DISASTER RISK INTELLIGENCE. FROM AFRICA

COP31: AFRICA'S ADAPTATION TEST

Beyond climate promises: who defines success, who measures progress, and who is accountable?



ANTALYA LEADERS' SUMMIT | Opening ceremony · Photograph supplied by contributor

THIS WEEK / THE DECISIONS THAT MATTER

COP31: African negotiators contest who shapes adaptation metrics and how implementation support will be tracked. Africa Day: water security and resilient infrastructure move into focus. SADC: ministers address contingency planning and regional logistics. East Africa: ICPAC identifies sharply differentiated rainfall and flood risks. Opportunities: selected live calls, clearly separated by applicant type.

Editorial cut-off: 17 November 2026, 09:00 SAST. COP31 is ongoing; draft negotiating texts are not final decisions.

DIMA LENS / COP31 AND THE MEANING OF ADAPTATION

Who decides what counts as resilience?

COP31 in Antalya has moved beyond broad commitments to the mechanics of implementing the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA). The dispute is not simply over a target: it concerns the indicators used to describe progress, the experts authorised to refine them and the resources available to countries expected to report results.

During negotiations on 16 November, the African Group resisted a process led by international organisations or constituted bodies for selecting the adaptation technical taskforce. Different negotiating groups favoured regional nominations, representation for least-developed countries and small island states, or selection by subsidiary-body chairs. This is an institutional question with practical consequences: whose experience shapes the indicators used to evaluate national adaptation?

The G77 and China called for a baseline, methodology and tracking of the commitment to triple adaptation finance. Other groups preferred handling these issues in finance negotiations. These positions were under discussion at the editorial cut-off, not adopted COP31 outcomes.

Why the measurement question matters

A country can report a climate plan, a new forecast system or kilometres of drainage without proving that fewer households are exposed, hospitals remain operational or communities recover faster. Conversely, weak national data can obscure genuine local improvements. DIMA's test is whether indicators connect national commitments to the people and systems that face the risk.

Three decisions to watch

1. Who nominates the experts refining adaptation indicators? 2. Will the tracking framework distinguish investments from measurable reductions in vulnerability? 3. Will finance rules support data-poor and low-capacity countries without creating another unfunded reporting burden?

Sources: IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin, 16 November · UNFCCC COP31

AFRICA AT COP31 / WATER, CITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The African Union's Africa Day at COP31 on 14 November put water security, climate resilience and accessible investment at the centre of the continent's agenda. The approach links the negotiations to everyday systems: water supply, sanitation, energy, transport and urban services. As COP32 approaches in Addis Ababa in 2027, the test is whether this political agenda yields investable programmes and measurable protection.

Source: African Union, Africa Day at COP31, 14 November

AFRICA DRR WATCH / FRESH REGIONAL SIGNALS

Southern Africa — what ministers can operationalise

SADC's Seventh Ordinary Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Disaster Risk Management on 12 November called for stronger readiness for the 2026/27 rainfall and cyclone season. The practical issues include contingency-plan validation, pre-positioning, humanitarian logistics and the operationalisation of the SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre. The story this week is the institutional follow-through, not a recycled funding-gap headline.

Source: SADC ministerial meeting, 12 November

East and Horn of Africa — one season, different local risks

ICPAC's 10–17 November outlook indicated above-usual rainfall in much of Kenya, Tanzania and parts of Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, but below-usual rainfall in other areas of the same countries. It also identified potential flooding in southern Ethiopia, much of Kenya, southern Somalia, central Tanzania and pockets of Burundi and Rwanda. Regional averages can therefore conceal locally opposing hazards; response plans must be tied to subnational forecasts.

Source: ICPAC weekly forecast, 10–17 November

Regional institutions — tracking commitments, not repeating announcements

The EAC plan reported in Issue 13 set 25 November as the target for a disaster-information dashboard and 30 November for an implementation document. Neither deadline has yet passed. DIMA will assess delivery after those dates rather than reprint the original announcement as new news.

DIMA RISK FINANCE WATCH / ACCESS AND EFFECTIVENESS

The relevant COP31 question is no longer only how much finance is promised. It is whether finance reaches the institutions capable of protecting people, on terms that do not compound fiscal vulnerability. A useful evidence chain is: commitment → approved programme → accessible funding → local implementation → verified risk reduction. A pledge is not a disbursement, and a disbursement is not proof of adaptation impact.

At COP31, the African Group and other developing-country coalitions argued for predictable support and clearer means of implementation. The final negotiating text remained unsettled at the cut-off. DIMA will not attribute a new COP31 finance agreement before one is adopted.

Source: IISD finance negotiations, 16 November

GLOBAL DRR WATCH / WHAT AFRICA CAN LEARN

Adaptation indicators must capture cascading risks

A climate indicator that measures only flood depth may miss the larger disruption: a damaged substation shuts down water pumping; clinics lose refrigeration; roads delay emergency transport; households lose income. This is a cascading risk pathway, not merely a second hazard. Indicators should therefore examine service continuity, recovery time, exposure reduction and protection of vulnerable groups alongside infrastructure investment.

The UNFCCC's adopted COP31 agenda explicitly includes adaptation, loss and damage, and climate finance. The outcome of the week's negotiations is still open. The governance lesson for Africa is to design measurement systems that can support decisions before, during and after shocks—not only international reporting.

Sources: UNFCCC adopted COP31 agenda · UNECE on transboundary cascading risks

EVENTS, LEARNING & PRACTITIONER QUESTIONS

17–18 November: Resumed COP31 high-level segment, Antalya, Türkiye. 20 November: Scheduled COP31 closing date; final decisions must be checked after adoption. 25 and 30 November: EAC dashboard and implementation-plan targets, respectively.

Source: UNFCCC high-level segment programme

Four questions for African institutions

- Which adaptation indicator would demonstrate a real improvement in the safety of households?
- Who validates risk data, and can cities access it in time to make decisions?
- Are critical-service interdependencies included in national risk assessments?
- How will ministries demonstrate that COP31 commitments changed budgets, plans or field operations?

ABOUT GRAVITAZZ & THE CONTINENTAL CONSORTIUM

DIMA Connect is published by Gravitazz Institute, drawing on the Gravitazz Continental Consortium — a pan-African network of specialists in disaster risk governance, early warning, climate resilience, risk financing, recovery, institutional assessments, research, training and monitoring and evaluation.

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PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES / FIRMS & INDIVIDUALS

Relevant notices open at the editorial cut-off. An original notice and a clear deadline are preferable to a long list of unverified leads. Check addenda and time zones before applying.

ORGANISATIONS / FIRMS

UNICEF Zambia — Shock-Responsive Social Protection Framework. RFP LRPS 2026 9206909; supplier/firm procurement. 19 November 2026, 23:59 GMT+2. Scope: operational guidance for preparedness, anticipatory action and emergency response. Official UNGM notice.

UNDP India — Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessments / GLOF Adaptation Investment Package. RFP-107-IND-2026, reference UNDP-IND-00849; institutional proposal. 17 November 2026, 08:00 GMT−4. International opportunity, not Africa-based; included for technical relevance, with a very short application window. Official UNGM notice.

INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS

ECOWAS — GEF Fouta Djallon Highlands project preparation. Individual consultant, listed closing date 17 November 2026. Because the deadline is today, applicants must confirm that submissions are still accepted. Notice and original tender documents.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Additional DBSA, AfDB, REC and UN consultancy leads were reviewed but not reproduced without a reliably confirmed original notice, applicant classification and current closing date. This is a deliberate quality threshold, not a claim that no other opportunities exist.

THE DIMA QUESTION: When COP31 ends, what evidence will show that Africa’s adaptation capacity has improved—not just its negotiating language?

Tracking the risks. Questioning the systems. Connecting the people who manage them.