COP31 PRESIDENT OPENS UN CLIMATE SUMMIT WITH CALL TO TURN CLIMATE PROMISES INTO ACTION

- **COP31 President Murat Kurum says 1.5°C goal "remains our guide" as the world confronts "many challenges"**
- **Kurum declares COP31 an "Implementation COP" focused on turning commitments into results**
- **COP31 President of Negotiations Minister Chris Bowen says COP31 is an opportunity to show what cooperation can deliver for the climate and global energy security**
- **Food, Agriculture and Health the thematic focus for Day One**

ANTALYA, Nov 9 – COP31 opened in Antalya, Türkiye, with COP31 President Murat Kurum calling on countries to turn climate promises into practical action, as the world confronts increasingly interconnected climate, economic and geopolitical challenges.

Kurum told delegates that climate change can no longer be considered in isolation from the other pressures facing countries and communities, and that *"each crisis makes the others worse."* Conflict and geopolitical tensions, economic uncertainty and debt, food insecurity, rapid technological change and unequal access to capital and technology are unfolding alongside a world that is becoming hotter, more fragile and increasingly exposed to disasters.

Climate impacts are also crossing borders and sectors, Kurum said, with drought, flooding, water scarcity and extreme heat affecting food production, supply chains, economies, migration, cities and human health. *"A drought in one part of the world is felt at the dinner table in another,"* he said.

Kurum called for COP31 to become an *"Implementation COP",* focused on closing the gap between commitments made in negotiating rooms and tangible improvements in people's lives. He pledged that the Presidency will seek to bring countries together across geopolitical and economic divides, and that *"Türkiye has long served as a bridge - we are ready to take on that responsibility again."*

Kurum reaffirmed the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting temperature increases to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels as the benchmark guiding international action, saying it *"remains our guide"* and that at COP31 *"we will be frank about what the science tells us."*

The *WMO State of the Climate Update 2026*, released on COP31's opening day, shows that the past 12 years have individually been the warmest on record, with the past four years being the top four. The *Belém Mission to 1.5* report, published ahead of COP31 by the COP Presidencies of Türkiye, Australia, Brazil and Azerbaijan outlines key opportunities, barriers, and actionable solutions to keep 1.5ºC within reach and strengthen adaptation and resilience in a changing world.

The Presidency's focus will be on ensuring that decisions taken in Antalya translate into results beyond the negotiating rooms, from more resilient urban infrastructure and productive farmland to cleaner industrial production and lower household energy costs.

Electrification and finance as engines of implementation

Kurum used his opening statement to reinforce the role of electrification in the energy transition, highlighting Türkiye's "35-by-35" Global Electrification Pledge, which sets an objective of increasing electricity's share of final energy consumption to 35 percent by 2035.

Renewable energy, stronger grids, energy storage, energy efficiency, clean transport and green industry will be mutually reinforcing components of that transformation, Kurum said.

The Presidency wants the results of international climate negotiations to become visible in people's daily lives, *"in buildings that use less energy, in clean public transport, in energy they can afford and in new jobs."*

Kurum recalled the climate finance goal agreed in Baku, of at least $300 billion annually for developing countries by 2035 and the call to scale climate finance from all sources to at least $1.3 trillion annually.

"Now our promises must be backed by capital. That capital must fund investment. And that investment must deliver results."

President of Negotiations for COP31 Chris Bowen said; *"COP31 is an opportunity to show what cooperation can deliver at this crucial time for both our climate and global energy security."*

"It will be about unlocking finance and investment, accelerating electrification and boosting action on the ocean, nature's greatest climate regulator.

"COP31 must help close the gap between commitment and delivery, and focus on real-world outcomes -- investment, infrastructure, jobs, energy security and resilient communities.

"Working together, we can turn climate commitments into stronger, more resilient and prosperous economies.

"We must turn climate ambition into real-world outcomes."

UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Stiell called out the costs of global heating and extreme weather on communities in his opening speech. He noted: *"This year's fossil fuel cost chaos has delivered a global shockwave, hitting households hard and spreading inflation like a cancer. But the solutions are clear: Global renewables saved US$265 billion in the first half of this year alone. Adaptation delivers proven returns on investment. It's in every country's interest to limit global heating, and protect every community and economy."*

Underscoring the need for solutions that deliver existing commitments, driving faster and fairer progress, he added, *"The urgency of this moment must drive us forward. Global heating is already costing the Earth, and the vulnerable everywhere are paying the highest price. COP31 must supercharge solutions, across both the negotiations and the Action Agenda. The stronger the COP31 outcomes, the more they will help convert targets into real-world outcomes, spreading more benefits to more people."*

Food, Agriculture and Health Day puts people at the centre

The interconnected challenges COP31 President Kurum highlighted in his opening address will be reflected in COP31's first thematic day, focused on food, agriculture and health. The current "Super" El Niño has the potential to push nearly 50 million additional people into

acute hunger, and the day will focus on how countries can build greater resilience across the systems people depend on for their health, food and livelihoods.

That means moving from climate plans to practical implementation – and ensuring the finance, knowledge and partnerships needed to deliver them reach communities on the ground. The Antalya Initiative for Resilient Health Systems (AIR), launched by the COP31 Presidency, Türkiye's Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH), will help countries turn existing climate and health commitments into practical action by strengthening health systems' ability to anticipate, adapt to and respond to growing climate-related risks.

For farmers and rural communities, the focus is also on closing the gap between climate ambition and the resources available to respond. A High-Level Women Farmers' Dialogue convened by the COP31 Presidency, IFAD and Türkiye's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry will examine barriers to climate finance and launch *The Unfunded Half*, a new joint report from IFAD and the Ministry.

Young people are also part of that implementation agenda. A High-Level Young Farmers' Dialogue, convened by the COP31 Presidency, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and Türkiye's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, focuses on the role young people play in transforming agriculture, water and food systems and features the Antalya Call to Action for Youth on Agri-food Systems.

That focus on empowering the next generation will extend beyond agriculture. The COP31 Presidency Youth Climate Champion will officially open the new Children and Youth Pavilion, which will provide a dedicated platform for their voices, leadership and solutions.

Through the Youth Climate Solutions Showcase, emerging innovators will connect directly with investors, funders and strategic partners who can help move youth-led ideas from promise to real-world impact.

The agenda will continue tomorrow with the launch of the Turquoise Nexus Initiative, led by Türkiye's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in coordination with the COP31 Presidency. A flagship programme under FAO's Food and Agriculture for Sustainable Transformation (FAST) Partnership, the initiative will draw on Türkiye's agricultural experience to bring together the transformation of food systems, sustainable water management and climate adaptation. The initiative will seek to carry that integration from international discussion into implementation, translating it into national policy commitments and aligned investment flows.

The opening-day programme puts into practice COP31 President Kurum's call for an "Implementation COP", with the Presidency's agenda over the coming two weeks focused on turning climate commitments into practical results. The two-week summit will occur across the Blue Zone, hosting the official climate negotiations and high-level meetings, while the Green Zone will feature thematic centres where government agencies, businesses, academics, civil society organizations, and young people can share climate solutions, with both zones officially opened today.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- COP31 is the 31st Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and takes place in Antalya, Türkiye, from 9–20 November 2026
- For more information, please contact COP31 Presidency at media@cop31.tr
- For more information regarding UN Climate, please contact the UNFCCC at press@unfccc.int
- The Belém Mission to 1.5 report can be found here
- For official photography from COP31 Presidency events and activities, visit the COP31 Flickr
- For official photography from all other COP31 events and activities, visit the UNFCCC Flickr