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Africa Goes to COP31 Demanding Grants, Not Loans. Sudan's Climate Plan Carries a US$8.2 Billion Price Tag. It Should Say on What Terms Before Antalya Opens.

3Bi Research Team | Situation Report | 6 November 2026

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African negotiators bring one demand to COP31, which opens in Antalya on 9 November: climate finance as grants, not loans. Sudan's climate plan costs US$8.2 billion over ten years, and it should state on what terms it needs the money before the agenda fight.

Climate finance terms are on the table at COP31, which opens in Antalya on 9 November 2026. The Africa Group of Negotiators wants public finance to flow as grants and adaptation finance to at least triple. (Illustration: 3Bi)

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Headline Fact

African negotiators are taking one message to COP31: climate finance must come as grants, not loans. On 5 November 2026 the Africa Group of Negotiators' (AGN) lead negotiator for mitigation, Veronica Gundu, said 51% of climate financing was beginning to flow in debt form, and that public finance under Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement "should flow in grant financing" (The Star, Kenya, 5 November 2026). A day earlier, the AGN chair, Nana Antwi-Boasiako Amoah, wrote that Africa will press for finance that is "predictable and grant-based" and for adaptation finance to be at least tripled, to around US$120 billion a year by 2035 (Climate Home News, 4 November 2026). The summit opens in Antalya on 9 November and closes on 20 November. The first fight is over the agenda.

Timeline

- **October 2021:** Sudan's updated first Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) puts the cost of its mitigation and adaptation measures at about US$8.2 billion over ten years, and says the government will strive to cover 15% of it (UNFCCC, Sudan Updated First NDC, 12 October 2021).
- **November 2025:** COP30 agrees to "at least triple" adaptation finance for developing countries by 2035, but leaves out the baseline year, a headline amount, who pays and how it is delivered (Climate Home News, 28 October 2026).
- **25 October 2026:** Ghana, which chairs the AGN this year, writes to UN climate chief Simon Stiell asking for three extra agenda items: tripling adaptation finance, trade and climate change, and the financing arrangements of the Green Climate Fund (Climate Home News, 28 October 2026).

- **4 November 2026:** Power Shift Africa publishes "Africa's Priorities for COP31", a policy brief that lists debt burdens, high borrowing costs and inadequate energy access among the pressures African countries bring to Antalya (Power Shift Africa, 4 November 2026).
- **5 November 2026:** Carbon Brief counts 104 substantive items on the COP31 agenda and notes that the African group has filed for the three additions (Carbon Brief, 5 November 2026).
- **9–20 November 2026:** COP31 in Antalya, hosted by Türkiye, with Australia as "president of negotiations" (Carbon Brief, 5 November 2026; UNFCCC, COP31 page).

What We Know / What We Don't

We know what the African group is asking for. In his Climate Home News article, Amoah sets out four asks: finance that is predictable and grant-based; adaptation finance at least tripled; direct access, "so resources reach the institutions and communities that must use them"; and mechanisms that track whether commitments are met. He calls the US$300 billion a year agreed at Baku "a floor, not a ceiling", with the real benchmark the US$1.3 trillion from all sources in the Baku-to-Belém Roadmap (Climate Home News, 4 November 2026). Gundu asked, as reported by The Star, how much of that US$300 billion and US$1.3 trillion "is going to flow in grant form", and warned that highly indebted African countries "cannot continue to carry an extra debt vulnerability" from climate finance (The Star, 5 November 2026).

We know the scale of the gap, as the AGN chair frames it. Developing countries need an estimated US$305 billion a year for adaptation by 2035, citing the UN Adaptation Gap Report. International public adaptation finance was US$28–32 billion in 2024, a rise of only about US$1 billion on the year before. Africa produces about 4% of global emissions and loses an estimated 2–5% of GDP a year to climate extremes (Climate Home News, 4 November 2026). These are the authors' figures, cited by them to the UN report. 3Bi has not re-checked the underlying report.

We know the agenda is contested. Carbon Brief reports that COP30 already put two finance items on future agendas, developed-country provision of finance under Article 9.1 and making finance flows consistent with the Paris goals under Article 2.1c. The African group's three requested additions come on top, and parties can suggest late additions, which often means an "agenda fight" before talks begin (Carbon Brief, 5 November 2026). As of 28 October, no other developing-country group had officially backed the AGN proposal, and blocs were due to hold pre-COP coordination meetings in Antalya (Climate Home News, 28 October 2026).

We know where Sudan stands on paper. Its NDC costs its measures at US$8.2 billion over ten years: US$4.39 billion for mitigation and US$3.85 billion for adaptation, of which water US$2.37 billion, agriculture US$0.83 billion, public health US$0.5 billion and the coastal zone US$0.15 billion. The government says it will strive to cover 15% of the total, and that past funding trends are "clearly not commensurate" with the need. The NDC names two Green Climate Fund projects,

US$10 million for the Gum Arabic belt and US$25.6 million for rain-fed crop and livestock systems in nine states, which it calls “only a start” (UNFCCC, Sudan Updated First NDC, 12 October 2021). Together they come to US$35.6 million, under 1% of the adaptation costing (3Bi calculation). The NDC lists them as examples and does not say that they are the only funds received.

We do not know Sudan’s position. 3Bi has not seen a Sudanese statement on the AGN’s grants-first demand, the three agenda items or the tripling target. We do not know whether Sudan’s costed needs are expressed anywhere in terms of grants and loans. Nor do we know how COP30’s tripling would be divided, since the baseline and the headline amount are still open.

Implications

In our reading, the AGN’s demand turns a general complaint into a test that every national plan can be held against: on what terms does the money arrive? For a country that costs its plan at US$8.2 billion and expects to fund 15% itself, the answer matters more than the headline number. Loans on that scale would add to the debt of a Least Developed Country (LDC) that the NDC itself describes as having “very limited internal resources”. Grants, or concessional money with direct access, would not.

The timing favours preparation. The agenda decision comes first and the negotiating texts follow, so countries that arrive with specific, costed asks give a bloc position something to point to. Sudan’s NDC already contains the numbers. What it lacks in public is a short note that sorts them by terms.

In our view, three low-cost steps follow. First, Sudan’s climate focal institution, the Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources, and the Ministry of Finance could prepare a one-page note that splits the US$3.85 billion adaptation costing by priority, water first, and states which parts need grants. Second, Sudan could share that note with the AGN’s coordination team before the opening plenary, in support of the tripling and grant-based asks, so that Sudan’s needs appear in the bloc’s evidence. Third, Sudan could identify two or three projects, for example in the water and rain-fed agriculture lines, that are ready for direct-access or Adaptation Fund-style grant windows, and bring them to Antalya as a short pipeline.

3Bi is not claiming that Antalya will deliver grant-based finance, or that the agenda additions will be accepted. The point is narrower. Africa has chosen its message, Sudan has a costed plan, and linking the two takes a short note, not a negotiation.

Watch Next

- **9 November 2026:** Opening of COP31 in Antalya. Watch whether the AGN’s three requested agenda items are adopted, and whether other groups back them (Carbon Brief, 5 November

2026).

- **9–20 November 2026:** Negotiations on the global goal on adaptation, the mitigation work programme and the just transition mechanism, the "Belém-Antalya mechanism" (Carbon Brief, 5 November 2026). Watch for the tripling baseline and whether any text mentions grants.
- **After Antalya:** COP32 in Addis Ababa, which Amoah says will "inherit the same unmet promises" without progress on finance (Climate Home News, 4 November 2026).

Sourcing & Next Update

Primary sources: The Star (Kenya), "Give us grants not loans! African nations say ahead of COP31" (5 November 2026); Climate Home News, "COP31 must deliver finance for Africa or there will be no implementation", by Nana Antwi-Boasiako Amoah and Charles Wanguhu (4 November 2026); Climate Home News, "Africa wants adaptation finance on COP31 agenda, raising risk of a fight" (28 October 2026); Carbon Brief, "Interactive: Tracking negotiating texts at the COP31 climate summit" (5 November 2026); Power Shift Africa, "Africa's Priorities for COP31: Policy Brief" (4 November 2026); UNFCCC, Sudan Updated First NDC (12 October 2021); UNFCCC, COP31 page. For methodology questions or to propose a correction, contact 3Bi's Research Team via 3bisudan.org.

Next update expected when COP31 adopts its agenda on 9 November, or when Sudan publishes a position on adaptation finance terms.

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