EAST AFRICAN
CRUDE OIL PIPELINE
HOST COMMUNITIES

Our reflections from COP30 and our demands for COP31.



OCTOBER 2026

NEWSLETTER

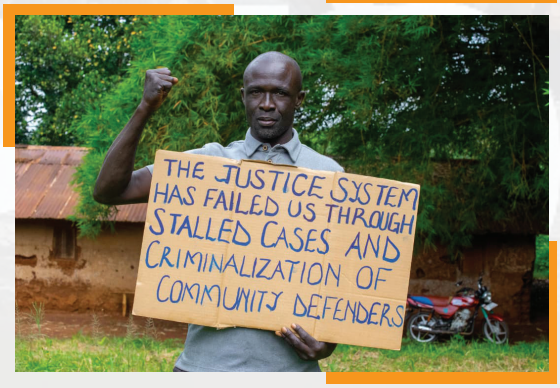
From the shores of Lake Albert to the negotiating halls of the United Nations, one question follows our communities: who gets to decide the future of the land, the water and the climate we live in?

On 9 November, 2026, the world's governments gather again in Antalya, Türkiye for COP31 and this particular COP marks the 10th year of the Paris agreement. In this inaugural edition of our newsletter, we look back at COP30 in Belém, look ahead to what Antalya must deliver, and we state plainly what our communities living along the EACOP corridor demand. We are not observers of this story. We live inside it and this is our story to tell.

COP30 IN BELÉM: THE COP THAT PROMISED MUCH AND NAMED NOTHING

Belém was billed as the "Amazon COP," the "Implementation COP" and the "Adaptation COP." It took place in the shadow of a renewed US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and deepening geopolitical tension, and it closed on 22 November 2025 with a package called the Global Mutirão decision, a Brazilian word for collective effort. Collective effort is what our communities along the EACOP corridor have practised for years. Yet in Belém, decisions that shape our land, water and future were made about us far more than with us.





The package delivered four things: a call to at least triple adaptation finance by 2035, the Belém Adaptation Indicators, a just transition work stream and a Belém Gender Action Plan.

Each one comes with a catch. The tripling of adaptation finance ends years of gridlock, but **the 2035 deadline costs vulnerable communities time they do not have.** For a country waiting on climate defences, 2030 versus 2035 is not a technicality. It is five more years of exposure. For families in Hoima, Kikuube and Buliisa, whose farmland, water sources and livelihoods are already under pressure, five years is a very long wait for protection. The Belém Adaptation Indicators give us a yardstick for measuring resilience, but they create no new legal obligations, so they offer measurement without enforcement. A yardstick only means something when the people being measured help hold it, and communities must own the data on what resilience looks like on our own land. The just transition work stream and the Gender Action Plan are welcome, but no funding was agreed to make the just transition mechanism operational. The architecture is there however the means to build it are not, and the women, youth and elders who carry the heaviest load in our villages and homes cannot be asked to wait for it.

What Belém refused to say

More than 80 countries backed a formal roadmap to move away from fossil fuels, and a draft text carried it. Then, in the final hours, under pressure from major producers, **every reference to fossil fuels disappeared.** The final decision did not mention them at all.





Brazil's presidency and Colombia have promised voluntary roadmaps outside the UN process. That keeps the conversation alive, but it lacks the authority of a formal COP decision. After 30 COPs, **the cause of the crisis still goes unnamed in the outcome text.** For us this is not an abstract omission. A pipeline is being built through our communities while the negotiating rooms cannot bring themselves to say the words that describe it.

Then here comes Belém's verdict: progress on the language of adaptation, failure on the cause of the emergency, and a finance promise stretched into the next decade. For communities living beside new oil and gas projects, our central demand, a clear no to fossil fuels, remains unanswered. Belém stayed silent but we, the communities who live with the effects of the EACOP project, will not and we will continue saying what the COP would not.

COP31 IN ANTALYA: WHAT IS DIFFERENT AND WHAT IS AT STAKE

COP31 will run from 9th to 20th November, 2026 in Antalya, with the World Leaders' Summit on 11th and 12th November. Its structure is without precedent. Türkiye hosts and holds the COP Presidency under Minister Murat Kurum, while Australia's Chris Bowen serves as President of Negotiations with "exclusive authority" over the negotiating process and draft texts. The split came out of a compromise at COP30, when Australia gave up its bid to host in exchange for leading the talks and putting the Pacific at the centre of the process.





The pre-COP reflected that bargain. It was held in the Pacific rather than in the host country, so the front-line voices of small island states shaped the run-up, and the pledging effort for a Pacific-led resilience fund was part of it. Kurum's own framing was that US$1.5 billion "for 1.5 degrees" would save the Pacific, and Pacific ministers have said they will hold the Presidency to that.

What makes Antalya a real test is that the arrangement has not yet been tried under pressure. Kurum has said the "final decision" lies with the COP Presidency, even as Bowen runs the negotiations. If the two roles pull apart over fossil fuel transition language, adaptation finance or the follow-up to the 1.5°C pledge, the outcome will show whether this model can be repeated or whether it only blurs accountability.

The stakes for frontline communities are concrete. Will the pledges on finance and adaptation reach people on the ground, or stay in the text? Will the talks name a credible path away from fossil fuels, or leave the gap that new oil and gas projects keep exploiting? And will communities whose land, water and livelihoods are affected have any real voice in a process designed for governments? Antalya will be judged by what it delivers to the places that have contributed least to the crisis and whether the people from those places are treated as rights-holders and not as just spectators.

BELÉM VERSUS ANTALYA

ATTRIBUTES	COP30, BELÉM (2025)	COP31, ANTALYA (2026)
Mood	Hope, then disappointment	High stakes, low trust
Fossil fuels	Roadmap erased from final text	Test of whether the transition can return to the formal process
Adaptation finance	Tripling by 2035 agreed in principle	Test of whether it becomes a funded, predictable delivery pathway
Leadership	Brazil, Amazon host	Split presidency, Türkiye and Australia, Pacific voices upfront
Civic space	Broad marches and civic mobilisation	Serious concerns over protest rights and access
Africa's moment	Adaptation and finance ask	Adaptation called "non-negotiable"; COP32 heads to Addis Ababa in 2027
Oil-affected communities	Our call for a clear no to fossil fuels went unanswered	Test of whether communities get a real seatand a voice, not just a mention

WHAT WE HOPE FOR IN ANTALYA

Belém left us with promises that had no means behind them. Our hopes for Antalya are simple: that words finally become delivery, and that the people living with the consequences are in the room and have their own table to voice out our concerns. Four tests will tell us whether that happens.

1. **A credible path to finance delivery.** African negotiators are pushing for a clear benchmark and delivery pathway to triple adaptation finance by 2035. Developing countries need an estimated US$310 to 365 billion a year for adaptation by 2035, while international public adaptation finance in 2023 stood at about US$26 billion. The gap is the story. For our communities the test is practical: can adaptation money reach a village in Hoima, Kikuube, Greater Masaka or Buliisa directly?
2. **A way back for the fossil fuel transition.** Voluntary roadmaps keep the conversation alive, but they cannot replace a decision inside the UN climate process. The communities living beside the oil rigs in King Fisher community and the pipeline in Kikuube need that decision most.
3. **Pacific resilience.** The Pacific Resilience Facility has secured about US$180 million in pledges against a US$500 million target. It shows whether pledges turn into money. We stand with Pacific communities in this: both of us are asked to be patient while the damage arrives early.
4. **Safe space to speak and participate.** None of the first three can be checked unless the people affected, and those who hold governments to account, can enter the room, speak and protest without fear. Our own representatives must be among them.

These hopes rest on one question: does the money actually arrive, and does it reach the people who need it? The finance picture suggests it does not. So we, the oil affected communities in the Albertine, will follow the money ourselves.





Climate finance is not failing for lack of pledges. It is failing for lack of grants, speed, accountability and direct access. And accountability depends on something the finance debate often ignores: whether people are free to ask where the money went, communities must own and appreciate that question as well.

Climate Finance and Civic Space: Two Sides of One Struggle

You cannot fund climate justice while silencing the people who demand it. On this point, Antalya's host faces serious scrutiny. Ahead of a NATO summit in Ankara in July, police reportedly rounded up more than 4,000 people on terror-related charges, including journalists, civil society leaders and environmental volunteers. Amnesty International and others criticised clauses in the COP31 hosting agreement that could hinder human rights defenders' participation, and Human Rights Watch has said the host must facilitate civil society participation. Climate Action Network was allocated only five press slots at the June Bonn talks, a move described as a deliberate narrowing of civic space. Meanwhile, observers note that oil and gas lobbyists continue to find easy access to the process.





We know this pattern at home. In Uganda, as we reported in June, laws like the Protection of Sovereignty Bill 2026 threaten to cast community organisations as suspects, while pipeline-affected families face intimidation for asking about compensation, land and water.

The link is direct:

- No civic space means no accountability for where finance goes.
- No accountability means finance serves banks and projects, not people.
- No people-centred finance means communities adapt alone, or are displaced.

A COP that excludes critical voices is not a negotiation. It is simply a showcase.

OUR DEMANDS TO COP31

Everything above points to what we are asking for. These demands do not come from consultants or committees. They come from the communities of Hoima, Kikuube, Greater Masaka and Buliisa: women, youth, elders, persons with disabilities, cultural, religious and local leaders. Together they form the People's Agenda, our collective mandate to COP31, and they follow three major perspectives which are the cause, the money, and the people. https://eacophc.org/download/the-eacop-impacted-peoples-agenda/?wpdmdl=3272&refresh=6af4478e940d11794393998









We are clearly stating out the cause. Our first and non-negotiable demand is that COP31 put a fossil fuel phase-out roadmap into the formal outcome. That means no new oil, gas or coal projects, an end to fossil fuel financing and subsidies, an immediate halt before more land, water and livelihoods are lost. We demand that polluter lobbyists be kept out of climate decision-making, and that the banks, insurers and export credit agencies behind EACOP apply binding human rights and climate standards, or withdraw. A climate process that protects those who profit from the crisis cannot claim to protect those who suffer it.

Fund the response and protect the people. Adaptation must be funded with grants, not debt: triple adaptation finance by 2030, not 2035, as public, grant-based finance with a clear annual delivery schedule. Capitalise the Loss and Damage Fund with new money from polluters, and make it reachable by communities hit by fossil fuel projects, not only by storms and droughts. Put money in communities' hands through direct-access windows for local organisations, women, youth, persons with disabilities and Indigenous Peoples, with simple processes and community-set priorities. Fund the just transition mechanism that Belém left empty, with land rights, free, prior and informed consent, and fair compensation at its core. And defend civic space: safe access, peaceful protest and press freedom in Antalya, protection for environmental and land rights defenders everywhere, and an end to laws that criminalise advocacy.

"You will decide in rooms that we are rarely allowed to enter, but the consequences will land in our villages, on our land and in our water. Do not decide about us without us. Take our demands home as your instructions, not as our requests. The Climate crisis is emerging rapidly now more than ever and we are ready to fight for climate justice now, more than ever."

Recheal Tugume,
Chapter Coordinator, EACOPHC,
and EACOP Project Affected Person

CONCLUSION

Belém showed what the world is willing to say. Antalya must show what it is willing to do. After thirty-plus COPs, we, communities along the pipeline corridor are done being told that the transition will come, that the money is on its way, and that civic space will be respected tomorrow.

Our argument to COP31 is simple. **A climate process that cannot name fossil fuels cannot end them.** Finance that does not reach communities cannot protect them. A negotiating room that shuts out the people most affected cannot claim legitimacy. These are not three failures but one: the world keeps designing the response without those who live with the cause. The test for Antalya is whether it reverses that, by naming the cause in the formal text, delivering money directly and as grants, and opening the room to the people carrying the consequences.

That is our message to the Presidency in Türkiye, to Chris Bowen and the negotiating team, and to every delegation. The People's Agenda is not a petition. It is a mandate, and whoever holds the pen in Antalya will answer to it.

We will not be waiting in the corridor of history. Whatever is decided in Antalya, we will keep documenting, organising and speaking from Hoima, Kikuube and Buliisa until climate justice is not a slogan but a lived reality. **The climate crisis is not coming. It is here.** So are we, in solidarity, as we continue to mobilise and organise.

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