

DAY 1 – Nov. 11  
UNFCCC COP 29 – Baku, Azerbaijan

COP 29 kicked off yesterday at the Olympic Stadium at Baku, Azerbaijan with a mix of highs and lows. Many were surprised and encouraged by the swift and early decision on Art. 6.4 with the COP endorsing the Supervisory Body's standards on methodologies and removals. However, the delayed opening plenary due to an extensive agenda fight was disappointing to many who were eager to start work on negotiations, especially on the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance. The anxiety from the results of the recently concluded US elections was palpable and dominated most discussions outside the negotiation rooms as well as some press rooms. Many people will be watching the US delegation very closely as we wait and see if President-elect Trump will push through with his campaign promise to once again pull the US out of the Paris Agreement.

What is an agenda fight?

The UNFCCC negotiations follow an agenda for each of its meetings and decisions are made based on these topics. All agenda items – including any additions - must be approved by the plenary before they can be opened for negotiation. At COP 29, the adoption of the agenda was delayed for about 9 hours as Parties struggled to come to an agreement over 2 main issues. The first being on trade measures and the second on the scope of the UAE Dialogue on the global stocktake.

Regarding trade measures, China, on behalf of the BASIC group of countries proposed a new agenda item last 6 November 2024 on “climate change-related, trade-restrictive unilateral measures” adopted by developed countries which they claim increase the cost of climate action and dampen efforts to increase climate ambition. On the other hand, regarding the UAE Dialogue, Parties were divided on whether to focus solely on finance or to discuss all stocktake outcomes - including the landmark agreement to “transition away from fossil fuels”. The agenda was finally adopted with the compromise to leave trade measures out of the formal agenda but with an agreement to discuss the issue informally with a report thereafter and a footnote on the UAE dialogue not to prejudge the outcomes of the modalities that may still be discussed under the SBI.

What is the Article 6.4 Decision?

The Article 6.4 standards on methodologies and removals proposed by the Supervisory Body on Article 6.4 was endorsed by the Parties on the first day of COP 29. This development shows the Parties' strong commitment to the full implementation and operationalization of Article 6 and sets the momentum for further talks on this issue at COP 29.