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COP31 Went Into Overtime, but It Has Already Created a Platform to Turn Poor Countries' Adaptation Plans Into Projects. Sudan Should Join Early.

3Bi Research Team | Situation Report | 21 November 2026

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COP31 ran past its deadline, but Friday's plenary created a platform to help the least developed countries turn adaptation plans into fundable projects. It brings no new money. Sudan, an LDC with a 2016 plan, should ask to be among its first users.

On 20 November 2026, at COP31 in Antalya, the closing plenary adopted the decision on matters relating to the least developed countries, which establishes the least developed countries national adaptation plan implementation platform under the Least Developed Countries Expert Group; the plenary was then suspended, to resume on 21 November. (Illustration: 3Bi)

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Headline Fact

COP31 did not finish on time, but it has not finished empty-handed. The closing plenary in Antalya convened at around 9:30 pm on Friday, 20 November, adopted the decisions that were ready, and was suspended at 10:29 pm, to resume on Saturday (IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB), 20 November 2026). "We are close to the finish line, but we are not there yet," COP31 President Murat Kurum told delegates (Al Jazeera, 20 November 2026). One of the decisions already gavelled matters directly to Sudan, one of the least developed countries (LDCs). Under the item "Matters relating to the least developed countries", the Conference of the Parties "decides to establish the least developed countries national adaptation plan implementation platform under the Least Developed Countries Expert Group" (LEG), the UN body that helps the poorest countries plan and carry out adaptation (UNFCCC, FCCC/CP/2026/L.7, 20 November 2026, paragraph 6). The platform's job is to help LDCs turn the priorities in their national adaptation plans (NAPs) into projects that funds will accept. Sudan has a NAP, published in 2016 (PreventionWeb, Sudan National Adaptation Plan 2016). The question now is whether it will be among the first countries to use the platform.

Timeline

- **9 November 2026:** As COP31 opens, 3Bi reports that two lines in the draft LDC decision are still in square brackets: one to establish a NAP implementation platform, and an option reaffirming developed countries' obligation to provide "grant-based" adaptation support. We recommend that Sudan back both (3Bi, 9 November 2026).
- **11 November 2026:** In Sudan's national statement to COP31, the country backs the common positions of the African Group, the Arab Group, the G77 and China and the LDCs. It says it is preparing its Fourth National Communication and its first Biennial Transparency Report, and asks that climate finance reach developing countries "fairly, swiftly, easily and predictably,

alongside capacity-building for national institutions" (SUNA via Fana News, 11 November 2026).

- **16 November 2026:** The LDC group tables a compromise that keeps both the platform and the grant-based option. The Arab Group proposes deleting all references to the platform. The EU, Japan and Switzerland oppose reaffirming developed countries' obligation to provide adaptation finance and prefer "no text" (ENB, daily report, 16 November 2026).
- **18 November 2026:** Negotiators agree an unbracketed text and forward it to the COP and to the Paris Agreement's governing body (the CMA) for adoption, after the Arab Group asks to replace "finance providers" with "funding channels" (ENB, daily report, 18 November 2026). The same day, the draft decision on support for transparency reporting notes that 140 first Biennial Transparency Reports had been submitted (UNFCCC, FCCC/PA/CMA/2026/L.2, 18 November 2026, paragraph 1).
- **19 November 2026:** Parties fail to agree on the separate agenda item assessing progress on NAPs and forward an informal note to the June 2027 session of the subsidiary bodies, SB 66 (ENB, daily report, 19 November 2026).
- **20 November 2026:** The LDC decision is issued as FCCC/CP/2026/L.7 at 18:00 local time (UNFCCC, document page, 20 November 2026). That evening, the closing plenary adopts decisions on Article 6 carbon markets, matters relating to the LDCs and the periodic review (ENB, 20 November 2026). Turkish news site Son Dakika reports that the decisions adopted also include the COP and CMA texts on LDCs and the decision on support for transparency reporting (Son Dakika, 20 November 2026).

What We Know

We know what the platform is, and what it is not. It sits under the LEG "within its mandate". It does not create a new constituted body, it must avoid duplicating the work of the climate funds, and it is to accommodate new activities by reprioritising the LEG's existing work (FCCC/CP/2026/L.7, paragraphs 6–7). The parallel draft for the Paris Agreement contains the same establishing paragraph (UNFCCC draft text on COP item 11 / CMA item 14, version 18 November 2026, via tralac, CMA paragraph 5).

We know what it is meant to do. The decision lists eight areas of support. They include translating NAP priorities into programmes "using nationally validated registries of priorities, catalogues of project concept notes" and the LEG's NAPX toolkit; feasibility studies and "implementation-ready adaptation project proposals and pipelines"; matching priorities with readiness support and financing windows, and following up "throughout proposal submission, project approval, fund disbursement and implementation"; and tracking which NAP priorities have actually been funded (paragraph 8(a)–(c) and (h)). The Adaptation Fund, the Green Climate Fund and the Least

Developed Countries Fund, and their accredited entities, are invited to collaborate with it (paragraphs 9–10).

We know which problems it is meant to solve, because the text lists them. It notes "limited uptake by funding channels of project concept notes and project pipelines developed by the least developed countries, with very few progressing, so far, into projects that have been approved, had funds disbursed and been delivered". It also notes "low uptake of existing support offers" by LDCs, such as help with accrediting national entities and deploying liaison officers (paragraph 4(e)–(f)).

We know what happens next. The LEG is invited to identify "initial activities" that may be undertaken through the platform "with the least developed countries and relevant channels using available financial and technical resources" (paragraph 11). It must prepare a synthesis of LDCs' NAP priorities (paragraph 13), report on how the platform will work with the three funds at its 51st and 52nd meetings for COP32 in November 2027 (paragraph 9), and recommend improvements to the LDC work programme for SB 66 in June 2027 (paragraph 19).

We know what did not survive. The final text contains no "grant-based" language. Instead, it recalls a 2011 decision in which developed countries "were urged to mobilize financial support for the national adaptation plan process" for LDCs, including through the Least Developed Countries Fund (paragraph 3). The 18 November version had already dropped the grant-based option (draft text, 18 November 2026).

What We Don't Know

We do not know how the platform will be paid for. The secretariat's work under the decision is "subject to the availability of financial resources" (paragraph 23), and the initial activities depend on "available" resources (paragraph 11). During the talks, Japan set red lines that included no new institutional structures and no additional budget, and Switzerland stressed that any work should use existing budgetary resources (ENB, 16 November 2026). Nor does the decision set an application process, a deadline or a list of first countries.

We do not know how COP31 will end. The President named just transition, finance, mitigation and adaptation among the significant issues still open, and announced a third version of the cover decision for Saturday (ENB, 20 November 2026). The second draft had dropped any mention of fossil fuels and a US$120 billion adaptation finance target, and the draft texts on the global goal on adaptation were still entirely in brackets (Carbon Brief, DeBriefed, 20 November 2026). Anything in this report about those items may change today.

We have also not seen the final, numbered versions of the adopted decisions. We cite the advance version of the COP text; the decision numbers will come later. We found no Sudanese intervention on the LDC item in the ENB daily reports we checked.

Implications

In our reading, the platform brings no new money. What it offers is a queue for technical help: someone to take a country's adaptation priorities, turn them into proposals, and follow them through the funds. The decision itself admits that very few LDC concept notes have become funded projects. That describes the gap Sudan raised in Antalya when it asked for finance that reaches countries "swiftly" and "easily", with capacity-building attached (SUNA via Fana News, 11 November 2026).

There is a fair objection. A platform with no budget may do little, and Sudan's small team has a first transparency report and a fourth national communication to write. 3Bi is not claiming that joining early will bring funding. The narrower point is that the first activities will go to countries that ask and arrive with material ready. The decision asks the LEG to give targeted support "particularly to those that have not yet submitted a national adaptation plan" (paragraph 15). Sudan has one, so it will need to ask.

In our view, three steps follow.

First, ask to be included. Sudan's Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources (HCENR) can write to the LEG, through the LDC group Sudan already supports, and ask to be among the countries in the platform's initial activities (paragraph 11). A letter costs little, and the decision gives no other entry route.

Second, arrive with what the platform asks for. Paragraph 8(a) names "nationally validated registries of priorities" and "catalogues of project concept notes". Sudan can start from its 2016 NAP: list its priorities, mark which have been funded and which have not, as paragraph 8(h) asks, and draft short concept notes for the unfunded ones. The plan is ten years old, so the exercise will also show where it needs updating.

Third, keep the reporting light. The decision on transparency support acknowledges that the Global Environment Facility now lets countries access resources for two Biennial Transparency Reports and/or one national communication "as part of the same enabling activity", and has raised the threshold for expedited approvals. It also notes that LDCs and small island developing states may submit their next reports "at their discretion" (FCCC/PA/CMA/2026/L.2, paragraphs 2 and 4). If it has not done so already, Sudan could ask the GEF whether its first Biennial Transparency Report and Fourth National Communication can be supported in one request. Its adaptation chapter can then record NAP progress in a form the platform can use, since paragraph 8(h) draws on transparency reports "while avoiding additional reporting burden".

Watch Next

- **21 November 2026:** The third version of the cover decision and the resumed closing plenary,

with just transition, finance, mitigation and adaptation still open (ENB, 20 November 2026).

- **31 December 2026:** The date by which the transparency decision encourages Parties to submit their second Biennial Transparency Reports; it encourages those that have not filed a first report to do so "as soon as possible" (FCCC/PA/CMA/2026/L.2, paragraph 2).
- **June 2027 (SB 66):** The LEG's recommendations on the LDC work programme (FCCC/CP/2026/L.7, paragraph 19), and the stalled NAP assessment item (ENB, 19 November 2026).
- **November 2027 (COP32):** The LEG reports on how the platform will work with the Adaptation Fund, the Green Climate Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund (FCCC/CP/2026/L.7, paragraph 9). Ethiopia holds the COP32 presidency (Carbon Brief, 20 November 2026).

Sourcing & Next Update

Primary sources: UNFCCC, "Matters relating to the least developed countries. Draft decision -/CP.31. Proposal by the President", FCCC/CP/2026/L.7, advance version, 20 November 2026 (paragraphs 3–4, 6–11, 13, 15, 19, 23); UNFCCC draft text on COP agenda item 11 / CMA agenda item 14, version 18 November 2026, 14:31 (copy hosted by tralac); UNFCCC, "Provision of financial and technical support to developing country Parties for reporting and capacity-building. Draft decision -/CMA.8. Proposal by the President", FCCC/PA/CMA/2026/L.2, 18 November 2026 (paragraphs 1–2, 4); IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin, daily reports for 16, 18 and 19 November 2026 and highlights for 20 November 2026; Al Jazeera, "Fossil fuel talks deadlock pushes COP31 climate summit into overtime" (20 November 2026); Son Dakika, report on the COP31 closing plenary (in Turkish, 20 November 2026); Carbon Brief, "DeBriefed 20 November 2026: Deal distant | Fossil-fuel fractions | 'Coalitions' seek progress" (20 November 2026); SUNA via Fana News, "Al-Burhan Addresses 31st UN Climate Change Conference in Antalya" (11 November 2026); PreventionWeb, Sudan National Adaptation Plan 2016; 3Bi, Situation Report on the LDC agenda item (9 November 2026). Quotations are from English-language texts, except Son Dakika, which 3Bi read in Turkish. The decisions are cited from their advance versions as forwarded for adoption; the final numbered decisions may differ in numbering. Next update: 3Bi will report on COP31's final outcome once the closing plenary ends, and on the platform's initial activities when the LEG publishes them. For methodology questions or to propose a correction, contact 3Bi's Research Team via 3bisudan.org.

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