



**Center for Global & Strategic Studies  
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## **Climate Change Reassessment: Pakistan's Initiatives and Way Forward**

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In the contemporary era, severe climate changes are stirring comparatively at a larger scale. Pakistan, which has been listed as the 7<sup>th</sup> most vulnerable affected country, is now confronting the unpredictability of the weather. Pakistan contributes less than 1% of the world's greenhouse gases alleged for causing global warming, yet its 200 million people are among the world's most vulnerable victims of the mounting consequences of climate change. The country is facing cumulative temperatures, flooding, drought

and earthquake that threaten health, agriculture, water resources, and the basic living standard by decreasing the income ratio of each individual.

The first nationwide “Climate March” led by environmentalists, activists, and citizens mainly youth held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019 aimed to highlight climate emergency and creating awareness among the masses and demanded actions worldwide to mitigate the serious impacts of climate change in Pakistan. The event was held in



more than 26 cities including the metropolitan hubs of the country, aligned with the United Nations climate action summit 2019.

While, Pakistan is considered among 7<sup>th</sup> countries affected most by climate change, according to the Global Climate Risk Index 2018 issued by the public policy group German

watch. The bridge between South Asia and the Middle East, Pakistan resides in such a geographic position where the average temperature is predicted to rise faster than elsewhere, with growing approximately 7.2 degrees Fahrenheit 4° C by the year 2100, according to a World Wildlife Fund report 2012.

The government of Pakistan has pledged to reduce emissions by 2030 as Pakistan having world’s 6<sup>th</sup> largest population, is projected to add almost 100 million people by 2050, causing great strains on its resources with increased carbon emissions by 300% over the next 15 years, as more cars clog roads and demand for electricity expands as

well as water demand in Pakistan is estimated to rise by at least 40% over the next 30 years, demographic and economic growth elements, and the demand management challenges are the principal drivers in this context.

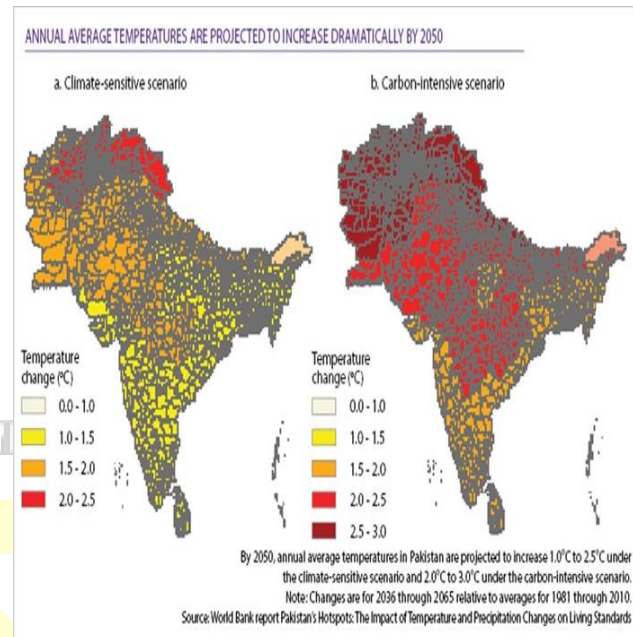
The Group of 77+China a traditional climate negotiation bloc where all the countries and China aligned their negotiating position, began to crumble at the Conference of Parties (COPs) during the last ten years due to the complexity of adaptation costs, flow of international climate finance, extreme weather, seawater rise, Damage, and the cost of climate change to the developing economic countries. Unfortunately, the Middle-income States like Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, and Pakistan with stunted growth rates but having the potential for emergence, are not significant players in negotiations.



According to the experts, Pakistan has confronted around 150 freak weather incidents of flash floods, forest fires in summer, smog in winter, melting glaciers, heat waves, landslides, and displaced population, food shortages during the past 20 years. Due to the climate change effect, floods occurred in 2010 and 2011, nearly 10% of Pakistan's population was displaced in two provinces of North and South. The costs of extreme weather as a consequence of climate change were listed at \$ 384 million in only last year.

A World Bank report on Pakistan explained that the Impact of Temperature and Precipitation Changes on Living Standards, published in July 2018, argued that by

2050, annual average temperatures are projected to increase to 2.5° C under the “climate-sensitive scenario” (represents a future for taking collective action to limit greenhouse gas emissions) and up to 3.0° C under the “carbon-intensive scenario” . Around 49 million, or 25% of Pakistan’s total population, lives in such places that will become ‘moderate



hotspots’ by 2050 under the “carbon-intensive scenario” . The Containment of temperature is essential to prevent major zones of Pakistan from converting into uninhabitable in a future.

The extreme climate incidents have become a regular phenomenon. A heat-wave that grabbed more than 1,200 lives in Karachi only two years ago was the result of greater frequency and intensity of climate. In Nawabshah (Sindh) 50.4° C in April 2018, recorded as the highest temperature globally. Floods and hydro-disasters since 2010 when 20 million Pakistanis were directly affected have become an annual feature. Riverine communities routinely get wiped away without even a mention by media. The calamity of drought is afflicting misery in Tharpakar and numerous other areas, particularly in Balochistan.

Climate change poses a serious threat to the living standards of the huge population of Pakistan. The World Bank report further indicates Sindh province as the most vulnerable flashpoint with which is considered the second-largest economy and contributes 30% to the National GDP. According to the report, the Hyderabad district of Sindh emerges as the top hotspot, following Mirpur Khas and Sukkur districts. Alarmingly, the metropolitan cities including Karachi, Lahore, Multan, and Faisalabad emerge among the top 10 hotspot regions.

### **Efforts to Combat Climate Change Effect and Way Forward**

Efforts are being undertaken to mitigate the Climate change problem. For instance, around \$ 120 million funds have been consumed in the country in the past 5 years to seizure forest degradation and to promote plantation. There has also an effort to take eco-friendlier energy for Pakistan. Pakistan has an installed capacity of over 30,000 MG of electricity. Out of this, 60% is being generated through imported fuel including furnace oil, coal, etc. while 30% is via hydropower, 6% nuclear and only 4% generated on renewable energy. The share of renewable energy would be enhanced to 25% of the total by 2025 and 30% by 2030. The billion trees plantation project was a great initiative to decrease the climate effect in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, and the government of Pakistan planting more under the 10 Billion Tree Tsunami project which is ongoing. After a ban on the use of plastic bags in the federal capital, the Punjab and Sindh governments also repeated this initiative. Hopefully, this time, the ban will force the public to switch to more environment-friendly alternatives.

Moreover, a concentrated effort by the government and civil society at each level is required to confront these environmental threats. There should be a ban on one-time use plastics which have a direct impact on global heating due to their excessive energy consumption while production. Although a bill was articulated by the Punjab Food Authority in 2018 to ban Styrofoam in food packaging, it is yet to be approved.

While focusing on the energy system, Pakistan's total energy largely includes oil, gas, and coal, while a small amount constitutes renewable resources of energy. The Alternative Energy Development Board has been tasked by the administration to produce at least 5% of the total national power grid from renewable resources including solar, hydel, biomass, wind and nuclear by 2030.

An attitudinal shift is obligatory to eradicate the climate danger on an individual as well as societal level. Constructing new dams to save water is also necessary for our survival. Planning and implementation of waste management are decisive for mountainous areas.

The implementation of a proactive approach rather than a reactionary one is needed. The climate change efforts should be prioritized at the political level as well. Currently, 40% of the food in Pakistan goes to waste while 43% of our population is considered food insecure. The signatories of Paris Climate Accord, also considering how to feed their population as feeding the growing population will be a challenge due to the melting of glaciers and higher water evaporation rates caused by hotter temperatures will mean less irrigated water and smaller harvests of staples such as wheat and rice.

Public awareness is the main aspect of eradicating the grave climate change issue. Thus, climate change having severe and drastic consequences needs serious consideration, applicable strong strategy, and implementation to save the earth.

