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ANTALYA CLIMATE NEWS UPDATE

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# Cop 31 presidencies outline mode of work for final stretch of talks

Antalya, 16 Nov, (Hilary Kung) - After a week of intense negotiations, the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies (SBs) wrapped up their work, with a late-night closing plenary on 14 Nov. This was followed by the convening of a plenary session of the governing bodies of the COP 31, CMP 21 and CMA 8 by the Presidencies early morning of Nov.15, to outline the mode of work for the final stretch of the climate talks which are scheduled to end on 20 Nov. in Antalya.

(COP31 is the 31st meeting of the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC, CMP21 is the 21st meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and CMA8 is the 8th meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement [PA]).

The closing plenary of the SBs was convened at around 11.20 pm on Nov 14, and was presided over by **Amb. Adonia Ayebare (Uganda**) (Chair of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice [SBSTA]) and **Julia Gardiner (Australia),** (Chair of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation [SBI]. The delayed convening was reportedly due to unresolved issues under the SBs on how to advance further work on the Mitigation Work Programme (MWP) and Response Measures.

The plenary meeting of the governing bodies was presided over by **Murat Kurum**, Minister of Environment and Urban Planning, Turkiye, and **Chris Bowen**, Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Australia, which began at 1.00 am, starting with the report back from the Chairs of the SBs on the progress made on the draft decisions for the consideration and adoption by Parties in the coming week, and the outstanding agenda items that remain unresolved, requiring further guidance from the COP Presidencies on the mode of work ahead.

Among the outstanding agenda items that remain unresolved include Response Measures, Adaptation matters viz. the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Adaptation Fund, Mitigation Work Programme, Article 6.8 of the PA on Non-market Approaches, and the Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP). In relation to the JTWP, the SB Chairs noted that Parties have expressed interest that further technical work is required in the coming week.

## MODE OF WORK IN 4 TRACKS

The COP 31 President, **Murat Kurum**, outlined four complementary tracks on the organisation of work for the coming week to bring a "successful outcome for COP31": (i) Ministerial engagement; (ii) Presidency consultations;; (iii) Ministerial consultations focussing on outstanding political issues; and (iv) Continue

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Third World Network

Third World Network is an independent non-profit international research and advocacy organization involved in bringing about a greater articulation of the needs, aspirations and rights of the peoples in the South and in promoting just, equitable and ecological development.
Address 131, Jalan Macalister, 10400, Penang, MALAYSIA.
Tel 60-4-2266728/2266159 Fax 60-4-2264505
E-mail twn@twnetwork.org Website https://twn.my/

technical work on a limited set of issues, into which emerging agreement on political issues can be incorporated.

Further, **Kurum** said that in the middle of the week, he will also invite ministers to a "*Divan"* - understood as a "conversation for all ministers" to come together, "held at one place and one time so that everyone hears the same thing", and "a space to speak frankly about the political choices before us across the outcome as a whole". He also clarified that this is "not a negotiation of texts" and "will not replace the work of the ministerial pairs", adding that the time and venue will be announced, alongside an initial update on progress.

## PRESIDENCY CONSULTATIONS

**Kurum** then provided initial updates on the progress of the Presidency consultations convened during the first week, while reiterating that "each have been conducted in a transparent, inclusive, predictable, consensus-based and Party-driven approach".

On the Presidency consultations on matters relating to **'Mountains and climate change'**, he said, "consultations have reflected broad recognition of the particular vulnerability of mountain ecosystems and communities to the adverse impacts of climate change and support for continued dialogue under the UNFCCC process. Adding further, he said, "Many Parties also voiced their support for strengthening scientific research and early warning systems at the same time". He added that divergences remain on the way and means to move forward, including possible institutional arrangements", and that he will conduct further consultations and report back at the closing plenary.

Regarding the Presidency consultations on '**The strengthening of UNFCCC process'**, **Kurum** said that the consultations and stakeholder roundtables held during the first week "helped provide forward-looking and exploratory space to exchange views on how the UNFCCC space can best support Parties in next phase of collective climate action, while remaining transparent inclusive predictable and party-driven", and they will continue consultations on this week.

The **Russian Federation** requested for the floor and expressed disappointment over the Presidency consultations on the strengthening of the UNFCCC process, saying that this issue is "already being addressed within an SBI agenda item on the 'Arrangements for Intergovernmental Meetings". Having considered this at SB64, it said that "Parties agreed to continue consideration of increasing the efficiency of UNFCCC process at SB66" and "did not consent to elevating this discussion to high political level" and this session cannot serve as a justification for shifting the discussion of such a matter to an alternative format". It also flagged that Parties had received no answers to fundamental questions regarding what the objective was and what outcome is intended to be achieved, saying it is unclear as to "why such a significant amount of negotiating time being devoted to this", if the intention was just for the exchange of views. Further, it asked to be put on record that it did not support the development of any substantive outcome resulting from these consultations.

**Panama** for the **Alliance of Latin American and the Caribbean nations (AILAC)** said it supported the presidency consultations on the strengthening of the UNFCCC process and also expressed support of the inclusion of the outcome of this into the cover decision.

**Switzerland** said it appreciated the exchanges from the consultation and also supported AILAC's proposal to have this to be part of the cover decision.

The **United Kingdom (UK)** for the **Umbrella Group** welcomed the presidency consultations on this issue and said it "heard strong convergences in the room", and that "there are many practical things we can do to improve the process" and looked forward to taking the discussion forward".

In response, **Egypt** said it disagreed with any suggestion that there was convergence in the room, pointing instead to clear divergence across multiple issues. While welcoming the "rich exchanges" and acknowledging the need for continuous assessment to address procedural loopholes, Egypt said that the consultation's structure was "not conducive." It noted that answers to key questions raised by Parties regarding the scope, intended outcome, and institutional destination of the talks were "not provided to us in totality." Warning that it could not

support anything suggesting even a semblance of convergence, Egypt stressed that reforming a process of such consequence and scope requires a far deeper, more focused conversation - one it would gladly join in the future, but which the current consultation failed to provide.

**Saudi Arabia** for the **Arab Group** echoed similar sentiments and noted that it "hardly sees the rationale of increasing efficiency of the process, yet at the same time, spending several hours in these consultations without understanding the nature, the origin of the discussion as well as the outcome of the discussions". "We find that to be in fact very inefficient", it said, adding that "this type of confusion in the process is not going to increase efficiency but only increase confusion". It then noted for the record that any resulting decision must reflect genuine convergence within that specific process rather than being imported from elsewhere.

The **European Union (EU)** also intervened to state that it associates itself with those who emphasised the need for continuing the conversation, requesting that this be reflected in the meeting report.

**Ghana** for the **African Group** aligned with the Egypt and Saudi Arabia, saying further that while it agrees that "efficiency is very important for any process" the "current format is not helpful".

**India** for the **Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC)** also echoed others in stating that there was no convergence in the room, adding that it was opposed to including this issue in the cover decision.

**Fiji** for **Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)** also joined others in expressing support on the proposed way forward by the COP Presidency, noting that "the format of the discussion may need to be changed", adding that the group has a concrete proposal, which garnered broad support, for bringing Parties toward areas of convergence, while establishing a process to further discuss points of divergence.

**Argentina** said that the convergence it saw "is the need to take this discussion back into agenda item which we usually discuss these issues and not separately by the Presidency". It also said that it is of the view of the decision on these issues should not be within the cover decision but under the relevant agenda.

**Timor Leste** for the **Least Developed Countries (LDCs)** said it agreed that improving effectiveness and efficiency is important, and looked forward to making further progress in the week.

**Iraq** also supported Egypt's and the Arab Group's interventions.

In responding to all the interventions, the COP President said that all interventions will be noted and that he will report back to Parties.

Regarding the presidency consultations on the '**cover decision'**, **Kurum** said the Presidency team has issued a summary of reflections last Friday morning, "noting it reflected the range of views expressed and is not intended to represent consensus or prejudge any outcome". Adding further, Kurum said Parties were also invited to provide written inputs by the evening of 14 Nov to inform the drafting of the first draft of the decision text, to be released at the beginning of the week.

On further work, he said following the release of the first draft text, they will "continue consultations at the Heads of Delegation level and if necessary, at ministerial level on specific issues, while a number of suggestions for inclusion in the cover decision, only matters that enjoy consensus will be in final decision".

## MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS FOCUSSING ON OUTSTANDING POLITICAL ISSUES

As for the ministerial pairs, **Chris Bowen** introduced the appointment of the Ministerial Pairs as communicated earlier by the COP31 Presidency on 19 October 2026.

Bowen said that for matter relating to adaptation, the ministerial pairs, Jiwoh Abdulai, Minister for Environment and Climate Change, **Sierra Leone** and Miatta Fahnbulleh, Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero of the **UK,** will undertake informal consultations on matters including elements on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) and any adaptation related matters arising from the cover decision.

On finance, the ministerial pairs, Monique Barbut, Minister for Ecological Transition, Biodiversity,

**France** and Secretary Robert Borje, Vice Chairperson and Executive Director at Climate Change Commission, **Philippines** will focus on the Climate Finance Work Programme, especially on Article 9.1 and Article 2.1 (c) of the PA, as well as those finance-related issue that may arise from the cover decision consultations.

As for the MWP, Carsten Schneider, Federal Minister for the Environment and Climate Action, **Germany** and Bhupender Yadav, Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, **India** will consult on outstanding political issues on the MWP and other mitigation issues that may arise in the cover decision.

On just transition, Alicia Barcena, Secretary of the Environment and Natural Resources, **Mexico** and Krzysztof Bolesta, Secretary of State for Climate and Environment, **Poland** will consult on outstanding political issues on the Just Transition Mechanism, specifically on the "political and implementation arms", the "mechanism timeframe" for operationalisation of JTM and its relationship with JTWP.

Bowen also said that Julie Dabrusin, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, **Canada** and Steven Victor, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment, **Palau** have already begun consultations on 'oceans' during the first week of COP31.

## TECHNICAL WORK ON LIMITED SET OF ISSUES

Technical work will continue for a limited set of issues including the GGA, JTWP, MWP, Response Measures, Article 6.8 Non-Market Approaches and National Adaptation Plans, etc. The issue related to the matters of the Adaptation Fund will continue to be considered in the joint contact group established, while for the elements related to the transition of the Adaptation Fund, the SBI Chair, Julia Gardner will undertake further consultations.

**Bowen** said he will convene a stocktake plenary during the week for updates across all workstreams and Parties will continue consideration of work on technical and political until 17 Nov.

**China** requested clarification on the total number of Presidency consultations, especially whether the consultations on the strengthening of UNFCCC process will continue, citing Kurum's remark that only matters that enjoy consensus will be in final decision and the hierarchy on the level of the work between the four tracks, and how the ministerial pairs will manage the linkages between agenda items and issues emerging from the cover decision.

**India** for the **LMDC** said it is "concerned with the handling of certain Presidency consultations which have continued with no clarity on the next steps as well as select closed-door consultations, which have raised serious issues about transparency and inclusivity. Process shapes the outcome; we urge you to maintain Party-driven, transparent and inclusive process through the second week". It said further that "to make progress, we urge our partners to stick to mandates, to implement what we have agreed and not conflate issues that do not belong in our formal process. Ambitious climate action in developing countries is based on ambitious means of implementation support from developed countries. We are for multilateralism and against unilateralism. The COP must send out this message loud and clear," said India.

**Saudi Arabia** for the **Arab group** reiterated its statement that it will not accept any global target that contradicts with nationally determined principle.

**Switzerland** said it is important for this COP to "respond to the 1.5 C overshoot" and deliver a "credible response" to that, citing that it is "important for outside world to get that signal". It also stressed on the importance to "enhance action where we can do more and better".

**Fiji** for the **Pacific SIDS** commended how the COP Presidency handled the consultations on cover decision in "such a transparent manner", while noting that "some process may need more clarity".

**UK** for the **Umbrella Group** and **EU** also echoed the need for the COP to send strong signal in response to "the overshoot" (of 1.5C).

The COP Presidency informed that other consultations had also been undertaken, including under the CMP 9 report on the high-level ministerial roundtable on increased ambition of the Kyoto Protocol commitments, and that he will report back on the outcome of the consultations at the closing plenary.