Implementing Justice: The Belem-Antalya Mechanism for Just Transition at COP31

Policy Brief | November 2026

Workers and communities, especially in the Global South, welcomed and celebrated the UN climate talks (COP30) decision to develop a just transition mechanism – the Belem-Antalya Mechanism for Just Transition (or BAM), containing the most progressive language on rights, inclusion, economic and social justice in a COP ever. The BAM can deliver real support and action for just transitions on the ground, improving the lives and livelihoods of billions, and ushering in a new era of climate cooperation: one with people and our rights at the centre. At the COP31, Global North governments must match the ambition of the moment by backing an inclusive, powerful BAM with a permanent institutional home (i.e. as a constituted body of the UNFCCC), and ensuring it is up and working by 2027.

Climate justice is non-negotiable

2026 – with its record breaking heat – has been plagued by unprecedented climate impacts placing an unbearable burden on the world's poorest and most marginalised people. Those who have done least to cause these impacts are being hit hardest with flooding, drought, crop-failure and heat.

With the Belem-Antalya Mechanism for Just Transition (or BAM) in the design phase, we have an opportunity to operationalise justice and address the interconnected crises of climate breakdown and rampant inequality. We need both a rapid, just and equitable phase out of fossil fuels and a transition of the economic and political systems which undermine efforts at care and repair, in ways that allow all beings to thrive.

Justice is people-powered

There can be no effective climate action without people's participation. For transition to be just the BAM must be inclusive, democratic, and ensure that rights-holders and vulnerabilised groups have seats at the table. We must place workers and communities in charge of decisions that affect their lives and livelihoods; and include their knowledge.

The BAM must be well-designed to succeed

To effectively deliver on its mandate to enable just transition, the BAM must have the longevity and stability of a permanent institutional home (i.e. as a constituted body of the UNFCCC) with links to other relevant bodies within and outside the UN to help fill gaps in existing programmes and catalyse the work that's missing. This means going beyond temporary workstreams and the fragmentation of existing institutions.

The BAM must enable just and equitable finance, technology transfer, and capacity building

There can be no equitable transition without provision of grant-based climate finance, technology transfer and capacity building from Global North to Global South countries. The BAM must be grounded in the principles of equity and on Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) which support and enable the UN climate funds to deliver public, grants-based, non-debt-creating climate finance for just transitions. The BAM must also identify and enable other appropriate channels of grant-based finance starting with the redirection of fossil fuel subsidies and other environmentally and socially harmful agricultural subsidies toward just transition pathways and agroecological transformation. The international barriers to just transitions such as those enforced by the international financial architecture and global trade regime.must also be addressed by the BAM.

The BAM must align with and promote the principles of just transition, going above and beyond energy

22 just transition 'key messages' were agreed at COP30, with unprecedentedly progressive language on rights, equity, inclusion, economic and social justice. These include: the meaningful participation of affected groups in just transition processes; acknowledgement of the role of care work; the importance of social protection; and the necessity for social dialogue. These, developed to include issues such as critical minerals, must serve as principles underpinning just transition work. The BAM must also go beyond energy to consider transition holistically, including areas such as: food, adaptation and care work.

The BAM must be fully operational by 2027

The pace of the BAM's operationalization must reflect the urgency of implementing just transition on the ground and at a pace with efforts to keep global temperatures below 1.5°C. It must operationalize fast and be up and running by COP32.

Everything to win

If done right, the BAM could help to ensure workers' rights, Indigenous rights and gender equality are at the heart of climate action as every country transitions its economy away from fossil fuels and unjust economic models. The BAM can provide UK unions and campaigners with a formal international platform to demand that transition-related actions like the closure of Grangemouth or the shift away from North Sea oil come with guaranteed retraining, decent jobs, and community investment, not just redundancy notices. The struggle over just transition is a struggle over the future economy. COP31 must ensure that the BAM becomes a vehicle for systems change rather than managing the social impacts of unjust economic models. Centring rights and practicing international solidarity is how we win.

Join our event in Antalya to learn more:
Operationalising Fairness: Just Transition, Equity, Science and Finance
Monday, 9 November 2026 15:00-16:30 Side Event Room 4 - AŞIK VEYSEL

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