POLICY PAPER

31st United Nations Climate Change Conference

COP31

GO FOR

LSU

31st United Nations Climate Change Conference

POLICY PAPER

February 2026

Prepared by
Youth Organizations Forum (GoFor)
National Council of Swedish Children and Youth Organizations (LSU)

Cover Photo
Daniel Leal-Olivas / AFP

info@go-for.org | www.go-for.org
info@lsu.se | www.lsu.se

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS FORUM

LSU

This policy paper/brief reflects solely the views, approaches, and demands of the participants from Sweden to "*the Exchange Programme on Environmental Sustainability and Justice: Phase II"*, jointly organised by the Youth Organizations Forum (GoFor) and the National Council of Swedish Children and Youth Organizations (LSU) in February 22-28, 2026.

It represents the collective insights and perspectives shared during the programme and does not reflect the official positions or policies of LSU. Where the term 'LSU' is used in this paper/brief, it refers exclusively to the participants from LSU who took part in the exchange programme, and not to the whole organisation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preamble: Why This Policy Paper, Why Now?

This policy paper represents the collective voice of youth organisations from Türkiye and Sweden, coming together at a moment when the foundations of international cooperation are being systematically weakened. Multilateral institutions that once structured global governance are increasingly rendered ineffective through political choice: international agreements are abandoned, funding for international organisations is withdrawn, and the authority of international law is openly undermined.

Global climate governance does not operate outside this reality. COP processes today unfold within an international order marked by fragmentation, power asymmetries, and declining political commitment to collective responsibility. In such a context, climate summits risk becoming spaces where ambition is repeatedly affirmed in language, while the political and economic conditions required for transformation are postponed or deliberately avoided.

It is precisely under these conditions that we choose to intervene. In a period when international cooperation is actively being hollowed out, producing transnational, youth-led policy is itself a political act.

This policy paper is written — not by technocrats but by the youth, for the youth — in the critical period between COP30 and COP31, a juncture increasingly framed as a shift from ambition to "implementation." Yet implementation without structural transformation risks consolidating the very economic models that have produced the climate crisis. Market-centred climate governance, growth-dependent development strategies, and the exclusion of rights-holders from decision-making cannot deliver climate justice.

Youth are often framed as future stakeholders of climate policy. We reject this framing. Young people are not passive beneficiaries of decisions made elsewhere; they are present political actors whose lives are already shaped by climate breakdown, economic precarity, and shrinking democratic space. In this convergence of crises, youth intervention is not symbolic—it is necessary.

This policy paper is a novel outcome of an exchange programme between the Youth Organisations Forum (GoFor) and the National Council of Swedish Children and Youth Organisations (LSU), grounded in shared analysis, lived experiences, and collective political work. It brings together youth perspectives from different national contexts to articulate common structural challenges and shared demands in the lead-up to COP31.

This paper does not seek to legitimise the status quo of international climate governance. It seeks to reclaim political space within it. Grounded in critical development economics, climate justice, and post-growth thinking, it challenges approaches that reduce the climate crisis to a technical problem while leaving its structural drivers intact.

Youth Organizations Forum (GoFor)
National Council of Swedish Children and Youth Organisations (LSU)

1. Introduction

This policy paper advances a central argument: climate governance shaped by GDP growth imperatives, market-based instruments, and private interests is structurally incapable of delivering an effective and just response to the climate crisis. Despite decades of negotiations, these approaches have failed to achieve emissions reductions at the scale required, while simultaneously reproducing social, economic, and generational inequalities.

The paper departs from dominant policy frameworks that treat climate change as a technical coordination problem to be solved through efficiency gains, financial instruments, and voluntary commitments. Instead, it approaches the climate crisis as a political and economic problem rooted in development models that prioritise growth, competitiveness, and capital accumulation over ecological limits and social well-being.

1.1. Analytical Perspective

The analysis is grounded in a synthesis of critical development studies, structuralist political economy, and post-growth thinking. From a structuralist perspective, climate transformation requires an active role for the state in planning, regulation, and public investment, rather than reliance on markets as primary drivers of change. It has been long demonstrated that market-led development paths entrench inequality and constrain democratic choice—dynamics that are equally visible in contemporary climate policy.

Post-growth and degrowth scholarship further challenges the assumption that economic growth can be decoupled from material and energy use at the scale and speed required. It is robustly highlighted that climate stabilisation is incompatible with continued growth in high-consumption economies. Complementing this, the framework of ‘doughnut economics’ underscores the need to reorient economic systems towards sufficiency, redistribution, and social foundations rather than expansion.

Taken together, these perspectives point to a clear conclusion: climate action that remains subordinate to growth objectives and private profitability will continue to manage symptoms rather than address structural causes.

1.2. Focus and Scope

This policy paper focuses on the political window between COP30 and COP31. COP30 is treated as a moment that clarified both the possibilities and the limits of current climate governance. While implementation has become the dominant framing, the form of implementation being pursued remains largely aligned with market-centred and growth-dependent models. COP31

therefore emerges as a critical juncture: a choice between consolidating existing pathways or reorienting climate governance towards public responsibility, redistribution, and democratic participation.

Within this context, the paper pays particular attention to the implications of climate governance for youth rights. Young people are not only disproportionately affected by climate breakdown, but are also systematically marginalised from decision-making processes that shape climate policy. The paper treats youth not as future beneficiaries of climate action, but as present rights-holders whose political participation is central to legitimacy and effectiveness.

1.3. Structure of the Paper

The remainder of this policy paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides an evaluation of COP30, outlining its concrete outcomes and assessing them through the analytical perspective set out above. Section 3 examines the positions of Türkiye and Sweden on the road to COP31, focusing on how macro-level climate policies and governance choices shape the lived realities and rights of young people in both contexts. Section 4 presents a set of policy recommendations aimed at reorienting climate governance beyond growth, markets, and private interests, and towards public planning, redistribution, and meaningful youth participation.

2. Reading COP30 from a structuralist perspective: What happened and why?

2.1. Formal outcomes of COP30

The 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change took place in Belém, Brazil, from 10 to 22 November 2025. The summit was framed by its Presidency as the "implementation COP"—intended to move the global climate regime from commitments to concrete delivery. In practice, COP30 produced a mixture of reaffirmations, modest institutional commitments, and diplomatic compromises, but stopped short of securing structural shifts in climate governance.

2.1.1. Tripling Adaptation Finance and Indicators

One of the main outcomes of COP30 was an agreement to work towards tripling climate adaptation finance for developing countries by 2035, with a trajectory towards approximately USD 1.3 trillion per year. This was accompanied by the adoption of 59 global indicators aimed at tracking adaptation progress under the Paris framework, reflecting a formal commitment to enhance monitoring and coordination of climate adaptation efforts.

2.1.2. Emissions Reduction Plans

Ahead of and during COP30, many Parties submitted updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). A UNFCCC synthesis report indicated that if these updated pledges were fully implemented, greenhouse gas emissions could fall approximately 12 % below 2019 levels by 2035. However, this falls significantly short of the reductions required to limit warming to 1.5 °C, which experts estimate would require substantially deeper cuts (often cited as 35 % or more relative to 2019).

2.1.3. Global Climate Action Agenda and Implementation Frameworks:

COP30 also advanced the Global Climate Action high-level agenda, including plans to coordinate and accelerate a set of climate solutions and commitments mobilised since COP21. These initiatives were positioned as part of a broader "Action Agenda" intended to operationalise cooperation on climate solutions across sectors.

2.2. Key Areas of Disagreement and Limited Progress

2.2.1. Absence of Binding Fossil Fuel Phase-Out Language:

One of the most contentious political issues at COP30 was the absence of an agreed roadmap for phasing out fossil fuels. Although a large number of Parties advocated for such language to be included in the final outcomes, the official text did not contain explicit commitments or timelines on fossil fuel phase-out or subsidy reform. This omission was widely noted as a critical gap in the conference's delivery on mitigation ambition.

2.2.2. Fossil Fuel Transition and Deforestation Roadmaps:

Plans to agree on specific roadmaps for transitioning away from fossil fuels and reversing deforestation received broad support from dozens of countries during the negotiations. However, these proposals did not make it into the final negotiated documents. Instead, the COP30 Presidency indicated that such roadmaps would be developed outside the formal UNFCCC process.

2.2.3. Climate Finance Architecture Remains Market-Oriented:

While there were commitments to increase mobilisation of climate finance, the focus remained on scaling up private investment, blended finance, and risk-sharing tools, without a clear shift toward grant-based public finance or mechanisms that confront systemic inequalities in global capital flows.

2.4 Assessment Through a Structural Lens

From a structural political economy and post-growth perspective, these outcomes reflect continuity rather than transformation in climate governance:

- **Reaffirmation over transformation:** The tripling of adaptation finance and expanded indicator frameworks represent institutional reinforcement of existing mechanisms, rather than a shift toward redistributive or equity-driven policies.
- **Implementation without structural change:** The absence of binding fossil fuel phase-out language and the reinforcement of market-oriented finance indicate that dominant growth-dependent and private interest-led approaches remain central to the climate regime.
- **Delegated political responsibility:** The decision to pursue some elements (such as fossil fuel and deforestation roadmaps) outside formal UNFCCC agreements highlights a tendency to delay or compartmentalise politically sensitive issues, rather than confront them within binding international mandates.

Therefore, it is suggested that COP30, while achieving incremental technical and procedural progress, did not fundamentally challenge the structural conditions that have historically constrained effective climate action. The outcomes therefore leave unresolved questions about how to align implementation with equitable, just, and transformative climate pathways.

3. Türkiye and Sweden on the Road to COP31

This section positions Türkiye and Sweden within the COP30–COP31 window through a youth-rights lens. It focuses on how national climate policy choices—and the political and civic environment in which they are made—shape young people's lived realities, participation opportunities, and the distribution of climate burdens and benefits.

3.1. Climate policy design: implementation through market construction and deregulated private governance

As COP31 approaches, climate policy design in both Türkiye and Sweden reveals a shared structural tendency: climate governance is increasingly articulated through market-compatible instruments and deregulated private governance, albeit through different institutional pathways.

In Türkiye, this orientation is explicit and codified through law; in Sweden, it emerges more incrementally through regulatory erosion and shifting political priorities.

In Türkiye, the Climate Law establishes the legal and institutional backbone of climate policy by placing market construction—most notably a national Emissions Trading System (ETS)—at its core. Rather than framing mitigation as a matter of public planning, sectoral transformation, or direct public investment, the law defines "implementation" primarily through carbon pricing, financial instruments, and private capital mobilisation. Emission allowances are treated as tradable assets, and climate policy is operationalised through capital market instruments, banking finance, and other financial tools, embedding financialisation into the very architecture of climate governance.

Crucially, revenues generated under the ETS are not earmarked for public climate expenditure or redistributive social investment. Instead, they are channelled back into the private sector through revolving funds and similar mechanisms, reinforcing a closed financial loop in which "green transition" funding circulates largely within market actors rather than supporting universal public services, just transition measures, or youth-centred employment strategies. Institutionally, this market-centred orientation is reinforced by a governance structure dominated by regulatory and economic authorities, with advisory and coordination functions closely tied to business-representative bodies. Participation by youth organisations and civil society is framed in discretionary rather than rights-based terms, rendering inclusion contingent and procedural rather than substantive.

While Sweden is often perceived as a leader in environmental governance, recent developments point to a parallel, though more institutionalised, shift towards private governance and deregulation. The impact of deregulation in Sweden has been more nuanced but no less significant. The growing influence of right-wing political priorities has contributed to a gradual erosion of regulatory frameworks, with policies increasingly favouring business interests through tax cuts for corporations and reduced environmental oversight. A clear example is the deregulation of the forestry sector, where clear-cutting practices have continued despite their well-documented impacts on biodiversity loss and carbon sequestration. Private forestry companies, which dominate the sector, exert considerable influence over policymaking and have consistently resisted stricter environmental regulation.

This orientation is further reflected in the government's proposal to merge the Ministry of Climate with the Ministry of Business and Enterprises, signalling an institutional reconfiguration in which climate governance is increasingly subordinated to economic competitiveness and industrial policy objectives. Rather than strengthening the autonomy of climate policymaking, this merger illustrates how environmental objectives are reframed as secondary considerations within a broader growth-oriented policy framework.

These developments in both countries reflect a common pattern observed in growth-dependent economies: climate objectives are pursued through instruments that minimise disruption to existing accumulation regimes. In Türkiye, this takes the form of explicit market construction and financialisation; in Sweden, it manifests through deregulation and the privileging of private sector interests within ostensibly strong institutional frameworks. In both cases, the result is a model of climate governance that prioritises compatibility with existing economic structures over transformative change.

This convergence has important implications for youth and intergenerational justice. When climate policy is designed around market incentives and deregulated private governance, distributional outcomes are treated as secondary concerns. Young people are positioned as future beneficiaries of market-led transitions rather than as rights-holders entitled to protection, participation, and material security in the present. The consequences of this design become particularly visible when climate policy is anchored to weak mitigation targets and energy strategies that sustain fossil fuel dependence—issues addressed in the following subsection.

3.2. Weak mitigation ambition and delayed transformation

Despite formal commitments to climate action, independent assessments consistently characterise Türkiye's mitigation trajectory as highly misaligned with the Paris Agreement's objective of limiting warming to well below 2 °C and pursuing efforts towards 1.5 °C. According to the Climate Action Tracker (CAT), Türkiye's current policies and climate action are rated *"Highly insufficient"*, meaning that they are inconsistent with pathways that limit warming to below 3 °C, let alone 1.5 °C. This classification reflects structural features of Türkiye's climate strategy, including weak sectoral targets, limited implementation pathways, and ongoing expansion of high-emission infrastructure.

CAT highlights several key drivers of this assessment. First, Türkiye's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) does not specify absolute emissions reductions consistent with the science-based benchmarks required for a 1.5 °C trajectory. Instead, the current NDC framework permits emissions to continue rising through the mid-2030s before any stabilisation, a design that structurally delays the mitigation imperative. Modelled pathways consistent with a 1.5 °C goal estimate that Türkiye would need to reduce emissions to approximately 310 $MtCO_2e$ by 2030 and 240 $MtCO_2e$ by 2035. By contrast, Türkiye's policies permit emissions trajectories well above these thresholds, enabling continued fossil fuel consumption and expansion.

Second, the weak ambition of Türkiye's mitigation architecture is intricately tied to its energy system strategy, which maintains and, in some respects, seeks to expand fossil fuel use. Coal remains a central component of the power sector: in 2024, coal accounted for approximately 36 % of total electricity generation in Türkiye, a share considerably higher than most OECD

countries and indicative of a fossil-dependent energy mix. This sustained reliance on coal reflects strategic priorities rooted in perceived energy security, domestic resource utilisation, and industrial policy, rather than a planned, rapid transition to low-carbon alternatives.

Importantly, Türkiye's approach does not simply tolerate coal as a residual energy source; official policy signals and investment orientations suggest an intention to maintain the country as a gas and coal hub within regional energy markets. Despite global trends away from coal, policy frameworks have not instituted comprehensive phase-out commitments or bans on new coal permits. Instead, both domestic lignite production and imports of hard coal remain substantial, and gas infrastructure investments continue to feature prominently in national energy planning. This orientation stands in contrast to the broader decarbonisation trends among major economies and reinforces the structural delay in mitigation.

These patterns illustrate a classic case of fossil lock-in, in which existing infrastructure, investment flows, and institutional commitments coalesce to reproduce a high-emission development path. Lock-in dynamics are not accidental; they derive from the embedded interests of energy incumbents, regulatory frameworks that favour financial predictability over ecological transformation, and economic strategies that valorise short-term output stability over long-term sustainability. In Türkiye, this manifests as continued policy support for fossil fuels alongside nascent market mechanisms like ETS, creating a hybrid governance model that seemingly embraces climate implementation while concretely enabling fossil dominance.

3.3. Zero Waste as climate branding: unequal ecological exchange and youth precarity

Climate action in both Türkiye and Sweden has increasingly been articulated through narratives of "green transition" and sustainability that prioritise market compatibility and international credibility. However, when examined through a political economy and youth-rights lens, these narratives reveal a shared structural pattern: environmental burdens and social risks are displaced onto marginalised communities and younger generations, while climate action is reduced to branding exercises compatible with existing growth-oriented economic models.

In Türkiye, this dynamic is most visible in the prominence of the "zero waste" agenda within climate policy discourse. While presented internationally as a flagship sustainability initiative, the material organisation of waste governance tells a different story. Türkiye has become one of the largest importers of plastic waste from Europe, positioning itself as a downstream node in global waste value chains. Rather than reducing waste generation at source, this model externalises the environmental costs of overconsumption in the Global North onto lower-regulated spaces in the Global South and semi-periphery.

The conditions under which waste is processed in Türkiye further expose the contradictions of this model. Investigations document widespread regulatory failures in recycling zones, including the absence of effective environmental oversight and occupational safety measures. Hazardous waste streams—particularly electronic waste containing lithium batteries and toxic metals—are frequently processed through burning or rudimentary methods, releasing poisonous gases with long-term health impacts. These recycling economies rely disproportionately on young people and migrant youth, many of whom work without protective equipment, formal contracts, or access to healthcare and social security. What is internationally framed as "green employment" thus materialises locally as a regime of precarious and hazardous labour, embedded in weak regulatory environments.

A structurally comparable dynamic can be observed in Sweden, albeit through different sectors and institutional arrangements. While Sweden is often portrayed as a leader in sustainability, extractive activities linked to the green transition—particularly mining and forestry—illustrate how environmental harm and social risk are redistributed rather than eliminated. The expansion of mining projects in northern regions, including the Sápmi area, is frequently justified by the demand for raw materials essential to renewable energy technologies and electric mobility. These projects threaten local ecosystems and directly undermine the livelihoods, cultural rights, and health of Sámi communities.

Here, too, youth are disproportionately affected. Indigenous Sámi youth face displacement from ancestral lands, ecological degradation of their living environments, and exclusion from decision-making processes that shape the future of their territories. Despite formal commitments to consultation, extractive projects often proceed with inadequate participation of Indigenous communities, reflecting deeper structural inequalities embedded in deregulated private governance models. Environmental justice concerns are subordinated to national competitiveness and resource extraction imperatives framed as necessary for the green transition.

Labour dynamics further reinforce these patterns in both contexts. In Sweden, "green jobs" in forestry, renewable energy, and extractive industries are largely controlled by private corporations operating under cost-efficiency and profitability logics. Employment in these sectors is frequently characterised by short-term contracts, limited career progression, and weak bargaining power for young workers. While the risks may be less immediately hazardous than in Türkiye's recycling sector, the underlying outcome is similar: young people are integrated into the green transition as a flexible labour force, while the economic and social benefits accrue elsewhere.

These cases illustrate a broader pattern of unequal ecological exchange within contemporary climate governance. Environmental degradation, health risks, and labour precarity are not

eliminated through green transition strategies; they are redistributed across borders, regions, and social groups. Market-oriented approaches to circular economy, extractivism, and renewable deployment fail to address the root causes of ecological breakdown—overproduction, growth dependency, and privatised governance—while generating new forms of injustice.

For young people, the consequences are cumulative. In both Türkiye and Sweden, marginalised youth—particularly migrant, Indigenous, rural, and low-income groups—are excluded from the benefits of the green transition while bearing its costs. Climate policy framed primarily through waste management, resource extraction, and private investment does not expand young people's rights, security, or agency; it reproduces precarity under a sustainability label.

3.4. Civic space, youth organising, and the limits of technocratic climate governance

Climate governance is frequently framed as a technical matter of targets, instruments, and implementation capacity. Yet climate transitions are inherently political: they redistribute resources, reshape labour markets, challenge entrenched economic interests, and generate social conflict. For this reason, protected civic space—including freedom of assembly, association, and expression—is not supplementary to climate policy; it is a structural precondition for effective and just climate action.

In Türkiye, this precondition is increasingly absent. Extensive documentation shows a sustained pattern of restrictions on peaceful assembly, protest, and collective action, with youth and youth-led organisations disproportionately affected. Demonstrations are routinely banned or dispersed, participants are subjected to arbitrary detention and judicial proceedings, and youth organisations face administrative pressure that constrains their ability to organise. Within such an environment, participation in public decision-making is widely perceived by young people as a risky activity with uncertain outcomes and potentially severe personal costs. This climate of fear and self-censorship undermines the possibility of youth acting as political agents in shaping climate policy.

While the contraction of civic space in Sweden is less overt, recent political developments indicate a subtler but consequential erosion of democratic participation—particularly affecting migrants, asylum seekers, and marginalised youth. The rise of right-wing populist influence has contributed to increasingly exclusionary political discourses and policy choices, especially in relation to migration and integration. Anti-immigrant rhetoric and restrictive asylum policies have narrowed the avenues through which migrant and refugee youth can participate meaningfully in public debates, including those concerning climate and environmental governance.

This exclusion is not incidental. Migrant and racialised youth are among those most vulnerable to climate impacts and environmental degradation, yet they are systematically marginalised from decision-making spaces. In Sweden, the prioritisation of securitisation and “law and order” agendas over social inclusion has weakened the participatory foundations of climate governance. Youth from marginalised communities are often treated as policy subjects rather than as rights-holders whose lived experiences and knowledge are essential for equitable climate solutions.

Across both contexts, the shrinking of civic space reinforces a technocratic and market-centred model of climate governance. When protest, organising, and collective bargaining are constrained—whether through direct repression or through exclusionary political frameworks—climate policy becomes insulated from democratic pressure. Decision-making gravitates towards state elites, market actors, and technical experts, while social demands for redistribution, environmental justice, and intergenerational equity are sidelined.

This depoliticisation is not a neutral outcome. It actively enables the persistence of growth-dependent and fossil-compatible development pathways by removing the social forces capable of contesting them. Historically, significant environmental and climate advances have emerged through social mobilisation and political struggle, not solely through expert-driven policy design. Where civic space contracts, “implementation” can proceed without transformation, and climate action risks becoming a managerial exercise aligned with market stability rather than social justice.

For young people, the implications are profound. In both Türkiye and Sweden, restrictions on civic space—whether explicit or institutionalised—limit the capacity of youth to organise, protest, and co-produce climate futures. Marginalised youth, including migrants, refugees, and Indigenous communities, are doubly excluded: they face heightened exposure to climate risks while being denied meaningful participation in shaping responses to those risks.

As host and presidency country, Türkiye’s domestic civic environment will inevitably shape the political horizon of COP31. At the same time, developments in countries such as Sweden demonstrate that even contexts with strong institutional frameworks are vulnerable to democratic backsliding under right-wing populist pressures. Together, these trajectories underscore a central lesson for COP31: climate policy cannot be effective, just, or credible if it is detached from democratic freedoms. Without protected civic space and inclusive youth participation, COP31 risks reproducing the technocratic and market-driven governance failures that have long constrained the global climate regime.

4. Policy Recommendations

The analysis presented in this policy paper demonstrates that the climate crisis cannot be addressed through incremental adjustments to existing growth-oriented, market-led governance models. As COP31 approaches, climate policy must confront the structural drivers of ecological breakdown, social inequality, and youth precarity. The following recommendations are grounded in a critical development and post-growth perspective and are intended to inform decision-makers at national, regional, and multilateral levels.

4.1 Re-centre climate governance on redistribution, not market expansion

Climate policy must move beyond carbon pricing and market-based instruments as primary tools of mitigation. Emissions trading systems and private finance mechanisms should not constitute the backbone of climate action.

- Public, grant-based climate finance must be prioritised over loans, blended finance, and speculative carbon markets.
- Climate action should be anchored in redistribution—both within and between countries—through progressive taxation, wealth taxes, and the redirection of fossil fuel subsidies toward public investment.
- Climate finance frameworks under the UNFCCC must explicitly address unequal ecological exchange and historical responsibility.

4.2. Strengthen the Loss and Damage Fund through justice-based financing

- Ensure the Loss and Damage Fund operates through grant-based finance rather than loans, preventing climate-vulnerable countries from accumulating additional debt.
- Establish mandatory contributions based on historical emissions and economic capacity, including contributions from major fossil fuel-producing countries and industries.
- Guarantee direct access for affected communities, youth organisations, and Indigenous peoples in the governance and allocation of the Fund.

4.3. Commit to binding fossil fuel phase-out pathways

COP31 must deliver clear, time-bound commitments for the phase-out of fossil fuels, including coal, oil, and gas.

- Member States must recognise and abide by the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and sign the Fossil fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.

- Fossil fuel phase-out timelines and roadmaps must be created and integrated into NDCs (especially of Global North) and aligned with 1.5°C-compatible pathways.
- New fossil fuel infrastructure—including coal-fired power plants and gas hubs—must be explicitly excluded from development strategies of the Global North.
- Just transition frameworks must be publicly planned and publicly funded, with guarantees for workers and communities affected by the transition.

4.4. Reject "green growth" narratives and adopt post-growth policy frameworks

Climate action must be decoupled from GDP growth as its central metric of success.

- Governments must adopt alternative indicators that prioritise ecological integrity, social wellbeing, and intergenerational justice.
- Climate policies must explicitly challenge overproduction and overconsumption, particularly in high-income economies.
- COP31 should open a formal space for post-growth and degrowth-informed policy pathways within the UNFCCC process.

4.5. Regulate global waste and extractive economies to prevent ecological dumping

Climate policy must confront the role of waste trade, extractivism, and resource-intensive "green" industries in reproducing global inequalities.

- Transboundary waste shipments must be strictly regulated, with binding enforcement mechanisms to prevent environmental dumping.
- Recycling, waste management, mining, and forestry sectors must be governed through strong public regulation, labour protections, and environmental standards.
- Climate leadership must not be reduced to branding initiatives; sustainability claims must be evaluated against material impacts on labour, health, and ecosystems.

4.6. Guarantee youth participation as a right, not a discretionary practice

Youth participation must be institutionalised as a binding component of climate governance.

- Youth representation must be legally mandated in national climate bodies, COP processes, and climate finance mechanisms. Such representation must be achieved through independent youth organisations rather than GONGOs.
- Youth-led climate funds must be established, with direct access to public resources.

- Participation frameworks must prioritise inclusion of marginalised youth, including migrant, indigenous, rural, low-income and LGBTI+ communities.

4.7. Protect civic space as a precondition for climate action

Climate governance cannot succeed in environments where civic freedoms are restricted.

- States must guarantee freedom of assembly, association, and expression for youth and civil society actors engaged in climate advocacy.
- COP31 must recognise civic space as a climate governance issue and address restrictions on protest, organising, and dissent within its political mandate.
- Climate participation must be understood as a political right, not a consultative exercise.

4.8. Centre labour rights and social protection in the green transition

A just transition requires that climate policy actively improves labour conditions rather than reproducing precarity.

- Green jobs must be defined through enforceable labour standards, including occupational safety, social security, and collective bargaining rights.
- Youth employment strategies must prioritise long-term security over short-term, project-based work.
- Public sector leadership in energy, housing, transport, and care services is essential to ensure equitable outcomes.

4.9. Re-politicise COP processes and climate governance

Finally, COP31 must be reclaimed as a political space capable of addressing systemic crises.

- Climate negotiations must move beyond technical optimisation toward confronting power, inequality, and political responsibility.
- Independent youth organisations must be recognised as political actors shaping climate futures, not merely as stakeholders.
- Climate governance must be rooted in solidarity, collective action, and democratic struggle.

COP31

GO FOR

LSU