77 and China's proposal was echoed by the **African Group,** the **Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC)**, **AOSIS, Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Land-locked Developing countries (LLDC), Arab Group, Like-minded Developing Countries (LMDC),** and **Grupo SUR.**

Switzerland for the **Environment Integrity Group (EIG)** indicated flexibility on a two-year timeline for the JTWP, while calling for explicit language on coherence and avoiding duplication of structures. It also reiterated that the JTWP should evolve into the policy arm of the JTM.

The **European Union (EU)** said the JTWP should be prolonged for three years, adding that any intersessional work should happen under the JTWP. The **UK** also agreed on the intersessional work and to finalise the mechanism by COP 32. **Canada** said it could support the phased approach and that it also wanted to see the JTWP integrated into the JTM.

Norway believed that the phased approach is conducive and expressed support for the intersessional work, and the need to ensure it does not incur additional costs. It also cautioned that the process must not prejudge institutional arrangements, adding that the current text on the JTM's functions was premature and should be left to the work over the coming year.

It is to be noted that there was a paragraph in the Presidency's Nov 21 draft text that was deleted in its entirety from the final version. This was para 18 which stated that "… decides that the JTM shall be Party-driven, nationally determined, demand-driven, facilitative and non-prescriptive, …, with meaningful engagement of non-Party stakeholders, as appropriate, and that the work thereunder shall not create additional reporting requirements or conditionalities for Parties".

Sources indicated that the **LMDC** had questioned the meaning of "nationally determined" in the para, arguing that the mechanism should be universal, and therefore proposed deleting the term. However, it remains unclear why the entire paragraph was deleted.

The adopted decision also saw the removal of the phase "making effective use of existing institutions and expertise and avoiding duplication of work" in para 19 of the Presidency's Nov 21 text. The adopted decision, which is now para 18 in the decision text, reads, "Reaffirms that the JTM is to be implemented in a manner that builds on and complements relevant workstreams under the Convention and the PA, including the JTWP". According to sources, the **LMDC** proposed the removal in an effort to advance discussions next year and avoid repeating familiar arguments from developed countries which had previously questioned the mechanism or contended that the JTM does not require a new constituted body and should instead make use of existing institutions and resources.

A newly added para in the preamble recognizes "that just transition pathways should take into account different starting points, capacities and national circumstances, with a view to leaving no one behind." Sources indicated that this served as the landing zone for a proposal from **China**, which sought to emphasize that all just transition workstreams, including the JTWP, must guarantee justice, fairness, and equity among nations so that the transition narrows, rather than widens, the North-South gap. In response to China's proposal, the **EU** had earlier stated that it could not accept any language referencing the North-South development gap, arguing that it is neither agreed language from this process or elsewhere nor relevant to the mandate of the UNFCCC.

JTWP CONTINUATION FOR ANOTHER 3 YEARS

As for the JTWP review, Parties decided "to continue the JTWP for a further 3 years" and "review its effectiveness and efficiency in Nov 2029". The adopted decision also called on Parties "to consider either the continuation of the work programme or the integration of its modalities into the JTM…with the same scope and modalities…without creating new reporting requirements or obligations for Parties".

(Para 15 of the decision reads, "*Decides* to continue the work programme for a further three years, to review its effectiveness and efficiency at the eleventh session of the CMA (Nov 2029) and, on the basis of that review, at the same session, to consider either the continuation of the work programme or the integration of its modalities into the JTM…with the same scope and modalities, subject to the following improvements being made under the work programme to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency, without creating new reporting requirements or obligations for Parties.")

During the final ministerial roundtable on Nov 20, **Egypt** for the **G77 and China** stated that the group shared the views "of partners" on the value the JTWP has brought to the overall process and noted broad agreement to extend it for three more years. Earlier, the G77 and China said it preferred not to conflate the JTM and JTWP and wanted to continue the discussion on these two mandates.

Meanwhile, developed countries, including the **EIG, Canada,** the **UK,** and **Japan,** have called for integrating the JTWP into the JTM to prevent duplication and avoid running two parallel contact groups. (This approach is seen by developing countries as limiting the JTM's potential, given developed countries' opposition to establishing a constituted body). The **EU** also agreed to "prolong the JTWP for three years to give time for smooth development and progress", while emphasizing the "need to build a strong mechanism".

The review of the JTWP also outlined measures to improve the JTWP's efficiency and effectiveness. These include establishing clearer timelines to ensure documents are available to Parties ahead of each dialogue and session; preparing analytical annual summary reports on the dialogues; enhancing inclusiveness and balanced regional representation among invited experts, particularly from developing countries and NGO constituencies; and selecting dialogue topics through a transparent, Party-driven process guided by a multi-year plan.

Parties also decided to "establish a closer connection between the annual high-level ministerial round table on just transition and the dialogues, with dialogue outcomes informing discussions at the subsequent round table and messages arising from the round tables guiding subsequent work under the work programme, as appropriate" and requests "the Chairs of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation to consider appointing, in consultation with the respective groups and constituencies, two co-chairs, one from a developing country Party and one from a developed country Party".

KEY MESSAGES FROM 5TH AND 6TH JTWP DIALOGUES

Regarding the key messages emerging from the fifth and sixth JTWP dialogues, familar fault lines emerged between Parties pushing for greater emphasis on mitigation ambition and those emphasising the aspect of international cooperation, means of implementation, and protecting policy space for the right to development and climate adaptation. The final list of key messages presented a compromised list on a non-exhaustive basis.

Sources informed that during the final ministerial roundtable on Nov 20, **Egypt** for the **G77 and China** called on the Presidency to table a text that respects the red lines of both developing and developed countries to ensure smooth adoption, warning against "bringing into this decision any contentious issues". However, it was learnt that the Presidency's Nov 21 draft text still crossed several red lines for developing countries.

The final adopted text incorporated references to "climate adaptation," "to strengthen adaptation," and "Article 2, 1(b) of the PA" into paras 6(h), (i), and (j). according to sources, the earlier mitigation-centric language crossed a red line for the LMDC, prompting the group to counter-propose this adaptation language in a final bid to bridge the divide. (Article 2.1(b) of the PA refers to Increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production.")

The final adopted decision in this regard reads,

- "Para 6(h): The importance of integrated, multisectoral approaches that address the interconnections between climate adaptation, food security, agriculture, fisheries and ecosystem health";

- "Para 6 (i): The potential for agroecological and agroforestry approaches, nature-based solutions and circular economy approaches, alongside other approaches reflecting national, regional and local circumstances, to support holistic, nationally determined just transition pathways that enhance food security and to strengthen adaptation and co-benefits";

- "6(j): That transitions in agriculture that are aligned with the Article 2.1(b), of the PA present significant opportunities for advancing climate action".

During the closing plenary after the adoption of the JT decision, **Paraguay** speaking for itself and **Argentina**, stressed that the "key messages as laid out in [para 6] are not a comprehensive summary of opinion, neither do they reflect regional [context and diversities] and national challenges and [should] not [be] prescriptive."

"As a producer and exporter of food, we understand the relationship of agriculture and climate has to align itself with the Convention based on the importance of agriculture to food security and economic growth for developing countries. As for just transition, [it is] necessary to avoid generalisation of the agriculture sector being called (for countries) to adopt, given some of these sectors in some countries are already sustainable," said Paraguay. It also stressed the need for the JTM to recall the principle of common-but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) and appreciated that the principle is already reflected in the JTWP.

It further explained that "transforming the agriculture and livestock sectors" to meet certain international standards could divert financial resources away from urgent priorities and result in suboptimal production, noting that the transition remains a learning curve for all.

It also highlighted Article 3.5 of the Convention and reiterated its concern regarding unilateral measures. It noted that "countries can be affected economically" by climate-related unilateral measures and stressed that such policies "should not undermine food security."
(Article 3.5 of the Convention establishes that "Parties should cooperate to promote a supportive and open international economic system that would lead to sustainable economic growth and development in all Parties, particularly developing country Parties, thus enabling them better to address the problems of climate change. Measures taken to combat climate change, including unilateral ones, should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade.")

The final text also saw the phrase "food system" being replaced by agreed language including "food security", "agriculture" and "food production". This was echoed by many countries such as **LMDC, African Group, LLDC, AOSIS, Paraguay, Uganda, Pakistan, Ecuador,** and **Argentina** during earlier informal consultations. **Argentina** explained that the phrase "food system" "goes well beyond the production, into inputs, logistics, trade, consumption and bringing in entire value chain into the text that would undermine effort to end hunger". It then said that the text should recognise the diversity of food production system in developing countries.

Switzerland stated that it supports references to "food system" instead of "food and agriculture", adding that it "requires a food system approach" and climate change "cannot be addressed in agriculture alone". The **EU** echoed the call to keep the term "food system". Explaining further, in the context of limiting global warming for 1.5°C, it said, "reducing fossil fuel [usage would help] to reduce farmers' vulnerability to price volatility [and thereby] increase food security."

Moreover, the final adopted text also removed all competing bracketed options, given the sharp divergence of views and these issues represented red lines for several Parties. Specifically, it dropped language highlighting "the challenges and barriers associated with the use of standards, certification, traceability requirements and other trade-related measures for producers, smallholder farmers and vulnerable communities in developing countries" (referencing Article 3.5 of the Convention) versus text emphasizing "the role of standards and requirements, including international standards, where appropriate, in advancing progress against objectives related to climate, the environment, human rights and labour rights."

Similarly, on industrial value chains, the text omitted competing options contrasting "the challenges and barriers associated with the cross-border implications of climate-related policies, standards and measures for the participation of developing country Parties" (also citing Article 3.5) with language stressing "the importance of effective domestic carbon

pricing instruments and of addressing carbon leakage in emission-intensive industrial sectors, in a manner compatible with the World Trade Organization."

Some other key and significant messages, as reflected in paras 6 and 7 of the adopted decision, include:

- "6(d): The importance of taking into account the specific circumstances, needs and knowledge of smallholder farmers, family farmers, pastoralists, artisanal fishers, migrant workers, people of African descent, and people in rural and coastal communities, as well as the role of producer organizations and cooperatives;

- 6(e): The importance of promoting decent work and ensuring the meaningful inclusion of workers in the informal economy and those working under informal employment arrangements in agriculture and food production, including by extending access to social protection, labour rights and skills development opportunities;

- 6(f): The important role of women in agriculture and food production and the need for gender-responsive approaches to addressing structural barriers faced by women;

- 6(g): The important role of Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, local knowledge and traditional practices in supporting the implementation of resilient and sustainable just transition pathways that enhance food security;

- 7(a): That just transitions in the industry sector are closely linked to development and should reflect national circumstances and priorities, and that sustainable industrialization and economic diversification are integral to nationally determined just transition pathways, which contribute to low-emission and climate-resilient development, sustainable development and poverty eradication, while recognizing the different levels of industrialization of Parties;

- 7(b): That industrial decarbonization should constitute a pathway to sustainable industrialization and economic diversification, rather than an additional constraint on development, consistent with the principle of CBDR and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances;

- 7(m): The role of locally led and community-based approaches in ensuring that industrial transformation contributes to sustainable local development and the preservation of cultural heritage, and the importance of sharing the benefits and opportunities associated with those approaches equitably with Indigenous Peoples, local communities and people of African descent, including through arrangements designed in collaboration with them from the outset and through their participation as partners, entrepreneurs and owners;

- 7(n): The importance of equitable value chains that promote local value addition and economic opportunities, help to build productive capacity and enable developing country Parties to move towards higher-value segments of regional and global value chains, including with respect to critical minerals and agricultural products, in line with nationally determined strategies.