

• ANALYSIS

Closing The Climate Divide: Türkiye's COP31 Presidency As a Catalyst For Africa's Just Transition

Tunç Demirtaş, Said Abubakar Garba

CLOSING THE CLIMATE DIVIDE: TÜRKİYE'S COP31 PRESIDENCY AS A CATALYST FOR AFRICA'S JUST TRANSITION

TUNÇ DEMİRTAŞ
SAİD ABUBAKAR GARBA

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SETA | SİYASET, EKONOMİ VE TOPLUM ARAŞTIRMALARI VAKFI

Nenehatun Cd. No: 66 GOP Çankaya 06700 Ankara TÜRKİYE

Tel: +90 312 551 21 00 | Faks: +90 312 551 21 90

www.setav.org | info@setav.org | @setavakfi

SETA | İstanbul

Defterdar Mh. Savaklar Cd. Ayvansaray Kavşağı No: 41-43

Eyüpsultan İstanbul TÜRKİYE

Tel: +90 212 395 11 00 | Faks: +90 212 395 11 11

SETA | Washington D.C.

1025 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 1106

Washington D.C., 20036 USA

Tel: 202-223-9885 | Faks: 202-223-6099

www.setadc.org | info@setadc.org | @setadc

SETA | Berlin

Kronenstraße 1, 10117 Berlin GERMANY

berlin@setav.org

SETA | Brussels

Avenue des Arts 27, 1000 Brussels BELGIUM

Tel: +3226520486

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This analysis evaluates Türkiye’s potential, through its COP31 Presidency, to support Africa’s just transition process based on the continent’s financing, technology, and capacity-building needs, within the framework of the opportunities offered by middle-power diplomacy.

SUMMARY

Türkiye’s COP31 presidency arrives at a moment when the climate divide between developed and developing regions is widening rather than narrowing. Located at the intersection of Europe, Asia, and Africa, Türkiye is positioned to use its diplomatic outreach capacity to amplify Africa’s voice in global climate negotiations. A just transition for Africa, grounded in equitable access to finance, technology, and renewable energy, remains central to the realisation of global climate justice. Persistent gaps in capacity, investment, and representation, however, leave the continent at risk of being left behind. Türkiye’s presidency can help narrow this gap by strengthening South-South cooperation and supporting African-led climate finance mechanisms. By shaping its COP31 presidency in alignment with African priorities, Türkiye can help transform the summit from a stage for abstract commitments into a platform on which concrete cooperation mechanisms are developed. This process offers Türkiye the opportunity to translate its middle-power diplomacy into a more visible, results-oriented contribution to climate justice, development, and the strengthening of Africa’s representation in global climate governance.

INTRODUCTION

The global climate landscape resembles a ‘tragedy of the commons,’ in which the most fragile states bear the largest share of environmental costs while having drawn the smallest benefits from global industrialisation. Within this context, the 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31), to be held in Antalya in November 2026, calls for a model of leadership capable of turning rhetoric and pledges into delivery. For Türkiye, this presidency coincides with the Türkiye Century vision and a decade of deepening strategic engagement with the African continent.

Situating Türkiye’s COP31 presidency requires understanding the widening climate divide, that is, the gap between the global North’s decarbonisation capacity and the global South’s adaptation needs. Despite having contributed less than four percent of historical emissions, Africa faces disproportionate systemic risks, foremost among them acute water scarcity and food insecurity.¹ This asymmetry between responsibility and vulnerability is the central problem any credible COP presidency must address. Hosting COP31 offers Türkiye more than a logistical exercise: it provides a strategic diplomatic space in which to place Africa’s just transition at the heart of a global agenda of equity and responsibility. This paper examines Türkiye’s role in facilitating a just transition across the African continent through the framework of Middle Power Diplomacy.

¹ African Union, “Addis Ababa Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action”, Second Africa Climate Summit (ACS2), Addis Ababa, 10 September 2025, <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20250914/africa-claims-its-place-global-climate-leadership>; World Meteorological Organization, *State of the Climate in Africa 2024*, (WMO, Geneva: 2025), <https://wmo.int/publication-series/state-of-climate-in-africa-2024>.

The current conjuncture offers a significant opportunity to align the COP31 Action Agenda with Türkiye's strategic interests in Africa. Since 2005, declared the Year of Africa, Türkiye has steadily expanded its diplomatic presence across the continent. Trade volume has risen from USD 5.4 billion to USD 37 billion as of 2024, with a target of USD 40 billion set for 2025.² An earlier presidential target of USD 50 billion has been recalibrated alongside near-term benchmarks and is now projected for the latter part of the coming decade. By assuming the COP31 presidency, Türkiye thus stands at the threshold of moving beyond its role as a provider of humanitarian aid and infrastructure to become one of the central architects of climate resilience for the global South.³

The study adopts a qualitative policy analysis method, employing a case study framework to assess how Türkiye's middle power diplomacy can help close the climate divide. Despite the predictive limitations inherent in the forward-looking nature of the COP31 presidency, the analysis draws on established energy security trajectories and current diplomatic frameworks.

TÜRKİYE'S COP31 PRESIDENCY: GEOPOLITICAL POSITIONING AND PATHWAYS FOR AFRICA

The analytical framework proposed here treats Türkiye's COP31 presidency not merely as a diplomatic assignment but as an opportunity afforded by its geopolitical position. In this respect, Türkiye stands out for its capacity to act as a bridge between different regional alignments. Following its ratification of the Paris Agreement and the announcement of its 2053 Net Zero target, Türkiye has emerged as a guiding global actor in climate governance.⁴ The dual-leadership model shared with Australia for COP31 further reinforces this role. Under this arrangement, Australia retains exclusive authority over the conduct of negotiations, the drafting of texts, and the issuing of the cover decision, while Türkiye holds the presidency and the political stage, which enables it to shape the summit's overarching narrative and public priorities.⁵

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The global climate landscape resembles a 'tragedy of the commons,' in which environmental costs are disproportionately borne by the most vulnerable countries, while these same countries receive the smallest share of the prosperity and development opportunities generated by global industrialization.

2 Khadija Mamouni, "Türkiye: An Emerging Middle Power in Africa", *Policy Center for the New South*, Policy Brief No. 46/25, September 2025, <https://www.policycenter.ma/publications/turkiye-emerging-middle-power-africa>, accessed 5 March 2026.

3 "Türkiye Holds COP31", *TRT World*, February 2026, <https://www.trtworld.com/article/4ea2f00cb13f>, accessed 5 March 2026.

4 Republic of Türkiye, *Updated First Nationally Determined Contribution*, (Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change, Ankara: 2023), https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2023-04/T%C3%9CRK%C4%B0YE_Updated%201st%20NDC_EN.pdf, accessed 10 April 2026.

5 SETA, *Türkiye's Emerging Role in Global Climate Governance at COP31*, (SETA, Ankara: 2025), <https://media.setav.org/en/file/2025/11/turkiye-s-emerging-role-in-global-climate-governance-at-cop31.pdf>, accessed 7 April 2026.



Through its G20 membership and the strategic partnerships it has developed with the African Development Bank (AfDB), Türkiye is well positioned to become a proponent and advocate of a multilateral cooperation vision that places environmental justice at its core, moving beyond the traditional energy security paradigm.

Türkiye's diplomatic strategy rests on the concept of humanitarian diplomacy, which resonates in African states that have no colonial history with Türkiye and seek demand-driven partnerships. This positioning enables Türkiye to mediate between the European Union's (EU) advanced climate commitments and the development-first imperatives of the global South. Through its G20 membership and the strategic partnership it has developed with the African Union (AU), Türkiye is well placed to advocate a shift from the traditional energy security paradigm toward a multilateral cooperation model that foregrounds environmental justice.⁶

The clearest test of this multilateral approach lies in the energy sector, where Africa's structural deficits meet Türkiye's technical capacity. Africa's energy landscape is shaped by a twofold challenge of rapid urbanisation and an enormous electricity deficit: in Sub-Saharan Africa, approximately 600 million people, or roughly 47 percent of the regional population, lack access to electricity.⁷ Achieving universal access by 2030, one of the African Union's Agenda 2063 targets, requires a fundamental transformation in investment patterns.⁸ As noted, green energy has become a new domain of diplomatic influence. For Türkiye, this presents an opportunity to address Africa's energy gap not through competition but through a partnership that advances shared development goals.⁹

Türkiye's domestic success in renewable energy serves as a scalable model for African states. As of 2025, renewable sources account for approximately 62 percent of Türkiye's total installed electricity capacity.¹⁰ This technical know-how is already being exported through bilateral agreements such as the 2026 memorandum of understanding signed with Ethiopia, focused on hydroelectric infrastructure and grid modernisation.¹¹ In October 2024, Türkiye also signed

6 Said Abubakar Garba and Tunç Demirtaş, *Nigeria-Türkiye Partnership in a Multipolar Era: Symbiotic Necessity in a Fragmented Global Order*, (SETA Foundation, Ankara: 2026), <https://www.setav.org/en/nigeria-turkiye-partnership-in-a-multipolar-era-symbiotic-necessity-in-a-fragmented-global-order>.

7 International Energy Agency, *Africa Energy Outlook 2022*, (IEA, Paris: 2022), 15–26, <https://www.iea.org/reports/africa-energy-outlook-2022>; “Mission 300: Powering Africa”, World Bank, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/energizing-africa>, accessed 6 April 2026.

8 African Union Commission and International Energy Agency, *Africa Energy Outlook 2022: Special Report*, (IEA, Paris: 2022), 15–18, <https://www.iea.org/reports/africa-energy-outlook-2022>; African Energy Commission (AFREC), *The African Energy Transition Strategy and Action Plan (ETSAP)*, (African Union, Algiers: 2025), 18–22, <https://au-afrec.org/sites/default/files/2025-09/ETSAP%20Report%20publication.pdf>, accessed 7 April 2026.

9 Gülşah Özdemir, “Green Energy and New Forms of Diplomacy: Environmental Strategies in International Power Struggle”, *International Journal of Environmental Sciences*, vol. 11, no. 6, (2025), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/394880566_Green_Energy_and_New_Forms_of_Diplomacy_Environmental_Strategies_in_International_Power_Struggle, accessed 1 April 2026.

10 SETA, *Türkiye's Emerging Role*, 9.

11 “News Detail”, Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, <https://enerji.gov.tr/news-detail?id=31746>, accessed 7 April 2026.

a significant renewable-energy agreement in The Gambia aimed at launching joint solar and wind projects to strengthen the country's sustainable energy grid.¹² Likewise, in Libya, which aims to raise the renewable share of its energy mix to 20 percent by 2035, demand for Turkish firms' expertise in expanding renewable capacity is rising.¹³

The credibility of these partnerships rests on Türkiye's own domestic record. Over the past two decades, Türkiye has substantially expanded its wind and solar capacity, supported by large-scale investment in grid and storage infrastructure.¹⁴ Within this framework, the leadership Türkiye offers can open new pathways for Africa by foregrounding distributed renewable energy (DRE) systems and battery storage integration, technologies of particular importance for the continent's rural and under-served regions.¹⁵

Technology alone, however, cannot close this gap; without adequate finance, even the most scalable models remain on paper. Climate finance is the area where the gap between rhetoric and delivery is sharpest. Although African leaders have called for USD 50 billion in annual catalytic financing through the 2025 Addis Ababa Declaration and the proposed Africa Climate Innovation Compact (ACIC), current global pledges and capital flows fall well short of that figure.¹⁶ Türkiye can use its presidency to advocate fair climate finance mechanisms that reduce the high cost of capital for green projects in Africa.¹⁷ This includes supporting initiatives such as the Africa Climate Innovation Compact (ACIC) and de-risking private-sector investment through triangular cooperation models that bring together Turkish institutions and multilateral banks. The urgency of this agenda becomes still clearer when considered alongside the scale of climate risks Africa already faces.¹⁸

12 Liberty East 1, "Türkiye-Gambia Energy Partnership: New Era for Renewable Projects in Africa", *YouTUBE*, 17 October 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8IBnXdgFIGo>, accessed 5 March 2026.

13 "Libya Seeks Turkish Investment, Expertise for Renewable Energy Expansion", Anadolu Agency, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/energy/renewable/libya-seeks-turkish-investment-expertise-for-renewable-energy-expansion/54632>, accessed 5 March 2026.

14 "Electricity", Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, <https://enerji.gov.tr/infobank-energy-electricity>, accessed 10 April 2026; International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), *Renewable Capacity Statistics 2025*, (IRENA, Abu Dhabi: 2025), <https://www.irena.org/Publications/2025/Mar/Renewable-capacity-statistics-2025>, accessed 10 April 2026; IRENA, *Renewable Capacity Statistics*, 12.

15 Garba and Demirtaş, *Nigeria-Türkiye Partnership*, 88.

16 African Union, "Addis Ababa Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action", Second Africa Climate Summit (ACS2), Addis Ababa, 10 September 2025, <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20250914/africa-claims-its-place-global-climate-leadership>.

17 Gülşah Özdemir, "Green Energy and New Forms of Diplomacy", *International Journal of Environmental Sciences*, vol. 11, no. 6, (2025), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/394880566_Green_Energy_and_New_Forms_of_Diplomacy_Environmental_Strategies_in_International_Power_Struggle, accessed 1 April 2026.

18 Özdemir, "Green Energy and New Forms of Diplomacy", 4.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF PROJECTED CLIMATE RISKS IN AFRICA		
Risk Category	Projected Impact (1.5 °C to 2 °C warming scenario)	Confidence Level
Food Security	Yield declines for staple crops are occurring across much of Africa. Since 1961, growth in agricultural productivity has fallen by 34 percent due to climate change, a steeper decline than in any other world region.	High
Public Health	Rising mortality from extreme heat is projected, alongside an expanding geographic range for vector-borne diseases (such as malaria).	High
Economic Growth	If warming is limited to 1.5 °C rather than 2 °C, per-capita GDP is projected to be 10–20 percent higher by 2100.	High
Human Migration	Sub-Saharan Africa is projected to see 17–40 million internal migrants by 2050, rising to 86 million under a 2.5 °C scenario.	Medium
Ecosystems	Up to 90 percent of East African coral reefs are projected to be lost, with widespread drying of Congo Basin peatlands.	High

Source: IPCC, *Fact Sheet – Africa*, 2022; Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2025

These projected risks do not operate in isolation; they deepen existing governance and security pressures on the continent. The interaction between environmental degradation and socio-political stability is a growing concern. Drought and desertification rank among the principal drivers of food insecurity, often compounded by ongoing conflict in hunger hotspots such as the Sahel and Southern Africa.¹⁹ The 2024 Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) records a decline of –1.9 in food-security scores over the past decade, with several states in East and West Africa registering double-digit drops.²⁰ For Türkiye, grasping these systemic risks appears essential to developing a COP31 strategy that addresses the human dimension of the climate crisis.

TÜRKİYE’S STRATEGIC TOOLKIT: ENERGY, MINERALS, AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The transition to a low-carbon economy represents both the greatest challenge and the greatest opportunity for the Türkiye-Africa partnership. Beyond the electricity deficit noted above, only about one-third of the continent’s population has access to clean cooking fuels, deepening the public-health and environmental costs of the energy gap.²¹ At the same time, Africa holds vast untapped renew-

19 Mo Ibrahim Foundation, *Latest COPs on Climate Change, Desertification and Biodiversity: Key Outcomes for Africa (2024-2025)*, (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, London: 2025), <https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/sites/default/files/2025-03/latest-cops-on-climate-change.pdf>; Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Fact Sheet – Africa: Regional Aspects of Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, (IPCC, Geneva: 2022), https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/outreach/IPCC_AR6_WGII_FactSheet_Africa.pdf, accessed 5 March 2026.

20 Mo Ibrahim Foundation, *Latest COPs on Climate Change*, 22.

21 Mo Ibrahim Foundation, *Africa on the Road to COP30: From Addis Ababa to Belém*, (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, London: 2025), <https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/sites/default/files/2025-11/africa-on-the-road-to-cop30.pdf>, accessed 5 March 2026.

able-energy potential yet receives only around 2 percent of global clean-energy investment.²²

While prioritising renewables, Türkiye also recognises the transitional role hydrocarbons can play in helping Africa achieve energy sovereignty. For example, in Somalia, the Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO) has acquired exploration rights for onshore and offshore blocks, aiming to bring these resources into production and thereby generate the financial foundation needed for the country's own development. Türkiye has similarly signed cooperation agreements with Senegal and Niger covering oil, gas, and mineral exploration.²³

These partnerships are not limited to resource extraction; they form part of Türkiye's broader ambition to develop as a regional energy hub.²⁴ By helping African states develop their own indigenous resources, Türkiye both secures its own energy supply chains and offers these countries a more cost-effective alternative to regional suppliers and traditional Western majors.²⁵

Beyond hydrocarbons, however, the transition economy is increasingly defined by a different set of resources in which Africa holds a decisive position. The global shift toward electric vehicles and renewable-energy storage has made Africa's critical mineral reserves more strategically important than ever. The continent still exports roughly 90 percent of these minerals in raw form, forgoing the economic gains that domestic processing would generate. The African Union's 2025 Green Minerals Strategy, building on the earlier Agenda 2063 vision of resource-based industrialisation, reflects the growing urgency around in-country processing and value addition.²⁶

Türkiye can support this transformation by establishing mineral-processing and battery-manufacturing facilities directly on the continent. In 2025, Türkiye expanded its industrial capacity in line with its domestic and export-oriented energy targets, with domestic firms moving into the production of high-efficiency solar equipment to meet a 5 GW target by 2028.²⁷ Aligning these manufacturing capabilities with Africa's mineral resources would strengthen the industrial base on both sides.²⁸

22 Mo Ibrahim Foundation, *Africa on the Road to COP30*, 14.

23 "Türkiye, Somalia Sign Onshore Hydrocarbon Exploration Deal", TRT Afrika, 10 April 2025, <https://www.trtafrika.com/english/article/ed1566951c8d>, accessed 10 April 2026; "Türkiye and Senegal Sign Oil, Gas and Mineral Cooperation Agreement", Anadolu Agency, October 2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr>, accessed 10 April 2026.

24 "Türkiye Expands Its Energy Strategic Ambitions with More Missions in Libya and Somalia", TRT World Now (YouTube), 21 February 2026, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drRrNfOTv8>, accessed 25 March 2026.

25 International Energy Agency, *Global Critical Minerals Outlook 2025*, (IEA, Paris: 2025), <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-critical-minerals-outlook-2025>, accessed 10 April 2026.

26 African Union, *African Green Minerals Strategy*, (African Union, Addis Ababa: 2025); African Union, *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*, (African Union Commission, Addis Ababa: 2015), <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview>, accessed 10 April 2026.

27 "Libya Seeks Turkish Investment", Anadolu Agency.

28 Garba and Demirtaş, *Nigeria-Türkiye Partnership*, 102.



By aligning its technological expertise with the on-the-ground needs of its African partners, Türkiye is in a position to help ensure that COP31 in Antalya delivers concrete and actionable outcomes that go beyond rhetoric, particularly for the countries that need such gains the most.

The scale of this potential is striking. Africa sits at the centre of the global energy transition thanks to vast reserves of critical minerals, foremost among them cobalt, lithium, copper, and graphite. According to the International Energy Agency's (IEA) Global Critical Minerals Outlook, Africa's mineral market value is projected to grow by 65 percent by 2030, driven above all by the rapid expansion of copper production.

Translating minerals into a shared industrial base, however, requires more than bilateral agreements: it calls for the broader institutional architecture that shapes Türkiye's engagement with Africa. The Ankara Consensus, foregrounding sustainability and human-centred development, provides the conceptual framework for Türkiye's engagement on the continent. This model is operationalised through institutions such as the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), which has implemented more than 30,000 projects across 170 countries, with Africa as a central focus.²⁹ The Zero Waste initiative, led by First Lady Emine Erdoğan, has become one of the flagship policies of the COP31 Action Agenda.³⁰ The programme addresses the energy, water, and waste nexus by focusing on the reduction of methane emissions from landfills, a critical issue for Africa's rapidly expanding urban centres. Türkiye's role in Black Sea Grain Corridor diplomacy further demonstrates its capacity to manage global supply-chain risks, a capability that can be applied to Africa's green minerals strategy to help secure the local processing of critical resources such as cobalt and lithium.

Türkiye's approach foregrounds practical delivery over diplomatic rhetoric. Rather than confining itself to high-level negotiations, Türkiye is using its presidency to scale models already tested at home, with the Zero Waste initiative as the clearest example. The aim is not to project influence but to offer partners replicable solutions where they are needed.

For African partners, the value of this approach lies in its concreteness. The Zero Waste model, for instance, speaks directly to the waste-management challenges of Africa's growing cities and opens space for waste-to-energy investments. Targeted, transferable initiatives of this kind are far more actionable for African governments than sweeping climate pledges that remain unimplemented. Steps of this kind link global climate governance to the immediate needs of African

29 Said Abubakar Garba, "Beyond the Humanitarian Mandate: Assessing the Strategic Calculus of Türkiye's Foreign Aid Programs", *Turkish Journal of International Development*, vol. 1, no. 2, (2025), 127–150, <https://doi.org/10.55888/TU-JID.2025.21>.

30 "Regarding the International Day of Zero Waste", Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press Release No. 56, 30 March 2026, https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-56_-uluslararasi-sifir-atik-gunu-hk.cn.mfa.

urban centres, helping translate pledges into improvements in health, energy security, and local environmental conditions.

Transferable initiatives such as Zero Waste produce lasting results only when paired with local capacity to sustain them. Closing the climate divide therefore requires Türkiye to move beyond infrastructure and project delivery toward institutionalised knowledge-sharing. Drawing on programmes such as the Africa Energy Sector Technical Assistance Program (AESTAP) to train African specialists ensures that the transition is not only just but locally managed, building the domestic regulatory capacity needed to govern complex energy ecosystems effectively.³¹

CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

Two challenges in particular will shape the future of the presidency. The first is external: the road to COP31 is not free of obstacles. Geopolitical fragmentation and great-power rivalry risk eroding the unity that ambitious climate action requires. Türkiye must therefore strike a careful balance between its strategic priorities in the Mediterranean and Eurasia and its role as a credible mediator for the global South. A persistent risk is that negotiations remain narrowly focused on mitigation, sidelining adaptation and loss and damage, the issues at the heart of Africa's concerns. Türkiye's opportunity lies in reframing the Action Agenda to foreground concrete deliverables rather than non-binding pledges. By shifting the focus from negotiation to implementation, Türkiye can produce a COP that translates into tangible infrastructure projects and substantive technology transfer.³²

The second challenge is internal and arises from within the African continent. The African Group of Negotiators (AGN) forms the largest regional bloc within the UNFCCC; while it has secured important gains on loss and damage and adaptation finance, fragility in its internal cohesion persists. Priorities diverge along geographic, economic, and sectoral lines. Small island states and coastal economies foreground adaptation and loss and damage; forest-rich states in the Congo Basin and West Africa prioritise REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) and carbon markets. Hydrocarbon producers such as Nigeria, Angola, and Mozambique press for a phased transition that preserves fiscal space, while Sahel and Horn of Africa states frame their agenda around food security and climate-induced displacement. Although the Addis

31 "Africa Energy Sector Technical Assistance Program (AESTAP)", African Development Bank, <https://www.afdb.org/en/topics-and-sectors/initiatives-and-partnerships/africa-energy-sector-technical-assistance-program>, accessed 6 April 2026; Garba and Demirtaş, *Nigeria-Türkiye Partnership*, 102.

32 SETA, *Türkiye's Emerging Role*, 17.

Ababa Declaration projected a unified stance ahead of COP30, translating that stance into binding outcomes depends on reconciling these competing national interests. For Türkiye, this means that a single “African agenda” framing will not suffice. An effective COP31 presidency requires a multi-layered engagement strategy that works with regional economic communities and sub-continental coalitions, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the East African Community (EAC), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and avoids treating the AGN as a monolithic interlocutor. Failure to grasp this internal heterogeneity risks producing outcomes that favour some states while under-representing others, undermining the very solidarity the presidency seeks to build. Managed with care, however, this heterogeneity becomes an opportunity: a multi-layered approach gives Türkiye the flexibility to produce distinct, tailored outcomes with different African coalitions in parallel, rather than tying the summit’s success to a single continental consensus.³³

CONCLUSION

Türkiye’s hosting of COP31 in Antalya carries significance beyond that of a diplomatic milestone. By shaping the Action Agenda and building on the Ankara Consensus, Türkiye can serve as a bridge between the ambitions of the global North and the development needs of the global South. Climate action has entered a phase in which implementation, more than commitment, has become decisive, and the partnership Türkiye has built with Africa over the past two decades is shaped by precisely that delivery focus.

For African states, the partnership with Türkiye offers a path to energy sovereignty and industrialisation free of the colonial baggage associated with older donor relationships. For Türkiye, delivering concrete outcomes at COP31 will consolidate its position as an advocate of a more equitable international order. By aligning its domestic technological base with the practical needs of its African partners, Türkiye has the opportunity to ensure that Antalya produces real results for the states that need them most.

Achieving these outcomes, however, requires clarity on the criteria by which the presidency will be judged. In this respect, three areas stand out as the most substantive expressions of the presidency’s institutional character and its global diplomatic footprint. The first is a concrete, Africa-focused financing package to be announced at Antalya, anchored in a triangular mechanism among Turkish institutions, the African Development Bank, and multilateral climate funds, and designed to lower the cost of capital for renewable-energy projects on the

³³ Nick Micinski, Victoria Markiewicz, and Praise P.T. Gandah, “Who Speaks for Africa at COP? Power and Politics at the UN Climate Negotiations”, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, June 2024, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/06/who-speaks-for-africa-at-cop-power-and-politics-at-the-un-climate-negotiations>.

continent. The second is a technical cooperation track built on the institutional foundations of AESTAP and TİKA, tied to measurable targets in terms of African specialists trained and regulatory frameworks supported. The third is close coordination with Australia under the Türkiye-Australia Partnership Modalities, which would ensure that Türkiye's Action Agenda on adaptation, loss and damage, and critical minerals advances in step with the formal negotiation tracks. Implementing this agenda will require sustained attention throughout the presidency year. Ultimately, Antalya will be judged by tangible outcomes: finance mobilised, specialists trained, and projects launched on African soil.

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TUNÇ DEMİRTAŞ

Tunç Demirtaş completed his undergraduate and master's degrees in 2012 and 2015, respectively, at the Department of International Relations, Bursa Uludağ University. He defended his master's thesis entitled "The Role of Soft Power Tools in Türkiye's Africa Policy", which was awarded the Third Best Thesis Prize in the Field of Social Sciences. Demirtaş completed his Ph. D. in 2022 at Bursa Uludağ University with a dissertation titled "Risks and Opportunities in State Re-Building: The Case of the Horn of Africa." He currently teaches various courses, including African politics, at the Department of IR, Mersin University. In addition, he serves as co-editor of the YTB Africa Yearbook, published by the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB). Demirtaş has produced a wide range of academic work on African politics, including articles, book chapters, analyses, and reports, with a particular focus on the Horn of Africa as well as other regions of the continent. As part of his academic research, he has conducted fieldwork in countries such as Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Africa. Demirtaş is currently a Foreign Policy Researcher at the SETA, and his research interests include Horn of Africa politics, global and regional power competition in Africa, and Türkiye–Africa relations.

SAID ABUBAKAR GARBA

Dr. Said Abubakar Garba is a scholar-practitioner and a veteran of the Armed Forces of Nigeria. He earned his Ph. D. in International Relations from Middle East Technical University, Türkiye (2025), with a thesis titled "Nigerian Energy Cooperation with the European Union: Energy and Environmental Security Dynamics." This doctoral work builds upon an extensive academic foundation that includes an MSc in International Affairs and Defence Studies from the Nigerian Defence Academy (2015), MPA from the University of Lagos (2012), PGDE from the National Open University of Nigeria (2015) and a BSc (Hons) in Political Science and Defence Studies from the Nigerian Defence Academy (2004). Throughout his career, Dr. Garba has held several key appointments, notably serving as the pioneer Assistant Defense Attaché in Ankara (2016-2020), where he was at the forefront of Nigeria–Türkiye defence diplomacy. His current research focuses on geopolitics, security-energy-development nexus in the Sahel and the protection of critical energy infrastructure, seeking to develop policies that bridge the gap between regional stability and trans-regional energy and environmental security.

Closing The Climate Divide: Türkiye's COP31 Presidency As a Catalyst For Africa's Just Transition

Tunç Demirtaş, Said Abubakar Garba

L Türkiye's COP31 presidency arrives at a moment when the climate divide between developed and developing regions is widening rather than narrowing. Located at the intersection of Europe, Asia, and Africa, Türkiye is positioned to use its diplomatic outreach capacity to amplify Africa's voice in global climate negotiations. A just transition for Africa, grounded in equitable access to finance, technology, and renewable energy, remains central to the realisation of global climate justice. Persistent gaps in capacity, investment, and representation, however, leave the continent at risk of being left behind. Türkiye's presidency can help narrow this gap by strengthening South-South cooperation and supporting African-led climate finance mechanisms. By shaping its COP31 presidency in alignment with African priorities, Türkiye can help transform the summit from a stage for abstract commitments into a platform on which concrete cooperation mechanisms are developed. This process offers Türkiye the opportunity to translate its middle-power diplomacy into a more visible, results-oriented contribution to climate justice, development, and the strengthening of Africa's representation in global climate governance.



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