

COP29

DEBRIEF



General overview

Current geopolitical conflict situations also had an impact on COP29 in Baku:

The climate conference focussed on the one hand on the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG). It is aimed at offering low-income countries in particular, and especially the poorest people there, fast, effective and affordable support to meet their development needs, independently of fossil fuels. However, people in these countries must also adapt to the effects of climate change and protect themselves from extreme weather events, which are becoming increasingly frequent and severe. This requires additional support in addressing loss and damage. At the COP, these issues were discussed in a global political scenario, in which governments are increasingly pushing responsibility for others in the world to one side.

On the other hand, the key success of COP28 – to advance the phasing down of fossil fuels together – had to be defended and consolidated. Saudi Arabia in particular, supported in part by Russia, tried to prevent any progress on climate change mitigation. It also repeatedly received very one-sided procedural support from Azerbaijan's COP Presidency. In the end, the Presidency even submitted a proposal full of setbacks, against the will of the majority of Parties. Some of the countries whose very existence is threatened by climate change then pulled the emergency brake. The proposed text was subsequently rejected and will be renegotiated at the next climate summit.

The outcome of COP29 in Baku therefore conjures up very mixed feelings. Given the existential challenges that remain unresolved, this is hardly surprising. In this crucial decade, climate change mitigation and adaptation finance in low-income countries has not been pushed forward to anywhere near the necessary extent. Eighty percent of the money needed had not been pledged by the end of the conference. Additionally, adaptation finance was not clearly secured, let alone loss and

damage finance. After tough negotiations, an agreement was finally reached on a new climate finance goal of at least USD 300 billion per year, which is to be achieved in full for the first time by 2035 at the latest. The main responsibility for this will lie with the traditional donors (i.e. the high-income nations), but new donors are also expected to make their contribution. However, the agreed amount does not correspond to the actual needs of the vulnerable countries. Unfortunately, many finance ministries have not yet realised that climate finance is not a charitable donation. Moreover, every euro spent on climate change mitigation and adaptation is well invested, as it saves substantially more in terms of loss and damage. Next year, governments have to decide on a roadmap to achieve an increase to USD 1.3 trillion by 2035. Innovative financial instruments such as levies on international aviation and shipping are also to be promoted.

On the other hand, it was welcomed with relief that the COP concluded with an agreement for more, albeit insufficient, multilateral momentum despite the increasingly difficult political situation globally. However, the fact that many low-income countries approved an outcome that for them was disappointing was primarily due to the perception that political willingness for change is likely to be even lower in 2026. It is already becoming apparent that the Global South and North will have to defend what they have achieved together, in particular the roadmap for an increase in finance.

A direct and rapid start to better finance will be decisive for the global climate and the political mood between Global South and North. This must benefit the implementation plans for Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) in low-income countries. Next year, the community of states should also show that they are actually putting the envisaged increase process into operation.

Azerbaijan's COP Presidency did not fulfil its role as a mediator and guiding force to lead the conference to a good outcome. Its approach was not transparent or inclusive, and it was ignorant of the concerns of particularly vulnerable groups of countries. Even before the COP, there were considerable human rights concerns regarding the suitability of the authoritarian state as host. For example, Azerbaijan has a long track record of suppressing the media and civil society. In addition, the country has still not fulfilled the condition for the COP Presidency of concluding a peace treaty with Armenia. In future, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) should therefore establish the following clear criteria for COP hosts under international law:

- No obvious disregard of the objectives of the Paris Agreement, which is binding under international law.
- Protection of the human rights of all COP participants and those who make climate change mitigation demands of the international community or their own Country.
- Opportunities for international and national civil society to protest not only in the Blue Zone, but at least also in the Green Zone, and without repression - neither in situ nor retroactively.

The availability of substantial financial resources, on the other hand, should not be one of the criteria for assuming a COP Presidency. If smaller, ambitious countries want to host a COP, they should be supported accordingly – as happened at the COP in Bonn in 2017, which was hosted by Fiji.

Negotiation items

1. Finance

New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG)

After three years of intensive negotiations, the new climate finance goal for the period after 2025 (NCQG) has now been finalised. A new figure was not discussed for a long time, as the high-income countries only entered into real negotiations behind closed doors at a late stage. Many stakeholders perceived the pledged minimum amount of USD 300 billion in 2035 as a major disappointment, as it falls far short of the needs of low-income countries. However, the long-term goal of USD 1.3 trillion in finance flows for low-income countries by 2035 was agreed upon, which is closer to the aforementioned needs. It is important that all actors contribute to this. There are also clear rays of hope in the decision. The outcome contains many qualitative advances, including better climate finance access mechanisms. In addition, a roadmap is to be developed in 2025 to achieve the major goal of USD 1.3 trillion.

Next steps



The next steps in the roadmap towards USD 1.3 trillion are now the responsibility of the Brazilian Presidency. It is crucial that it is not just a report, but that specific measures for implementation follow. In particular, new ways to increase the funds must be found quickly for adaptation finance and for responding to loss and damage. The roadmap offers the opportunity to explore key issues such as levies based on the polluter-pays principle, the link between debt and climate, and innovative financial instruments in greater depth.



The qualitative progress must be quickly incorporated and implemented, especially with regard to access to climate finance. At a time of limited funds, this can also increase the effectiveness and efficiency of climate finance. In addition, the debate on a separate goal for adaptation finance could be revived in 2025 in order to ensure long-term support. In the past, after all, it has been demonstrated that set targets can effectively channel funds in the right direction.



In view of the geopolitical challenges and the cutbacks by many donor countries to development and potentially also climate finance, climate finance must be integrated more broadly into economic and security policy debates. This is the only way to ensure that climate finance does not come under further pressure but grows in line with global needs.

2. Climate action and just transition

MITIGATION

United Arab Emirates Dialogue

COP29, the first climate conference after the Global Stocktake (GST), was supposed to accelerate the implementation of the GST outcomes and translate the ambitious energy package from COP28 (§28, 1/CMA.5) into specific measures. However, the negotiations came to a halt, blocked by the Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDCs) and the Arab Negotiating Group. Saudi Arabia lobbied for the inclusion of "transition fuels" in the text while blocking the confirmation of key global goals, such as tripling renewable energy capacity and phasing out fossil fuels. In light of these setbacks, progressive groups decided to allow the negotiations to fail in order to prevent backsliding on the consensus reached in Dubai.

Next steps

Negotiations on the UAE dialogue will resume at the interim negotiations in Bonn to prepare a decision at technical level for COP30 in Belém. There, the Parties must send clear and ambitious signals that:

- emphasise the role of all Parties in the implementation of the GST outcomes and the COP28 energy package,
- make a just and fair phase-out of fossil fuels mandatory in all sectors,
- put an immediate stop to new coal, oil and gas projects and abolish fossil fuel subsidies,
- and drive forward the expansion of grid infrastructure and storage capacities.

Mitigation Work Programme (MWP)

The MWP remains blocked due to disputes over its mandate. No significant progress was made at COP29 either, as Saudi Arabia, China and India rejected key proposals to implement climate-related elements of the GST (§18-42) and were against providing political impetus for 1.5-degree-compatible Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Next steps

Given the deadlocked negotiation dynamics, the focus should be on pragmatic approaches such as the global dialogue platforms and investment-oriented events. Such formats can enable tangible progress, even without strong political signals:

- **Global dialogues:** the dialogues should be used specifically to advance the implementation of the climate-related elements of the GST (§18-42). It provides an important opportunity to promote exchange between Parties and share practical solutions, best practices and lessons learnt. The new thematic focus of the global dialogues for 2025 is the forestry and waste sector.

- **Investment focus:** the investment-orientated events must be further developed into an effective platform that facilitates access to financial resources such as grants, loans and investments (§11(d), 1/CMA.6). The aim is to provide countries with the necessary resources to successfully implement the climate-relevant GST elements.

- **Refocusing on the MWP mandate:** the technical negotiations at the interim negotiations in Bonn should focus on how the global dialogues and investment-oriented events can be specifically improved to effectively support the Parties in implementing the GST elements (§18-42).

NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS (NDCS)

According to the Paris Agreement, every country is obliged to submit new Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) every five years. These targets are crucial for limiting the climate crisis, but the current targets are far from sufficient. According to the NDC Synthesis Report, which was published before COP29, the implementation of all NDCs would lead to a greenhouse gas reduction of only 2.6% by 2030 compared to 2019. This is a far cry from the 43% target set by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and would have catastrophic consequences for humanity. COP29 should therefore have urgently provided new impetus for more ambitious NDCs, but unfortunately it failed to achieve this goal for the most part.

In addition to the aforementioned blockade in the implementation of the GST and the work on the Mitigation Work Programme, negotiations on the NDC components, known as the NDC features, have also stalled and been postponed until 2026. As a result, there has been no progress in the comparability and transparency of the NDCs. The presentation of new climate goals also lacked momentum. Although Brazil submitted ambitious targets, it is planning their implementation too slowly and is excluding the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure. One ray of hope was the United Kingdom, which at least submitted a good interim target and aims to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 81% by 2035 compared to 1990. In contrast, the EU has not submitted any NDCs and now has to deliver.

Next steps

After the mixed NDCs presented at COP29, the deadlock in the substantive GST discussions, and the disappointing NCQG outcome, many countries have now also missed the UN deadline of 10 February 2025 for submitting new NDCs. These are difficult conditions for the ongoing first full cycle of raising the NDC ambitions under the Paris Agreement, which will be finalised at COP30. It is therefore essential to use the time until then to create positive momentum for ambitious targets. The following points are important:

➤ **Strong signals:** The rich high-income nations with high emissions in particular have a responsibility to act ambitiously. The EU must set a good example here and should, among other things, adopt a greenhouse gas reduction target of 90-95% by 2040 compared to 1990 levels, by the middle of the year.

➤ **Timely publication:** All NDCs, especially those of major emitters such as China, India and the EU, should be published in good time so that they can be included in the next NDC Synthesis Report. This will serve to review the progress made in the next NDCs (NDCs 3.0) and thus provide a central basis for discussion on the required ambition increase at COP30.

➤ **Strengthening international trust:** Bi- and plurilateral channels and formats such as the Petersberg Climate Dialogue, the Ministerial on Climate Action (MoCA) and the preliminary negotiations for the COP30 in Bonn (SB 62) are suitable for restoring lost trust in international cooperation. As a mediator between the Global South and the Global North, Brazil has an important role to play here in the run-up to the COP30 Presidency, including as part of the "Road to Belém".

➤ **Expanding NDC diplomacy:** Expanding support for the development and implementation of NDCs in the Global South is crucial in the wake of the NCQG. This could be achieved, for example, by providing NDC partnerships with more resources and engaging with them more intensively.

JUST TRANSITION

Die The discussion at COP29 on just transition under the UAE's Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP) (adopted by Decision 3/CMA5) did not end with a formal decision or an official consultation process. Instead, the topic will be taken up again at SB 62 in Bonn. The talks in Baku were similar to the previous negotiations on this topic: high-income countries such as the USA and low-income countries such as Bolivia, which is part of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America (ALBA), were unable to agree on the scope of the programme. Many low-income countries from the G77+China negotiating group expressed their dissatisfaction at the lack of a comprehensive and fair just transition guidance framework and the failure to take trade sufficiently into account. In addition, the LMDC and the Arab Group spoke out against the references to GST outcomes in the JTWP text. References to the phase-out of fossil fuels were also missing in the final draft. Furthermore, the hands-off approach of the COP29 Presidency did not help to move the discussion forward.

Next steps

➤ Parties should address the easy-to-solve problems and long-standing challenges, such as the scope problem, as soon as possible. A more intensive informal dialogue during SB 62 could help to achieve a more substantial outcome.

➤ The JTWP needs more space, both literally and figuratively speaking. Several Parties have shown that they want to work and have the ambition to conclude the negotiations. In the final days of negotiations, a compromise even emerged, but as there was no more room to go through or negotiate the text, no consensus could be reached.

➤ So far, only an invitation has been extended to Parties, observers and other non-Parties to submit their comments by 15 February 2025. The exact date for the subsequent third dialogue has not yet been set and is to take place adjacent to SB 62. The topic of the dialogue will be determined on the basis of the contributions submitted.

3. The global goal on adaptation

In preparation for key decisions on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) this year, COP29 focussed on two topics:

1. Integrating financial, technological and capacity-based support into the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience
2. The preparation of a decision on adaptation indicators at COP30

The negotiations in Baku got off to a promising start and focussed on the technical foundations, including the criteria for the indicators. However, in the second week, delays in the NCQG negotiations led to vague statements on the finance issue, which also affected the GGA process. In addition, the topic of transformative adaptation was postponed. As a result, only procedural progress was made in the development of indicators to measure the GGA, while there were no major advances in terms of content.

Nevertheless, a clear roadmap to COP30 was agreed in Baku. An important milestone was the agreement on the Baku Adaptation Roadmap, which is intended to help implement the GGA beyond COP30. However, while the basic elements of the GGA are gradually taking shape, crucial details and concrete strategies are still lacking.

In particular, the following important questions remain unanswered:

- How can NDCs and NAPs be effectively linked to the implementation of the GGA?
- How can accountability be ensured in voluntary reporting on adaptation indicators?
- How will the NCQG prioritise the allocation of funds between adaptation and mitigation?

Given the worsening impact of the climate crisis, current frameworks and theoretical plans are inadequate. Parties urgently need to show political will to drive viable strategies, financial commitments and concrete measures on the ground. Otherwise, the GGA will remain an empty promise - jeopardising in particular those people and ecosystems that are already suffering from the consequences of the climate crisis.

Next steps

- **Adoption of a GGA indicator set:** A set of indicators for the sub-targets in the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience adopted at COP28 in Dubai is to be prepared for adoption at COP30.
- **Strengthening international support:** The UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience should define further specific sub-goals, particularly with regard to finance.
- **National Adaptation Plans (NAPs):** All countries should have specific and detailed NAPs by the end of 2025.
- **Integration of adaptation goals into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):** The core elements of the NAPs should be incorporated into the NDCs to systematically anchor adaptation in them.
- **Further development of the concept of transformative adaptation:** The aim is a more precise conceptualisation of transformative adaptation, comparable to the just transition approach in mitigation. Together, transformative adaptation and just transition can promote equitable and whole-of-society resilience and decarbonisation in line with the SDGs. The two concepts should also be better linked thematically, for example through the use of renewable energy to support adaptation measures.

4. Loss and damage

With regard to loss and damage, COP29 fell far short of expectations. This was significantly due to the failure to include loss and damage in the NCQG goal adopted at COP29 (see above). It was a missed opportunity to fulfil the Paris Agreement, which established loss and damage as the third pillar alongside adaptation and mitigation. Without anchoring loss and damage in the NCQG, there are no clear legal obligations for rich countries to provide financial resources to respond to loss and damage. It also remains unclear how extensive this finance should be. Although the decision text on the NCQG mentions the fund for responding to loss and damage (FRLD) as a possible disbursement channel, without being firmly anchored in the goal, the necessary enforcement power is lacking.

No significant progress was made on capitalising the FRLD itself either. While pledges totalling USD 702 million were made in 2023, only an additional 56 million dollars were pledged at this COP (Sweden: approximately 18 million, Australia: approximately 31 million, New Zealand: approximately 6 million). The provisioning of the fund therefore falls considerably short of the actual finance needs.

COP29 also saw the launch of the High-Level Dialogue (HLD) on Complementarity and Coherence co-convened by the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage, which is jointly organised by the FRLD and the United Nations Secretary-General. This dialogue is to take place annually and make recommendations for the objectives of the funding arrangements for loss and damage (including relevant funds and actors). The HLD is composed of a maximum of 30 representatives from institutions being part of the funding arrangements. Unfortunately, it was not very inclusive at the outset, as only one person per CSO constituency was allowed to participate. In addition, with a succession of statements it meant the event lacked the nature of a dialogue. According to the organisers, the next dialogue, which will take place in April, should be more inclusive.

No substantive progress was made in the review of the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) and the reports of its Executive Committee (ExCom) and the Santiago Network (SNLD). A major point of contention was the location of the SNLD secretariat. Kenya requested that the secretariat, which is already based in Geneva, be relocated to a country in the Global South. A number of countries, including Vanuatu, Kenya and the G77+China, also called for the introduction of a regular "gap report" on loss and damage. This gap report, similar to the existing reports on mitigation and adaptation published by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), is intended to show which gaps exist in financial, technical and capacity terms. However, countries of the Global North such as Australia, the USA and the European Union do not support this demand.

Next steps



The review of the WIM and the ExCom and SNLD reports must be decided at the intersessional negotiations in Bonn in June 2025.



The FRLD must be ready for disbursement by 2025, prioritise modalities for direct access and present a strategy for replenishing the fund.



The next HLD at the end of April on the margins of the spring meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund must be organised more inclusively.

5. Food systems

Food systems are massively affected by climate change and at the same time are themselves fuelling global warming due to their high emissions. Up to a third of all man-made emissions worldwide are attributable to our food systems. The transformation of food systems is therefore crucial to achieving the Paris Climate Goals. In order to prevent global crop losses and further food crises, both the high emissions from industrial agriculture and animal husbandry in high-income nations should be reduced and adaptation strategies should be developed. Consequently, food systems were part of many discussions and initiatives at COP29. However, concrete negotiation results unfortunately remained the exception. Civil society engagement, on the other hand, was remarkably high - the "Action on Food Hub" became the central contact point for the food systems & climate community and provided space for numerous high-quality discussions and strategic networking sessions.

As part of the negotiations on a new climate finance goal, nothing decisive has been achieved with regard to the transformation of our food systems. However, progress in this area is essential in the future, as only a fraction of climate finance is currently channelled into agriculture in 2025, it will therefore also be increasingly important to increase the visibility of food systems in climate finance. As expected, the Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security only agreed to further develop an online portal to present projects and strategies. However, this small-scale process is a far cry from the comprehensive changes that will be needed in future, in view of the sector's impact on climate. A new declaration on the reduction of methane emissions only provides for the reduction of emissions from organic waste in the agricultural and food sector. Nevertheless, this declaration has been signed by the majority of the largest emitters.

Next steps

The transformation of our food systems, with the aim of achieving food security within planetary boundaries, requires a global understanding of the need for emission reductions and binding targets and measures in the new NDCs 3.0. Although agriculture was frequently addressed in the previous NDCs, the corresponding emission reduction measures were not ambitious enough and did not cover all emissions along the supply chain.

At the SB 62 intersessional negotiations in Bonn, a workshop* on systemic and holistic approaches to implementing climate action in agriculture is on the agenda as part of the Sharm-el-Sheikh process. Civil society will ensure that the link between climate and food systems remains in focus in the run-up to COP30 in Belém. The Brazilian COP Presidency has announced bioeconomy, food security and agricultural reforms as priorities, among others.

*Systemic and Holistic Approaches to Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture, Food Systems and Food Security, Understanding, Cooperation, and Integration into Plans.

Outlook for COP30

COP30 will take place in November 2025 in Belém, Brazil. This is where the first full cycle for raising the ambition of the Paris Agreement is to be concluded. The focus will be on the question of how the world can achieve a 1.5-degree pathway, or at least a Paris-compatible pathway, based on the new NDCs. The new NDCs should actually have been available by February 2025 at the latest. However, more than half of the countries, including India, China, and the EU, have not met the United Nations' deadline. In view of the fact that there have never been as many elections and new governments as in 2024, a certain delay is not surprising. It is important that all countries publish their targets well before the next climate conference in Brazil in November. After all, the motto is: it is better to present ambitious climate targets a few months later than on time but less consistently. Major emitters such as the EU and China in particular must lead the way with ambitious NDCs and set an example, in favour of a climate policy that is as compatible with the 1.5-degree target, effective international co-operation on climate action and partnerships with countries of the Global South.

This is because the USA has withdrawn from the Paris Agreement under President Trump. However, they have the right to participate in the negotiations for up to one year after withdrawing. The US government could potentially use this for disruptive manoeuvres in 2025. In addition, some parts of the COP are based on the Framework Convention on Climate Change and not the Paris Agreement, which allows the US government to continue to participate in these negotiations – destructively if the worst comes to the worst. Given these circumstances, it will be challenging in the coming years to reach consensus-based decisions

within the UNFCCC process. It will therefore become increasingly important to revitalise the international climate debate in other forums as well. China, in particular, has called for a stronger role for the MoCA, the annual ministerial meeting of key countries and negotiating groups, which was launched in 2017 in response to Trump's first election.

Hopes are high for Brazil as an ambitious and transparent COP host, and at the same time the country will assume the chairmanship of BRICS+ (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa + others). The COP troika (UAE, Azerbaijan, Brazil) is tasked with using the "Roadmap to Mission 1.5" to further increase ambition. Ahead of the conference in Belém, the manner in which the "Baku-Belém Roadmap" can actually lead to an increase in climate finance, in particular the necessary USD 1.3 trillion, must also be clarified. It is furthermore crucial to ensure reliable long-term finance for loss and damage, as there is no legal basis for this in the NCQG. In order to support the particularly vulnerable developing countries in coping with the consequences of climate change, the indicators for the Global Goal on Adaptation must be defined at COP30. In addition, the reform of the international financial architecture will gain importance as a key measure for increasing funds for international climate finance. In this context, the "Finance for Development" conference in Spain in mid-2025 will be an important milestone.

Authors: Laura Schäfer, David Ryfisch, Lalit Chennamaneni, Kerstin Opfer, Vera Künzel, Lisa Schultheiß, Giovanni Pradipta, Rixa Schwarz, Lina Ahmed, Petter Lyden, Katharina Brandt, Felix Domke.

Published by:

Germanwatch e.V.

Office Bonn

Dr. Werner-Schuster-Haus

Kaiserstr. 201

D-53113 Bonn

Phone +49 (0)228/60 492-0

Office Berlin

Stresemannstr. 72

D-10963 Berlin

Telefon +49 (0)30/28 88 356-0

Internet: www.germanwatch.org

E-mail: info@germanwatch.org

March 2025

Download this document at:

www.germanwatch.org/en/93091

With financial support from Brot für die Welt

Germanwatch is responsible for the content of this publication.

**Brot
für die Welt**

mit Mitteln des
Kirchlichen
Entwicklungsdienstes