BIOMASS ACTION NETWORK - PRESS RELEASE

As COP31 Opens, the Real Test of the Energy Transition Is What Comes Next

Governments must show that implementation leads to lower emissions, safeguarding of ecosystems and a just energy transition

(9 November) COP31 in Antalya, Turkiye opens today at a pivotal moment for global climate action. As the impacts of climate change accelerate and the risks of overshoot grow, governments face mounting pressure to demonstrate not only ambition, but implementation, according to the Biomass Action Network (BAN).This year's conference marks the start of the Second Global Stocktake (GST2), which will assess collective progress in implementing the Paris Agreement. The challenge facing countries is no longer simply setting targets. It is ensuring that those targets translate into measurable outcomes.

> "The era of promises is over. The test now is whether implementation delivers the emissions reductions and ecosystem protection that governments have committed to," said Campaigns and Policy coordinator Reija Mikkola from Biomass Action Network.

As countries work to accelerate electrification and expand renewable energy, COP31 has an opportunity to strengthen the integrity of the transition away from fossil fuels. Progress should be measured through real-world outcomes: declining emissions, protected and restored ecosystems, and benefits for communities.

For BAN, one of the key questions facing COP31 is whether energy transition pathways are fully aligned with climate, biodiversity and forest protection goals.

A particular challenge is how growing reliance on forest biomass in some energy strategies can be reconciled with commitments to halt deforestation and forest degradation, protect biodiversity and rapidly reduce emissions. As governments discuss implementation, these trade-offs should be openly assessed and transparently accounted for.

> "Implementation should be judged by what happens in the atmosphere, in forests and in communities," said Katja Garson from Stand.earth. "Climate action cannot be measured

by accounting assumptions or fuel-switching alone. It must be measured by real outcomes."

During COP31, the Biomass Action Network and its partners will publish additional analysis and commentary examining the role of woody biomass in energy transition pathways, including its implications for emissions, public finance, forests and local communities.

While implementation takes place through national policies and energy plans, international accountability remains essential to ensure progress is not weakened over time and that climate and biodiversity commitments reinforce one another. The measure of success at COP31 will not be the number of announcements made, but whether countries leave Antalya with a clearer pathway to delivering real emissions reductions while safeguarding forests and communities.

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