



CLIMATE INNOVATION FORUM – OPENING SESSION

## Keynote Address by the COP31 President-Designate

H.E. Murat Kurum

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**Dear Friends,**

I warmly welcome you all with my deepest respect. It is a true honour to stand before you today as Türkiye prepares to host COP31. I would like to thank our hosts from the Climate Innovation Forum, E3G, and the UK government. On our journey to COP31, I extend my gratitude and respect to all of you for your unwavering support for the future of our world.

We meet at a time when many around the world are facing hardships. The costs of recent conflicts are still echoing through the global economy, debt pressures are deepening, and we now face a super El Niño. Studies have shown that El Niño events can cost around five trillion dollars, and this year could be the most expensive El Niño on record.

And that is even before we start counting the greatest cost of all, which is the loss of life. Meanwhile, our ability to collaborate is being tested.

We hope that in Antalya this November we can turn things around. We want to send a clear signal of collective commitment, and we want to deliver results that improve the lives of people around the world, so that everyone clearly understands the value of participation. This week in London is a critical stepping stone in this journey as we develop solutions and build momentum.

As the COP31 Presidency, we assume our responsibility for guiding the process with deep determination. We have been listening to everyone and assessing where we can and need to make progress, and we have now developed an agenda that is focused on delivering concrete results.

Two weeks ago in Germany, we formally launched many initiatives to a gathering of countries. Here in London, we want to widen participation to include more businesses, institutions, NGOs and charities, and by the end of the week we want to have secured more support for our objectives and targets. This is needed so that everyone comes to COP31 in Antalya prepared and ready to make the global summit a success.

*“Accelerating electrification in daily life is an urgent need to protect countries, businesses, and families from fluctuating energy prices.”*

In all the discussions we have held so far, one theme has stood out very clearly: electrification. This issue is being discussed today in government cabinets and in company boardrooms, because accelerating electrification in daily life is an urgent need to protect countries, businesses, and families from fluctuating energy prices. It is directly linked to the most tangible decisions people make in their daily lives — from which car to buy to how to heat their homes and reduce their energy bills.

COP31 offers a unique opportunity to address these issues with a practical approach and to accelerate global transformation. So, as the COP31 Presidency, we want to spark a global conversation about electrification, shaped around the goal of meeting 35% of final energy consumption from electricity by 2035.

This “35 by 35” target will be delivered by electrifying transportation, buildings, and industry, and it needs to be supported by modern grids and infrastructure investments. We are delighted that the target is already supported by many countries, international organisations, and coalitions of the willing — including the International Energy Agency, the International Renewable Energy Agency, and the Global Renewables Alliance.

We have also seen the recent We Mean Business Coalition survey, a public opinion poll for the business world, showing that the business world is strongly prepared for this transformation, and that 90% of the companies surveyed expect to electrify their operations by 2035.

And in Antalya, the “35 percent by 2035” goal will be one of our most important agenda items, and for the success of COP31 this is exactly the kind of momentum we need. The discussions we have conducted, and the many important decisions made, show that as we arrive here today we need to turn these decisions into implementation. That is why concrete results and decisive steps are needed.

All of our conversations show us that, to talk about success, we need to consider two important things. First, at COP28 in Dubai, the first Global Stocktake put forward that increasing electricity demand should come from clean energy supplies — because for a secure and sustainable energy future we need electrification and renewables to move forward simultaneously.

Secondly, we need to strengthen the conditions that will accelerate progress and enable us to achieve this goal. In this context, we have been talking with many developing countries about their needs for finance and technology. Support for the developing world is of particular importance: in 2024, countries collectively agreed to mobilise at least 300 billion dollars every year by 2035 under the Baku Finance Goal. However, last year saw the largest annual drop on record in overseas development assistance.

For the success of this transformation, and to realise the goals of developing countries, they have to be able to access the finance they need. As the COP31 incoming Presidency, we will work

decisively to keep this on the agenda, and we will call on all donor countries to provide their contributions.

Ladies and gentlemen, electrification is a flagship initiative for COP31. However, as part of a COP focused on implementation, we want to make progress in many areas beyond it.

Our First Lady, Her Excellency Mrs. Emine Erdoğan, has launched the Zero Waste Movement — now a world brand — and the methane reduction initiative, as global priorities. Reducing methane emissions from landfills is one of the quickest and most implementable opportunities to slow global warming. The waste sector accounts for approximately 20 percent of human-caused methane emissions, and we already have proven and scalable solutions available. We have set out a global target to halve the increase in waste production by 2035.

Resilient cities are also among our priorities. Türkiye has developed extensive experience in building resilient cities, stemming from the reconstruction we undertook following the catastrophe of the century in 2023. Under the leadership of our President, His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, across 11 provinces and more than 200 construction sites we rebuilt 455,000 homes and handed them to our people affected by the earthquakes. We made sure they met the highest energy efficiency standards: we built earthquake-resilient cities and, at the same time, reduced energy consumption by around 40 percent — critical to protecting families from rising energy prices.

Energy efficiency is widely recognised as one of the most fundamental elements of the energy transition today. In this context, we want to use COP31 to discuss a target of reducing energy consumption intensity in the building sector by at least 25 percent by 2035 — a concrete initiative we put forward in our Action Agenda.

Green industrialization is another area where we want to make progress, and electrification will be an important part of this process. In addition, we want to discuss how we can increase the use of recycled materials in the production and manufacturing sector to at least 15 percent by 2035.

We have also announced that we will launch a new initiative known as the Climate Implementation Bridge. This will strengthen the alignment between climate goals and economic development policies, particularly in developing and least developed countries.

Finally, we believe that awareness and widespread climate literacy are essential for sustaining societal support for climate action. In some countries awareness can be high, but all over the world we want to increase it. If our citizens can put this forward more strongly, then governments cannot remain unfamiliar with or indifferent to these topics. From homes to neighbourhoods, to districts, to cities and countries, we need to scale this up.

Climate literacy is indispensable in this process — for people themselves, for a climate-resilient future, and for people to make the best choices. Therefore, by 2030 we aim to include climate

change in educational curricula in more countries around the world, because children at a young age should learn and understand more about climate change.

Ladies and gentlemen, these are some of our initiatives, with themes for every sphere of COP. Together with the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye (TOBB), we are also launching the COP31 Business Forum — a year-long platform to mobilise business participation for the Business Summit, which will be held in Antalya on 12-13 November.

This week, we have an important opportunity to make progress. As the COP31 Presidency, we have set out transparently and clearly our key priorities — from electrification to waste management, resilient cities, education, and finance — and we have set targets for all of them. Here at London Climate Action Week, we are calling upon the world: come, and let us focus on these priorities that will shape the future of our world.

Let us work together — for the future of our children, we need to do this courageously. When we come to COP, let us tell the whole world the story of what we have done, our strong cooperation and our vision. Because if we want momentum, we need action; if we want hope, we need global action.

This is how we deliver a COP of the future and a COP of implementation. We want everyone to try every avenue, with no stone left unturned. Action should be rapid, on the ground, across all sectors and with all stakeholders, and we need to mobilise all together.

All the decisions made until now have been very valuable. My friend André mentioned the decisions in Brazil, and before that in Azerbaijan and Dubai. We will execute all of these as the COP31 Presidency, together with the UN — including my dear friend Selwin Hart, who is here today — and our Australian friends.

Australia and Türkiye are working like a single body. There was some curiosity about this COP because of its new approach, but multilateralism can be delivered through the Türkiye-Australia partnership, with my dear friend Chris as President of Negotiations. We are working in consultation and in harmony, implementing the process together.

I would like to thank you all once again for your participation and for being here. For the success of COP31, let us work together. I believe we will all work together and implement our decisions, and I extend my warmest greetings to each of you.

## **Murat Kurum**

COP31 President-Designate · Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change of Türkiye