

## CLIMATE CHANGE GOVERNANCE AND FOREIGN POLICY OF PAKISTAN

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### ABSTRACT

The primary cause of climate change is human activity, especially in light of the widespread industrialization that has been observed in Western nations. The effects of climate change are currently unevenly dispersed, threatening every country regardless of how much each one has contributed to the issue. Pakistan is the sixth most vulnerable country to climate change, although producing less than 1% of the world's emissions. Pakistan's efforts in climate governance are still insufficient, making the nation more vulnerable to climate-related problems, even though many other countries have put into place efficient mitigation and adaptation plans to tackle these dangers. At the level of different tiers of government, the problem of climate change has not been methodically institutionalized along with clear deficiency in knowledge and readiness about climate change. However, being an entity to international climate change regime Pakistan has come up with a number of domestic and international climate change response initiatives in response to these concerns. Pakistan's National Climate Change Policy was first introduced in 2012 and has since undergone multiple changes by different administrations. Pakistan actively participates in international climate change debates and is dedicated to upholding its duties. Pakistan's participation in international climate change diplomacy is indicative of its dedication to tackling worldwide environmental issues. Pakistan aims to improve its reputation abroad and support worldwide efforts to tackle climate change by taking an active part in discussions about the issue and enacting laws at home. Furthermore, Pakistan's foreign policy highlights its role as a responsible global actor in the battle against climate change by emphasizing the significance of coordination and cooperation with other countries to effectively handle climate-related challenges.

**Key Words;** Climate Change, Climate Governance, International Regime of Climate Change, Foreign Policy, Pakistan.

### INTRODUCTION

The phrase "climate change" refers to the ongoing modification of Earth's climate, including variations in temperature, precipitation amounts, wind patterns, and other essential components of the planet's climate system. These fluctuations in climate have the capacity to have a significant impact on human communities, their economic systems, and the larger environmental background. This problem has become a major worldwide challenge due to its profound and long-lasting effects on the environment and the health of its population. In the current discourse, there is a growing emphasis on analyzing the implications of climate change in multiple areas,

such as economic frameworks, energy policy, development strategies and environmental stewardship. The intersection among foreign policy, international climate regime, and climate change governance emphasizes how important it is to align national policies with international obligations. By ensuring that national plans complement and support the goals of international agreements like the Paris Agreement, this synergy makes it easier for nations to participate in the global fight to tackle climate change. In order to advance national interests as well as shared environmental goals, such coordination is necessary for effective global climate action and

diplomatic collaboration. Pakistan's robust participation at COP 27, particularly in promoting the creation of a loss and damages fund, is indicative of its dedication to tackling climate change issues within the context of global climate governance and diplomacy.

The interplay of governance, legislation, and foreign policy highlights a unified strategy for tackling intricate global issues, guaranteeing that national legislation and foreign policy initiatives are in harmony to accomplish broad policy goals. This research elucidates the multifaceted repercussions of climate change on Pakistan, spanning environmental degradation, economic volatility, and the socio-economic fabric of the population. It conducts a thorough analysis of Pakistan's programs and legislative frameworks designed to lessen the consequences of climate change. This study also explores the critical influence that climate change has played in influencing Pakistan's foreign policy and diplomatic endeavors in international regime of climate change. This research aims to make a substantial contribution to the scholarly debate by outlining the practical approaches to climate change within the domains of policy and governance. In order to promote a more knowledgeable and calculated approach to policy creation and foreign diplomacy in the face of global environmental concerns, it emphasizes the necessity of having a sophisticated grasp of climate change's implications for Pakistan.

The theoretical framework of this study is Complex Interdependence Theory. This theory emphasizes the interconnectedness between states and non-state actors in a variety of subject areas, acknowledging the complex character of international relations. Climate change challenges intersect with national issues and general foreign policy goals, such as economic development, trade relations, and regional cooperation. Interactions with a wide range of entities, such as foreign nations, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and multinational enterprises, are a part of Pakistan's projection of domestic climate change governance issues at international level. Pakistan engages in bilateral and multilateral agreements related to climate change mitigation and adaptation, takes part in international climate change forums like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations, and works on climate-related projects with international

development agencies and non-governmental organizations. The Complex Interdependence Theory also makes a distinction between "high politics" (military security and sovereignty) and "low politics" (economy, ecology, and society). It contends that collaboration is more likely in low politics areas. Since climate change governance incorporates social, economic, and environmental factors rather than direct military security concerns, it generally falls under the category of low politics. This difference is reflected in Pakistan's involvement in climate change governance, which shows a readiness to work with other nations and international actors on common environmental issues in spite of underlying political conflicts or security issues in other areas of the country's foreign policy agenda. Thus the Theory of complex interdependence provides an opportunity to the researcher to explore different interconnected areas related to climate change governance and foreign policy of Pakistan.

The following are the research questions involving corresponding objectives and methodology used for this study.

#### **Research Questions**

1. What policies and governance frameworks has Pakistan put in place to counteract the effects of climate change?
2. What connection exists between Pakistan's foreign policy framework and the governance of climate change?
3. In what ways does Pakistan's foreign policy and international relations approach take climate change into account?

#### **Research Objectives**

1. To outline Pakistan's mitigation initiatives and governance plans in response to the issues posed by climate change.
2. To investigate the relationship between Pakistan's foreign policy and climate governance, positing that the country's foreign policy agenda is becoming more and more influenced by climate change considerations.
3. To closely examine Pakistan's foreign policy in light of climate change, placing special emphasis on how climate issues are incorporated into diplomatic dealings and global collaboration.

### **Research Methodology**

The present research uses a qualitative methodology, utilizing up-to-date, secondary sources to create a comprehensive grasp of the topic. This methodological decision makes it possible to examine the intricate dynamics at work in-depth and to analyze policy texts, governance structures, and diplomatic approaches in relation to climate change in great detail.

### **1.State-Level Resilience: Addressing Climate Change Challenges**

Devastating impacts of climate change are obvious and explicit. It is also a fact that climate change impacts are global, however, besides a global approach to mitigate climate change devastation, there is a need of strong national government to counter it domestically as well. There is a deeper link between climate change and governance. The adaptation and mitigation mechanism framed and implemented nationally are the result of the governments' efforts at the national level. Effective and catastrophe – responsive government is considered to be highly important in reversing or minimizing the climate change impacts. The more the government is responsive the more it would minimize climate change induced threats. The overall institutional capacity of the government to initiate climate friendly policies, frame and implement the mitigation strategies, fall in the domain of climate governance (Jagers & Strippel, 2003). Furthermore, the debate on climate change and governance or climate governance evolved in certain phases. The early literature primarily focused on the domestic approach towards climate change, electoral promises and normative questions over climate actions. Subsequently the discussion was followed by the relationship between institutional structure of a country and the climate related decision making.

The countries prone to climatic effects or adversely affected framed different strategies to mitigate the threats. China witnessed devastating floods in the 2008 that caused infrastructural damages and human losses. Consequently, it led China to take some serious steps at home to mitigate the climatic affects. China introduced sponge cities, villages and towns model, where excessive rain water could be artificially absorbed and stored in the underground retainers. Furthermore, to lessen the carbon emission China introduced massive climate friendly public

transport services across many of its cities. Guangzhou China metro service is the world largest public transport service in which millions of people travel on daily basis. The public transport sector helped in minimal use of personal vehicles which ultimately led into the low carbon emission. The above strategies were result of the better governance system in China, where the government took the matter of climate change seriously and took effective, and long term steps (Chikhi, Li, Ji, & Zhou, 2023). As an adaptation strategy Japan introduced floating houses concept, which could easily withstand the climate change induced floods. To minimize the excessive carbon emissions, Dutch government emphasized its citizen to use bicycles. The effective implementation of this strategy made Amsterdam to be known as the city of bicycles. Furthermore, Netherland has designed its infrastructure construction on a well thought plan that it could either be on walking distance or on short drive of bicycle. This is how different countries are adopting different adaptation and mitigation strategies across the globe to mitigate the climatic threats (What are the World Countries Doing about Climate Change, 2021).

### **2.Climate Change Governance in Pakistan**

In its recent history Pakistan has witnessed worst climatic catastrophes in the form of floods and untimely precipitation. Climate is a threat multiplier for Pakistan. In Pakistan, food supply chains disruption, water scarcity, internal migration, crops damages and infrastructural damages are the areas of high concern due to climate change threats. Pakistan experienced extreme weather in 2023 as March and April being the hottest months after 60 years and July being the wettest month after 62 years. Pakistan's crop of wheat, millet, and mangoes were severely impacted by an abrupt rise in temperature. According to the Global Climate Risk Index, climate change will have a significant influence on Pakistan, Haiti, Nepal, and Myanmar. The Himalayan glaciers and the unpredictable weather in the Hindu Kush mountains could have disastrous consequences for Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, China, India, Pakistan, and Nepal (Rehman, 2023).

Pakistan, as a developing nation, faces challenges in achieving sustainable development, and inclusivity. Unfortunately, there is a general perception that interest groups have taken over the nation, leaving large swaths of the population vulnerable to the risks

and extremes of weather brought on by climate change. Well intact and functional local government structures are lacking in Pakistan and catastrophe preparedness, resource distribution, and policy-making are done from above. In union councils, tehsils, and districts, there is a severe institutional vacuum. Since local leadership is not developed, whenever there is a climate tragedy the prime minister or chief ministers personally oversee rescue efforts (Sheikh, 2022).

Very few standard operating procedures, or SOPs, exist for handling floods and other extreme weather events linked to climate change. Civilian institutions, especially those responsible for providing environmental and municipal services, lack requirement resources. These services include the provision of emergency supplies and goods, the cleaning of drinking and sewage water, and the maintenance of rainwater and floodwater drains. The fact is that the district-level Disaster Management Authorities, or DDMAAs, have not yet been established after the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) was established in 2007. The provincial level disaster management institutions are also not empowered to undertake actions independently. This is the reason that each time during adverse climatic event army is called in the rescue and even for the rehabilitation services. Climate change is also turning to be a major threat to the national security of Pakistan (Bhutto, 2023).

### **3. Weak Climate Change Governance Induced National Security Threats to Pakistan**

In Pakistan, the debate to integrate climate change into the national security policy had largely remained unexplored in the academic and strategic discourse. Regardless of the fact that for the past 20 years, Pakistan has remained one of the top 10 countries vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and faced extreme weather events. It is in the year 2022, that climate change has been included in Pakistan's national security policy (2022-2026). In the same year climate change induced floods wreaked havoc in the country (Siddiqui, 2022). The unprecedented floods affected 33 million people in the country and 2.2 million houses were either completely or partially destroyed. Besides, 1730 people lost their lives and many more wounded. The total damage caused by the floods was more than 4% of the FY22 GDP. In the year 2022, variability in weather patterns caused 10% decrease in wheat

production and 30 percent in the mango production in the country. In addition to that, the super floods caused supply chain disruption and raised the cost living. This resulted in pushing more than 8 million people below the poverty line in Pakistan (Durrani, Khurshid, Malik, & Hashmi, 2023).

Besides the extreme weather events, climate change induced risks could pose threats to Pakistan's national security. The U.S intelligence report has identified Pakistan as one of the eleven countries may be unable to cope with the long term impacts of climate change. According to the German Watch report; Pakistan is the fifth vulnerable country to climatic catastrophes. The report further reiterates that the country's vulnerability to climate change is increasing with each passing year (Report, 2022). Water availability is on decline and Pakistan is in the list of 33 water stressed countries. The per capita availability of water in Pakistan was 5000 cubic meter in 1951, currently its 1100 cubic meter and till the end of this decade, it is estimated to be 700 cubic meter. In Pakistan food and water crisis are known issues often translated into an inter-provincial rift and political polarization. In 2012, when the Lahore high court gave verdict in favor of Punjab province and directed the federal government to construct Kalabagh dam in the Mianwali, the provincial assemblies of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, Baluchistan and Sindh passed resolutions against the verdict. The inter-provincial political crisis went deep in 2012 and Kalabagh dam construction is still an inter-provincial issue (Khan, 2019).

Climate Change could flare up tensions over the stressed natural resources and could cause large scale internal migration. In Pakistan conflict over resource distribution has already been manifested in the form of insurgency in the province of Baluchistan and the country has the history of ethnic and sectarian fault lines. The severity of climate change impacts on Baluchistan in the form of droughts and the depleting water table resulted in a direct increase in insurgency. In Pakistan migration towards mega urban cities is one the fastest in South Asia. Climate Change resulted in a huge scale trend in internal migration in the year 2022, in which people moved to the urban centers for better opportunities. As there are no established laws in Pakistan to legally deal with climate immigrants, resultantly, it creates a sense of dispossession in local urban communities. This situation would also exacerbate the existing fault lines in the society. According to Micheal Kugelman,

there is a connection between sectarian and ethnic violence, and rapid urbanization in Karachi. In the coming years' climate-migrants could prove detrimental to the internal security of Pakistan (Kugelman, 2013).

Climate change induced threats also question states' legitimacy and its institutional capacity. Pakistan's obsolete and inept institutional, and policy response to the climate emergencies exposed poor governance standards. The situation enables the violent non-state actors to exploit state inability and exert their influence in the affected areas in the garb of philanthropy. The VNSA try to assert their influence in the affected areas where the government presence is minimal (Gordon, 2022). In Pakistan, Jamat U Dawa had stronghold in the areas where the government had little outreach and the group inspired many through its charity and assistance work especially during the rapid onset of climate induced disasters. The group had hundreds of sympathizers in the parts of Baluchistan, Sindh and Southern Punjab. In reference to the TTP and LeT assistance work during 2010 floods, the then president Asif Ali Zardari warned that; "the extremists take babies who become orphans and put them in their camps, train them as the terrorists of tomorrow." (Siddiqua, 2018).

Climate change also poses direct threat to the military security in Pakistan. The discourse in academic and strategic circles is largely non-existent on the said threat. However, given the rising sea level, in 2015, the Pakistani parliament was informed that three cities; Karachi, Thatta and Badin might be under water till 2060. This poses a serious threat to naval bases of the Pakistan navy in the coastal areas. Moreover, Pakistan's military deployment in the highest militarized zone in Siachen is not immune from climatic threats. The fast melting glaciers and avalanche poses threats to the soldiers' lives and effects military operational readiness. One of the causes of the Giyari sector incident in 2012 was said to be climate change. Heat waves, cyclones, and floods impacts the military movement, operational readiness, training and it can also damage the critical military infrastructure (Zoin, 2023).

#### **4.Steps to Improve Climate Change Governance in Pakistan**

Being of one the most vulnerable countries Pakistan has taken certain fundamental steps to combat the looming threats of climate change. Furthermore,

Pakistan regularly updates its National Climate Change Policy to cope up with emerging threats.

#### **4.1 Pakistan's Institutional Framework for Climate Change Governance**

The Pakistan Climate Change Authority was established under the 2017 Pakistan Climate Change Act. The authority is in charge of managing programs that are appropriate to draw in international finance for climate change. The body is mandated to: "Prepare suitable adaptation and mitigation projects for submission to international and local institutions for funding," according to Section 8(1)(c) of the Act. The authority bears the additional responsibility of guaranteeing the fulfillment of duties delineated in international conventions, treaties, and agreements. This covers both international commitments toward Pakistan, such as the issuance of climate money, and national-level obligations toward global climate change mitigation and adaptation targets.

While acknowledging Pakistan's entitlement to climate finance, the Pakistan Framework for Implementation of Climate Change Policy, 2014–2030 emphasizes that, in order for Pakistan to draw in a sizable amount of the available funding, "the institutional capacity at federal and provincial level needs to be enhanced significantly to design and prepare effective and saleable programs by the line ministries and other stakeholders. (Azwar, 2023)" There will be little interest from donor communities and international climate financiers if stakeholders are not actively engaged and political backing is not developed. In a 2018 writ case named "Asghar Leghari vs. Federation of Pakistan" before the Lahore High Court (LHC), the petitioner contended that Pakistan was required under the framework to enable the efficient use of the financial opportunities that were accessible, both domestically and globally. But he contended that the framework's priority items had not been followed, and the relevant authorities had not taken any steps to build resilience and adaptability to deal with climate change. This view was supported by the LHC, which concluded that climate change had evolved from a localized environmental issue to a complicated global one. Because developing countries are less able to adapt, rich countries must make a greater global contribution in order to comply with the requirements of climate justice (Mirza, 2020). However, this necessitates emerging nations interaction with global stakeholders

#### **4.2 Pakistan's National Climate Change Policy**

The National Climate Change Policy, which was adopted in 2012, tackles adaptation and mitigation issues in great comprehension. It offers the basic structure for climate action plans, initiatives, and projects. The policy focuses on issues including biodiversity, coastal areas, agriculture, forestry, and water. In spite of its negligible share of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, Pakistan places a strong emphasis on forestry, agriculture, transportation, and energy-related mitigation. The National Climate Change Policy was updated by the outgoing government of Shahbaz Sharif in 2023. Climate Change Minister Sherry Rehman made significant efforts to make it adjustable to the climatic threats. A socially and economically just Pakistan that is resilient to climate change is what the National Adaptation Plan advocates for. In doing so, it hopes to strengthen local communities' defenses against environmental and self-destructive threats by providing green jobs, innovative technology, sustainable infrastructure and services, and fruitful collaborations between the public, private, and civil society sectors (National Climate Change Policy of Pakistan, 2021). The strategy, according to experts, mostly depends on foreign funding being available to implement these ideas. Although it is unclear how finance mechanisms would be used.

Pakistan is still, to some degree, dealing with the aftermath of the disastrous floods that struck in 2022. Pakistan's leadership position at the COP27 in Egypt was largely influenced by the scope of the disaster. A Loss and Damage Fund for Pakistan was approved by the country's effective leadership, which included the then-foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. After this fund is put into action, it would be a crucial channel for bringing in foreign financing to support programs like Pakistan's NAP. According to Pakistan's Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination, the work of creating a National Adaptation Plan, which had been made feasible by a USD 3 million grant from the United Nations Environment Programme, had finally been finished. As part of its commitments under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Pakistan is currently one of 40 nations that have developed a national adaptation plan (UNFCCC) (Ebrahim, 2023).

#### **4.3 Pakistan's Updated Plan for Nationally Determined Contributions**

Pakistan has set an extensive target to address climate concerns by decreasing GHGs by 15% with domestic resources and 35% with assistance from foreign funds by 2030 in its Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) 2021. Pakistan wants to achieve this goal by totally banning imported coal, switching to 30% electric vehicles by 2030, and utilizing 60% renewable energy. Financing for the energy transition alone will total USD 101 billion. Due in large part to the important role played by its cities and other subnational administrations, the nation has also made some progress in the area of climate action between 2018 and 2021. For instance, the low emission Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system has been introduced in Islamabad, Lahore, Peshawar, Multan, and Karachi (Sheikh I., 2023).

According to Pakistan's amended NDC of 2021, the city of Karachi has implemented a number of climate change adaptation and mitigation methods since 2018. These tactics include utilizing urban forests to counteract the effects of climate change, managing solid waste to reduce the risk of flooding, enhancing the public transportation system to achieve zero emissions, and including the gender viewpoint into the "Safe BRT Travel Program." In 2018, Karachi launched a zero-emission bus rapid transit metro line. The "Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)" Project shortened travel times, provided affordable, secure, and reliable connectivity, and enhanced the public transportation system. It is anticipated that this project will lower annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 77,979 tons. The "Safe BRT Travel Program" has designated stations for men and women, trained employees, anti-harassment posters with reporting numbers and helplines, and recording devices in place to guarantee the safety of both sexes. The Miyawaki Forests were planted by the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC), which also intends to establish 300 small forests across the city to increase green cover and use urban forests as a tool to fight climate change. The Solid Waste Emergency and Efficiency Project will also see the construction of new sanitary disposal cells, the renovation of transfer stations, the purchase of new machinery, and the development of a long-term waste management plan for Karachi. In addition, throughout the following two years, the city intends to produce and publish a consumption-based emissions inventory for goods and services. KMC

intends to develop a Nature Restoration Plan with both short- and long-term goals in order to make Karachi greener, more natural, and climate resilient (Aamir , 2021).

#### **4.4 Pakistan International Commitments and Agreements**

Despite having low economic status and politically instability, Pakistan has been somewhat consistent in fulfilling international obligations and commitments. There is a list of national legislations done in line with international obligations. In 1983, the first ordinance pertaining to ecology and the environment was passed, but it was never put into effect. Nonetheless, the Federal government conveyed through this law its worries over the gravity and significance of environmental challenges and their connected concerns. In 1997, an additional attempt was made to tackle this problem in its entirety. The Pakistan Environmental Protection Ordinance 1983 (Badr-ul-Ameer) was repealed by the Federal Legislature through the aforementioned act. The Federal Government formed the "Pakistan Environmental Protection Council" in this historic legislation, the first and most relevant of its type. The council's duties included approving and examining national environmental quality standards, environmental policies, national environmental reports, etc. Significant institutional changes were undertaken when the federal cabinet approved the Climate Change Bill of 2016.

Pakistan actively seeks out international cooperation, utilizing alliances to transfer technology and share information. Multiple initiatives have been taken to control trash reduce environmental effect, and to finance green methods, incentivize investments in sustainable projects. Infrastructure that is climate-resilient is built to resist harsh weather, demonstrating Pakistan's resolve to combat climate change. Working together across regions is essential to tackle common climate issues. The focus is on cooperation between Pakistan and the other members of the "South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation" (SAARC), paying specific attention to India and other bordering countries. Unfortunately, not all of the actions listed in the SAARC action plan on climate change - which was endorsed during the SAARC Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change in Dhaka - have been carried out. Enhanced cooperation within the SAARC framework can be a good example of transboundary action, bringing about a

worldwide influence in the fight against climate change. Regarding climate change, Pakistan has ratified and participated in a number of multilateral environmental agreements. Pakistan is signatory of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 1992. In order to reduce the damaging impacts of climate change, this convention aims to stabilize and reduce the concentration of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere. Pakistan is also a part of Kyoto Protocol 1997, in which the developed nations committed to reducing and limiting their greenhouse gas emissions. Pakistan is also a part of the Paris Climate Agreement. The agreement aims to keep the temperature below 2.0 degree Celsius and pursuing efforts to minimize the extra increase in temperature. This agreement aims to improve the international feedback to the threat of climate change (Sherin , 2023 ).

#### **4.5 Climate Change and Foreign Policy**

One of the biggest problems of the twenty-first century, the climate issue has significant geopolitical ramifications for the entire planet. In addition to raising sea levels and raising temperatures, greenhouse gas emissions are also drying up water supplies and endangering people's lives and livelihoods everywhere. Severe weather events are happening increasingly and with maximum severity. These include violent rainstorms, hazardous storms, protracted droughts, lethal heat waves, and uncontrollable wildfires. The climate crisis presents significant obstacles. Significant geopolitical concerns about sovereignty, territorial integrity, and access to resources like food, energy, and water are raised by the effects, which also jeopardize people's livelihoods and impede development. The climate problem has the potential to have significant and wildly unforeseen repercussions on civilizations, meaning that human security may be jeopardized and tensions and instability may increase. It will take a global, coordinated, and all-encompassing strategy to address them. Climate diplomacy has a role here. Industrialized nations and associated negotiation blocs have long employed climate diplomacy as a means of shaping global discourse and achieving outcomes consistent with their goals. On the other hand, developing states have often lacked the resources required to engage in substantive climate diplomacy, such as Pakistan. Even though Pakistan contributes very little to global greenhouse gas

emissions, it remains vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Therefore, any action it takes to mitigate the effects of climate change would be highly encouraging to the rest of the world. Although COP26 produced some positive results, it also made significant mistakes: it did not adequately address loss and damage, and a last-minute agreement to reduce coal obligations damaged confidence. Without the financial resources and clout of the G7, the G20's initiatives will not be successful. The largest economies in the world are significant investors in development banks and play a key role in public financing. The most powerful nations must create an inclusive structure for raising funds rather than exclusive climate clubs that serve mainly to shield them (Salik, 2022).

The role of Foreign minister is very important in International Engagements. Under international frameworks like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), foreign ministers actively participate in climate negotiations. The foreign ministers as the representatives of states take part in diplomatic initiatives to represent their nation's interests, negotiate contracts, and work with other countries to solve climate-related issues. Foreign ministers participate in the development of national plans and policies related to climate change. They collaborate closely with the ministries of the environment, energy, and finance to match foreign policy objectives with climate change aims. The successful execution of climate obligations, such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), is contingent upon proficient coordination spearheaded by foreign ministers. Foreign ministers attend important climate conferences, like the Conference of the Parties (COP) meetings, on behalf of their nation. They make speeches, strike agreements, and promote their country's position on important matters including adaptation, climate funding, and emissions reduction. Their participation guarantees the hearing and consideration of national viewpoints in international climate decision-making. Conversations about climate financing, including contributions to the Green Climate Fund, are held by foreign ministers. They support giving developing nations financial assistance for capacity-building, adaptation, and mitigation. It is within their purview to guarantee the fair and transparent allocation of money towards climate initiatives (Hale , 2018).

#### **4.6 Pakistan Diplomatic Engagement and the Climate Change**

In the recent times Pakistan has vehemently projected the issue of Climate Change Governance at international fora. The government of PTI from 2018 – 2022 made significant strides in the area of Climate Change diplomacy. Shah Mehmood Qureshi the then foreign minister had a vocal role in Pakistan's international climate change related engagements. Qureshi urged the international community at UNGA regarding Pakistan's vulnerabilities and its minimal contributions in the greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, to combat climate change and project Pakistan soft power the then prime minister Imran Khan took significant steps, which were highly applauded at international level. Imran Khan launched the massive campaign of "Billion Tree Tsunami" and then "ten Billion Tree Tsunami" to mitigate Pakistan's climate threats (Ayaz , 2020).

After the VONC, Shahbaz Sharif became the prime minister while foreign minister portfolio was given to Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. This government (2022-2024) also effectively presented Pakistan's case at the COP27 Summit. The United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference (COP27) brought together people from all around the world in Egypt in 2022. The conference's agenda included topics such as adaptation, mitigation, loss and damage fund from climate change, and climate financing. A fund was established during this meeting for Pakistan to deal with loss and damage brought on by climate-related calamities. The decision, which was made in Sharm-El-Sheikh, Egypt, is regarded as a significant victory for Pakistan. Floods occurred due to climate change in Pakistan caused losses and damages exceeding US\$ 30 billion, drawing attention to this pressing issue on a global scale. China and the Group of 77 also vowed to help Pakistan. To lessen losses and damages in developing nations, the "Fund for Loss and Damage" was approved for Pakistan. This fund will be beneficial to Pakistan (Din , 2023).

The then Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto played an active role in the international fora. Pakistan's representation at COP 27 under Bilawal Bhutto was quite impressive owing to his grandfather legacy. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, was a key figure in representing Pakistan at the 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP-27). The Pakistani delegation to the COP-27 Sharm El-Sheikh Climate Implementation Summit in Egypt was led by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. The



Prime Minister was accompanied by senior officials and other members of the government, including Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. At a news conference with the UN Secretary-General in September 2022, Bilawal Bhutto emphasized his strong solidarity with the Pakistani people on the terrible loss brought on by floods. He drew attention to Pakistan's issue with the densification of climate change. August was the wettest on record in several parts of Pakistan, with rainfall up to eight times more than average. Bilawal underlined that he had personally seen the enormous devastation brought on by floods, and that climate change is a reality. He sent his deepest sympathies to everyone affected by the floods who lost family members, homes, businesses, and means of subsistence. From Pakistan, Bilawal Bhutto made a global plea for an end of depending too much on fossil resources. In order to tackle climate change, he urged investment in renewable energy. He made a point of saying that nations like Pakistan, which have made very little contribution to global warming, are suffering greatly as a result of the main emitters' intransigence. Bilawal called the current state of affairs "collective suicide" and urged everyone to act immediately (CURTAIN RAISER: Prime Minister's visit to Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt for COP-27, 2022).

## **5 Way forward**

The following are the recommendations Pakistan could pursue both at national and international levels.

### **5.1 At National Level;**

The identified climate change-induced risks pose challenges to Pakistan rather it put in danger the survival of the country. Although climate change risks cannot be handled single handedly, still the threats can be minimized through a climate resilient policy framework.

- Pakistan needs to develop a mechanism to shift from fossil fuel to renewable energy, build climate resilient infrastructure, ensure sustainable urban development and initiate massive reforestation.
- Moreover, Pakistan has to develop an early warning and alert system, invest in a grass root level well-coordinated response mechanism, timely and proper shelter arrangements for climate refugees, and long term cash or monetary grants to the effected people.

- Rather than blaming Climate Change, the government must expedite its operations and demonstrate its presence in all impacted areas. In addition, the State bears the responsibility of offering financial assistance to individuals who have lost their means of subsistence due to the recent floods for a minimum of two years.
- Ultimately, the important step is to acknowledge the reality of climate change and the massive failure of Pakistan's public infrastructure.
- To improve governance, divert resources and empower civil institutions to timely cope up with adverse climatic effects.

### **5.2 At International Level;**

- Pakistan needs to make a serious and well-intended leap forward towards a geo-economic and focus on more green projects.
- Pakistan needs to plead its case more vigorously to convince the international community over its low carbon emissions and disproportionate consequences.
- Pakistan is required to end the disconnect with neighboring countries especially India to combat the threats of climate change effectively.
- Pakistan needs to make the international obligations practical and achieve targets mentioned in the national determined contributions.
- Pakistan needs develop national environmental policies with international standards and focus on the long-term green policies.

## **6 Conclusion**

The sum and substance of the above discussion is that climate change is one of the imminent threats looming over the planet earth. Climate Change threat is trans-borders and cannot be contain by a single state's efforts. It needs a unified front to deal with. It affects the developed and developing states equally. However, the magnitude of devastation is different owing to the developed best climate related policies and strategies. The developing world is prone to climate change dangers and Pakistan is one of the most vulnerable countries among the developing states. Although, Pakistan's contribution to

greenhouse gas emission is less than one percent yet it stands 5<sup>th</sup> in the vulnerable countries. Pakistan has been facing extreme weather since long. The year 2010 floods wracked havoc in the country and the country had bear more than thirty billion PKR losses. It was also hit by a historic flood in 2022, which caused infrastructural damages, supply chain disruption, loss of agricultural productivity etc. Climate change also poses serious threats to Pakistan national security as well. Pakistan is a strategically sensitive state and climate change can flare the already existing security tension of Pakistan. Climate Change can damage many of the critical strategic infrastructure of Pakistan.

The above mentioned issues are primarily related to the weak climate governance of Pakistan. Neither at national level nor at provincial level the matter of climate change has been institutionalized. Having said this, Pakistan is trying to overcome the climate catastrophes. Pakistan both at national and international levels tries to manage the threat of climate change. Nationally Pakistan introduced National Climate Change Policy in 2012, which has been frequently updated by the consequent governments. In 2012, Pakistan also established a separate ministry for the climate change. Apart from this Pakistan is trying to develop a legal and institutional mechanism to combat climate change. At international level, Pakistan is a part of all the important protocols, commitments and obligations. Pakistan is signatory to UNFCCC, Kyoto protocols and Paris Climate Agreement. At the diplomatic and foreign policy front Pakistan maneuvers to gain as much financial assistance as much possible. After the recent floods of 2022, Pakistan foreign minister represented Pakistan in good diplomatic manner at international fora related to climate change. In the COP27 Pakistan convinced the international community that the country has a due right of the loss and damage fund. Pakistan is now trying fulfill the international commitment and work on the nationally determined contributions.

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