JUST TRANSITION WORK PROGRAMME

Overview

A just transition places **social justice and equity at the centre of climate action** from the phase out of fossil fuels to the growing reliance on critical minerals through locally-led transition pathways adapted to each country's economic and social context. The Just Transition Work Programme was established in 2022 as part of the Sharm el-Sheikh implementation plan at COP27. At COP28, countries formally agreed on the programme's objectives and adopted them. Ministers meet once a year to discuss progress.

Negotiation Goal

The JTWP is a forum where countries discuss how to reach the Paris Agreement goals fairly (Art. 2.1: keep warming well below 2 °C and aim for 1.5 °C, adapt to climate impacts, and align finance flows with low-emission, climate-resilient development), while recognising that countries start from different positions and capabilities (Art. 2.2, CBDR-RC). It is a place for discussion and shared understanding, not a rulebook that prescribes policies. Under decision 3/CMA.5, it covers: Pathways (fair routes to the Paris goals), Development and poverty, Adaptation and resilience, Workers and jobs (decent work, social protection), Inclusion and cooperation.

GCE Objectives

1. Operationalise the Belém-Antalya Mechanism (BAM) as a permanent constituted body under the CMA.
2. Embed justice and meaningful rights holders' participation in the governance of the BAM.
3. Ground the BAM in rights, decent work and the transition away from fossil fuels.
4. Deliver accessible, public and grant-based finance for just transition.
5. The EU in particular should support a BAM that mobilises grant-based, non-debt-inducing finance, rather than a mechanism limited to coordination.
6. Ensure that human rights are upheld in the production and use of critical minerals.

Status Quo

The JTWP centres on knowledge exchange through multilateral collaboration: two dialogues per year plus an annual high-level ministerial round table (HLMRT). At COP30, parties agreed to develop a Just Transition Mechanism (JTM, nicknamed BAM) to enhance international cooperation, technical assistance, capacity building and knowledge sharing. The mandate is to build something, not a finished institution: the JTM is not a fund and has no permanent body yet. After 57 submissions on operationalisation, the June 2026 Bonn talks produced draft conclusions and a text outlining functions and modalities, but significant divides remain.

Key Terms & Acronyms

BAM	Belém-Antalya Mechanism: civil society name for the JTM (in 2025: Belém Action Mechanism)
CBDR-RC	Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities
CMA	COP serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement; decides on the JTWP
COP	Conference of the Parties (to the UNFCCC)
GST / GST2	Global Stocktake / second stocktake (CMA 8 to CMA 10, 2026–2028)
HLMRT	High-Level Ministerial Round Table on just transition (annual)
JT / JTWP / JTM	Just transition / Just Transition Work Programme / Just Transition Mechanism
LT-LEDS	Long-Term Low-Emission Development Strategies
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
SB / SBI / SBSTA	Subsidiary Bodies: for Implementation / for Scientific and Technological Advice (SB62 = Bonn Jun 2025, SB64 = Bonn Jun 2026)
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

Key Stakeholders

- **Decision-makers:** Parties to the Paris Agreement (194 since the US withdrawal took effect on 27 January 2026; 198 Parties to the UNFCCC). The JTWP is a CMA workstream, implemented under the guidance of the SBI and SBSTA with Secretariat support.
- **Observers:** non-party stakeholders such as NGOs can follow the negotiations and occasionally share their standpoint. At the dialogues, observers and parties participate more equally. All stakeholders can submit views through the UNFCCC portal at the start of each year to guide discussions.
- **Presidencies and chairs:** COP30 Brazil; COP31 Türkiye (Antalya) with Australia's President of Negotiations; SB chairs guide the dialogues.
- **G77 (+China):** developing-country bloc; pushed for a detailed work plan and backed a mechanism.

Expected Challenges & Fault Lines

Dialogue themes. (1) Integrating JT into NDCs, NAPs and LT-LEDS through a whole-of-society approach; (2) people-centric, equitable pathways empowering workers, women, young people, Indigenous Peoples and local communities; (3) locally led adaptation, decent work and social protection; (4) just energy pathways and responsible critical minerals; (5) food security (agriculture, oceans); (6) the industry sector: technology, innovation and equitable value chains.

Fault lines. Developed countries tend to focus on domestic efforts and labour-market transitions; developing countries stress CBDR-RC and want fair pathways that do not sacrifice development goals. This played out at COP29 and SB62. COP30 then brought a breakthrough: the decision to develop the JTM, with the strongest rights-based language to date (human rights, labour rights, Indigenous Peoples' rights, gender equality, decent work), reaffirming that JTs must be country-driven. The divide has now moved to the design: at SB64, developing countries insisted that support cannot rest on dialogue and technical assistance alone, while several developed countries ruled out the mechanism becoming a new financing channel. A separate dispute over the terms of reference for the JTWP review took up much of the talks.

What to watch out for

- **Function and entry point:** clarity on who delivers the JTM's functions and what countries can request; a mechanism that is broad but hard to use is the weakest outcome.
- **Finance:** no dedicated funding pool so far; watch for links to climate finance, technology and capacity-building institutions, and for resources attached to its operation.
- **Relationship to the JTWP:** COP31 reviews the JTWP's effectiveness, efficiency and continuation; watch for a clear division of roles and no duplication.
- **Participation:** whether workers, communities, Indigenous Peoples, women and youth can shape the work before decisions are fixed.
- **Fault lines:** the divide between developed countries' domestic focus and developing countries' push for CBDR-RC, equity and development space may resurface in the design.
- **Reporting and review:** how activities and outcomes will be tracked.