

Discussion Paper

**THE BELEM ACTION  
MECHANISM  
FOR A GLOBAL JUST  
TRANSITION  
(BAM)  
WHY AND HOW**

October 2025



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*This discussion paper further elaborates the Cross-Constituency proposal for a global just transition mechanism. It is intended to enrich and enhance the consideration of this proposal. This paper seeks to address gaps and suggest functions that fill them, and authors are open to engage in discussions to further develop how those are performed.*



# Executive Summary

The Belem Action Mechanism for a Global Just Transition (BAM) is a proposed new institutional arrangement<sup>1</sup> under the UNFCCC designed to address the current fragmentation and inadequacy of global Just Transition efforts. While Just Transition initiatives are proliferating worldwide, they remain uneven, lack alignment with climate goals, and are often poorly contextualized and not fit for purpose, leading to duplication, confusion among stakeholders, and the risk of not contributing to social equity.

The BAM aims to transform Just Transition principles currently under negotiation (see Section 3), into a coherent, practical, and actionable system by fulfilling three core functions:

- **Coordination and Coherence:** A central Coordination Entity will map existing Just Transition initiatives, identify gaps, steer the overall mechanism, and ensure Just Transition efforts are aligned with the Paris Agreement objectives and the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC).
- **Knowledge Sharing and Generation:** An enhanced version of the existing Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP) will serve as a global hub for practitioners, facilitating dialogue, sharing best practices, and generating new knowledge to inform policy.
- **Action and Support:** A dedicated component will provide direct support through a helpdesk or facilitative platform for countries, matchmaking between projects and funders, and work to mobilize and channel non-debt-inducing finance and technology transfer, particularly for the Global South.

Governed with meaningful inclusion of both Parties and Non-Party stakeholders, the BAM would be established modularly from COP30 to COP32. Its launch at COP30 would signal a decisive step towards a coordinated global effort that firmly links climate action with social justice, equity, and sustainable development for all.

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<sup>1</sup> Institutional Arrangement is a formalized structure or body (i.e. mechanism, taskforce, platform) to carry out specific functions or mandates. It has an operational and implementation function.



# The Belem Action Mechanism for a Global Just Transition (BAM)

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## WHY IS THE BAM NEEDED?

A wide range of local, national, and international initiatives have emerged – from International Labour Organization (ILO) and G20 frameworks to Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETPs) and principles adopted by multilateral development banks (MDBs), and from national institutional innovations (Scotland, Ireland, South Africa, EU), legislative frameworks (Canada, Australia), consultative approaches (Colombia, Chile) to sectoral policies. However, despite this growing momentum around Just Transition worldwide, current approaches remain fragmented, uneven, and often lack alignment with broader climate objectives or dismiss fundamental aspects, such as those related to labour. They vary significantly in scope, design, and implementation, and are often poorly contextualized. This has led to duplication of efforts, confusion among stakeholders, the risk that initiatives fail to advance social equity or serve the communities and countries most affected by the transition. Worryingly, the result is that the world is not on track to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, with backlash against climate policies being felt in multiple jurisdictions.

Several challenges underscore the problem:

**Lack of a common framework and vocabulary:** Just Transition principles (See Section 3) are interpreted inconsistently across institutions and sectors, limiting clarity, comparability and effectiveness.

**Fragmented and siloed action:** Key issues such as debt, trade and investment regimes, intellectual property rights, and access to technology are addressed separately, undermining integrated solutions and practical approaches to tackle barriers in these areas.

**Insufficient coordination, knowledge generation and sharing:** Existing initiatives operate without a central hub, resulting in missed opportunities to learn from diverse experiences and scale best practices on time.

**Gaps in finance, capacity, and cooperation:** Just Transition policies require significant qualitative non-debt-inducing public finance, technology transfer, and capacity building. Yet, international support is fragmented, inadequate in scale, and most countries lack the fiscal and policy space to drive a Just Transition.

**Weak integration with climate objectives:** the absence of a straightforward connection between climate action and Just Transition means that some Just Transition approaches lack direction, ambition and run parallel to climate policies.

## HOW DOES THE BAM ADVANCE JUST TRANSITION GLOBALLY?

The Belem Action Mechanism for a Global Just Transition (BAM) is designed to transform Just Transition principles into a coherent, practical, and actionable framework under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, by identifying barriers, opportunities, international support and international enabling conditions to realise a just transition across sectors, countries, and communities. Building on COP-adopted Just Transition principles (see below and in Annex), the BAM provides the missing coordination, clarity, and support needed to ensure Just Transition initiatives are equitable, inclusive and adequately funded. Also, by anchoring Just Transition firmly within the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, the BAM ensures that Just Transition pathways are socially and climate-aligned, while reinforcing the principles of Equity and Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC).

Through its core functions, the BAM will address current gaps and challenges. Firstly, through agreed principles, it will help to create a shared framework and common vocabulary on Just Transition as a reference for countries, institutions and stakeholders. Secondly and crucially, the BAM will foster deeper coordination and coherence across different actors involved in Just Transition initiatives, bridging national, regional, and

international efforts, avoiding duplication and filling gaps. Thirdly, the BAM will strengthen knowledge and capacity, by facilitating structured exchanges among practitioners, policymakers and experts. Finally, through its support function, the BAM will be key in aligning finance, capacity building and technology transfer with Just Transition needs.

The BAM moves the Just Transition agenda beyond fragmented initiatives toward a coordinated, ambitious, and actionable global effort that links justice, climate ambition, and sustainable development.

## PRINCIPLES ON JUST TRANSITION TO GUIDE THE MECHANISM

The BAM will be based on **agreed UNFCCC principles and guidance**, currently under negotiation in the JTWP, and apply to Just Transition pathways - international and national-including in transitioning away from fossil fuels, advancing agriculture and food systems transitions, industrial processes, deploying renewable energies, managing demand for transition minerals, and the role of care, public services and social protection in advancing Just Transition strategies among other key areas.

At the time of drafting, the COP30 draft decision under the JTWP lists important principles to pursue as part of Just Transition pathways work moving forward, including the importance to ensure Just Transition actions are equitable, inclusive, rights-based and aligned with the Paris Agreement goals, including, rights and participation (human and

labor rights, gender equality, the rights of Indigenous Peoples including Free, Prior and Informed Consent, engagement of affected people including workers); addressing, not deepening, inequalities (decent work, skills development, gender and age responsiveness); and incorporating means of Implementation and international cooperation. Those principles should underpin Just Transition planning efforts, notably as part of NDCs, NAPs, LTS or other planning instruments.

## FUNCTIONS AND FEATURES FOR THE BELEM ACTION MECHANISM FOR A GLOBAL JUST TRANSITION (BAM)

The mechanism is designed to be supportive and non-prescriptive, attuned and receptive to local circumstances articulated by countries and communities, guided by the JTWP and its principles, and taking stock of progress and best practices. It will allow to connect rights-holders and various stakeholders, including experts, practitioners, and representatives of national and subnational advisory bodies on Just Transition<sup>2</sup>, who would benefit from this collective space in order to collaborate effectively, share knowledge and best practices and find constructive solutions to tackle obstacles and barriers to implementation. Building on past experiences<sup>3</sup>, the BAM should be supported by a UNFCCC **Coordinating Entity** with meaningful inclusion and participation of constituency observers (with each having a full seat at the table) and other stakeholders, a **knowledge generation component** (which could be based on an improved JTWP) and an **action**

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<sup>2</sup> Nascent efforts are taking place in this regard. An initial conversation took place in the summer of 2025, initiated and facilitated by the Just Transition Commission of Scotland. The objective was bringing together sister organisations and other implementation bodies with just transition in their remit to consider opportunities for collaboration, including establishing a more structured framework for cooperation such as what is recommended in this paper.

<sup>3</sup> Within the UNFCCC, Loss and Damage institutions have rapidly evolved over the past years. Yet, no body has been tasked with an oversight mandate of the different L&D actors, such as the Fund to Respond to Loss and Damage, the Santiago Network and institutions working on averting, minimizing, and addressing Loss and Damage outside of the UNFCCC remits. Parties and observers have argued that this fragmented governance across multiple actors—inside and outside the UNFCCC—leads to inefficiencies and overlaps. Many suggest that the Executive Committee of the Warsaw Mechanism should provide clarity on the coordination of different structures involved to avoid the duplication of efforts and to reduce fragmentation.

**and support component.** The coordinating entity will oversee and guide the two other entities of the Mechanism as well guiding and steering conversation across key actors and institutions, both within and beyond the UNFCCC (see function #2).

## Coordination Entity

### Function #1: Stocktake and Gap-finder

The coordination entity of the BAM would serve to **synthesize and streamline progress achieved and gaps to be addressed** by different institutions, including, but not restricted to, reporting on progress made on voluntary initiatives (i.e. JETPs), and providing recommendations for developing future partnerships to access Just Transition support. This work needs to be connected to developments outside the UNFCCC (i.e. ILO, UNCTAD), within the UNFCCC (i.e. CTCN, KCI) and to the voices of multiple actors involved in developing and deploying Just Transition approaches - hence the institutional inclusion of such actors in the Coordination Entity. Clarity and innovative approaches to the way in which their inputs translate into the decision-making process would attract more organisations.

### How it will look in practice

*Based on an agreed workplan and selected priorities for the year, the Coordinating entity will request the knowledge component to organize the dialogues, workshops and develop the depository accordingly. It will also, based on needs or barriers that are emerging in the Action and Support component, highlight the importance of a dialogue being organised on a specific aspect (i.e debt). Based on the dialogue outcomes, it will then produce draft guidance on Just Transition indicators or Just Transition financing for consideration by the COP/CMP.*

The BAM Coordination entity could **systematically organize information** coming from multiple bodies, identify commonalities, gaps and indicate the most effective ways to further advance discussions or decisions. This would have the advantage of presenting a

comprehensive picture of Just Transition work that encompasses all the dimensions relevant to national policy-making (mitigation, response measures, finance, adaptation, among others).

### Function #2: Steer and Guide

The Coordination entity would be in a good position to **identify work** that is considered necessary by Parties and relevant stakeholders, and suggest ways forward on those. It would also provide **guidance to the other components of the Mechanism**, ensuring that their work is responding to the identified gaps and learnings and **propose matters for consideration at the negotiation level** to further advance Just Transition work in a harmonious way.

### Function #3: Monitoring of implementation and support

The BAM could **track progress and provide opportunities for course correction**. This includes regular stocktaking, periodic assessments, stakeholder consultations, and transparent reporting, similar to how the Warsaw Implementation Mechanism and the JTWP are reviewed through the COP and CMA processes. Tracking how Just Transition support is being deployed will also contribute to more informed Knowledge and Action/Support components.

## Knowledge generation and sharing component

### Function #4: Knowledge Generation and Sharing

As an improved version of the Just Transition Work Programme, this component will **organise dialogues on available knowledge and best practices**. It will organise discussions between sessions, synthesize work to date, identify gaps, following the steer of the coordination entity. It can create a **Global Hub of practitioners, along with national contact points on just transition**, enabling countries to learn from each other's experiences and ensuring the dialogues are not an extension of the negotiating process. This would include connecting national and subnational advisory bodies and their members so they can learn from each other's efforts, build on existing successes and contribute to mapping gaps. In the context of topics that are discussed in multiple spaces, the knowledge component will share learnings, summarise gaps. On issues that are receiving less attention, and based

on guidance from the coordination entity (see above), the knowledge component can develop original content to guide discussions.

The Global Hub will connect communities of practitioners and experts while enhancing access to knowledge and information on Just Transition, at the local, national and international levels. It will also be important to create the space for sharing early work on some of the new areas where Just Transition has been applied - industry, transport, health, gender, agriculture, and adaptation. The idea here is to ensure that conversations on Just Transition are truly advancing Just Transition knowledge and practice by making them as informed as possible by practitioners.

### Action and Support component

The Action and Support component will enable and identify **technical and financial support**, as well as in **capacity building**. In addition, it will feed into the Coordination entity, flagging gaps experienced by Just Transition practitioners. It would also identify ways forward for international cooperation and means of implementation on just transition, including identification of non-debt-inducing finance, technology transfer, and capacity building to countries in the Global South. The Action and support component will also help to identify and tackle structural barriers that are hindering access to finance and support, such as the high cost of capital, unsustainable debt levels or inequitable trade rules.

#### Function #5: Support

Through coordination with the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism (i.e the GCF, the GEF or the Adaptation Fund) and other financial institutions and actors (i.e. philanthropies, public development banks), the Action and Support entity could **map and communicate information about specific funding lines and pool funds** to ensure vulnerable countries and communities have access to adequate funding for their transition, and prevent financial mechanisms from worsening inequalities. For the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism, this would also imply explicitly integrating Just Transition considerations into their funding decisions through their specific guidance documents, which are designed to steer resources toward their policies, program priorities, and eligibility

criteria. It could also identify technologies/ patents which could be made available for advancing Just Transition strategies in interested countries.

#### Function #6: Consolidated Helpdesk

Countries and projects working towards Just Transition could submit **queries** regarding emerging challenges, gaps and needs. The helpdesk would provide information, tools, resources and guidance collected in the knowledge component and its practitioners network. The helpdesk would also inform the Coordination entity of trends observed with regard to challenges with Just Transition implementation on the ground.

#### Function #7: Match making

While the priority remains the channelling of funding through multilateral financial mechanisms under the UNFCCC, the Action and Support component would also identify funding avenues for Just Transition pathways, along with countries and experts currently working on Just Transition pathways and in a position to mentor and accompany Just Transition initiatives in other territories. It would connect projects or countries with funders, support efforts of practitioners to connect directly with each other.

#### How it would look in practice

*Helpdesk: A developing country wants to create and implement a national just transition strategy. As part of this, they wish to conduct proper and meaningful public participation. They contact the helpdesk of the global mechanism. The helpdesk directs them to existing materials on public engagement on Just Transition compiled in a best practice depository built by the JTWP (the knowledge component). The helpdesk also connects them with two other countries (one developed and one developing) that had volunteered to mentor other countries after sharing their learnings in previous discussions. Finally, they also connect them with a philanthropy seeking to fund public participation in Just Transition initiatives in developing countries. With this funding, they are able to conduct their own public participation suited to their context.*

## Governance

### Composition

The BAM requires ownership by Parties, observer constituencies and relevant international organisations at the practitioner level, as well as a solid fabric of cooperation extended to the Just Transition community made up of communities, experts and those willing to advance Just Transition in accordance with the agreed principles and scope (the Global Hub of practitioners, along with national contact points on just transition) .

### Timeline for establishing the Mechanism

The BAM functions can be agreed and implemented modularly:

- At COP30/CMA7:
  - Launch of the Belem Action Mechanism (BAM) with a description of its functions at COP30/CMA7.
  - Kick off of the “Action and Support component” through provisional hosting by a Party/Group of Parties in cooperation with interested UN agencies and observers. This would imply that the consolidated helpdesk, matchmaking and support Functions #5, #6 and #7 at COP30 could start working.
  - Launch of the Global Hub of practitioners, along with national contact points on just transition.
- By COP31/CMA8:
  - Agreement on strengthening of the JTWP so it responds to Function #4 on Knowledge Sharing.
- By COP32/CMA9:
  - Agreement on modalities of the Coordination entity with critical functions #1 Stocktake and gap finding, #2 Steer and Guidance and #3 Monitoring of implementation and support, with the right balances and ownership among Parties and non-Party stakeholders.

## Conclusion and next steps

At a time of high geopolitical turmoil and lack of progress towards meeting the Paris Agreement goals, some may question the pertinence of the UNFCCC COPs and of climate multilateralism. The Belem Action Mechanism for a Global Just Transition (BAM) represents a unique opportunity to orient climate action towards a stronger alignment with peoples’ rights and prosperity for all. Centering the implementation of the Paris Agreement and all its features towards workers, communities and prosperity pathways for countries, the launch of the BAM would send a strong signal about the role of multilateralism in advancing justice and international cooperation. COP30 can build an iconic milestone in this regard.

This discussion paper seeks to contribute to ambitious and out-of-the-box thinking in terms of what the UNFCCC can still deliver for people and the planet. The Climate Action Network and the Women and Gender Constituency, their members, along with allies in the trade union, justice, indigenous peoples and youth movements stand open to engage and keep improving this proposal.

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<sup>4</sup> The nine official constituencies are: Business and Industry (BINGO), Environmental (ENGO), Farmers, Indigenous Peoples (IPO), Local Government and Municipal Authorities (LGMA), Research and Independent (RINGO), Trade Union (TUNGO), Women and Gender (WGC), and Youth (YOUNGO).

## Annex

### Principles for Just Transition Pathways

Recent years have seen multiple developments of just transition initiatives in the energy and other sectors— whether local, national, sectoral, international—and show the breadth and growth of the deployment of Just Transition across some very different realities. While there is increasing positive recognition of Just Transition as a critical framing and approach to climate action, we have also witnessed a proliferation of guidance, principles and approaches on the matter, watering down fundamental elements, leaving a scattered landscape for policymakers and civil society, and, at worse, painting a Just Transition varnish on initiatives that are far from just or part of the transition.

This is why it's urgently needed for the UNFCCC, as the main multilateral forum where climate action is discussed, to agree on guiding principles. Having shared guidance would foster policy coherence nationally and internationally, support implementation and serve as reference point for other constituted bodies (within and outside the UNFCCC), national climate plans (i.e. NDCs, NAPs and LT-LEDs), and for the Global Just Transition Mechanism many parties and non-party stakeholders are advocating for. These principles should be drawn from existing frameworks (e.g., ILO fundamental rights) as a basis, while establishing shared expectations under the UNFCCC and protecting the core values of Just Transition.

These principles would ensure Just Transition actions are equitable, inclusive, rights-based and aligned with the Paris Agreement goals, including:

*Being designed and implemented at country level, and aimed at securing dignity for all within planetary boundaries:*

1. Set national and sectoral objectives that are aligned with the Paris Agreement and decision 1/ CMA.4, para. 51, and encompass pathways that include energy, socioeconomic, workforce and other dimensions.
2. Include a focus on sufficiency, efficiency and circular economies, avoiding green extractivist approaches that put undue pressure on the environment, land, resources, Indigenous Peoples, Afrodescendant and communities.

*Being built with workers, communities and all rights-holders' voices (based on peoples' realities, needs and inputs) through:*

3. Robust and inclusive consultation institutions and processes and participation in planning and decision making processes at the national, regional and local level. This should include on the one hand tripartite social dialogue involving government, employers and workers to shape labour policies, and on the other hand engagement with rights-holders and relevant stakeholders on all other aspects of Just Transition.
4. The respect, protection, and fulfilment of human rights, which include economic, social, environmental and cultural rights, people of African descent and Indigenous Peoples' rights, gender equality, labour rights, the right to health, rights of persons with disabilities, rights of future generations, the rights of minorities and other marginalised groups, and the right to development.
5. Upholding the Right to Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) of all Indigenous Peoples, and ensuring all affected communities are consulted and have access to grievances mechanisms and fair compensation.

6. Robust and transparent assessment mechanisms and identification of social, economic, and environmental impacts, with intersectional considerations and the integration of the most diverse social realities, including but not limited to gender, race, ethnicity, class, disability, age, income, taking measures to avoid and mitigate them, with full accountability mechanisms and remedy for damages done.

*Increasing prosperity and reducing rather than entrench inequalities, via:*

7. Decent work, labour rights, safe and dignified lives for all with active participation of all workers in transition plans, including formal and informal, popular, women and gender-diverse, young, senior, care, subsistence and domestic workers.
8. Universal, disability-responsive and gender-transformative social protection programs/policies, with particular attention to those marginalized and with the establishment of universal social protection floors as the priority.
9. The care economy as a central axis towards a Just Transition, including a systematic, institutional and domestic recognition, reorganization and redistribution of the labor that enables social provisioning and reproduction, primarily undertaken by women and gender-diverse people.
10. Governments provide quality public services meeting their obligations to fulfill economic, social and cultural rights, such as the rights to sustainable, stable and affordable energy, food, education, health care, housing, water, and sanitation, and put in place food sovereignty policies.

*Generating an enabling environment for Just Transition to happen in all countries through international cooperation, including:*

11. Access to non-debt-creating climate finance for supporting the realization of the above principles in countries with limited capacity to undertake those.
12. New forms of investment, partnerships, and trade agreements away from unequal, extractive and/or neo-colonial exchange dynamics and terminating and/or circumscribing trade deals that do not align with the Paris Agreement. Measures must ensure fair terms of trade, protecting policy space, preventing exploitative practices, and upholding labour and other human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights such as the right to health, and environmental standards to create a more balanced, equitable, and inclusive global trade system.
13. Facilitation of broad-based access to human rights compliant renewable energy and other climate-related technology goods for the Global South.
14. Enabling developing countries to diversify their economies, build alternative economic models and facilitate the establishment of domestic ownership and industrial capacity.





## WOMEN \* GENDER CONSTITUENCY

This discussion paper further elaborates the Cross-Constituency proposal for a global just transition mechanism.