

Strengthening Pakistan's Climate Change Policy

written by admin | October 24, 2021



By: Saddam Tahir

Climate change is not only an environmental challenge; rather it has evolved into a security and developmental challenge over the years for countries across the globe. With changing climate scenarios, Pakistan's development model needs to go through a paradigm shift, creating a second climate science arm. All economic planning and investments, out of necessity, need to be an exercise in planning and investment of climate adaptation, duly informed by institutions generating climate knowledge and providing climate services. Climate services can help the country pursue three tracks:

- Climate adaptation
- Disaster-risk reduction
- Sustainable development

In the annual report for 2020, Global Climate Risk Index has placed Pakistan in the fifth position on the list of countries that are most vulnerable to climate change. According to the report from 1999 to 2018, Pakistan has experienced 152 extreme weather hazards, faced economic loss worth \$3.8 billion, and 9,989 people have died. Based on the statistics recorded by the think tank, the report concluded that Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change is intensifying. The report points out that Pakistan is "recurrently affected by catastrophes and continuously rank among the most affected countries both in the long-term index and

in the index for the respective year". Due to the geographical location, Pakistan has become most vulnerable to climate change and hence placed on the long-term index of the report. One of the co-authors of the report David Eckstein registers in the report that "the entire region where Pakistan is located is prone to extreme weather events, in particular, heavy rainfalls e.g. during monsoon season, and floodings as a result."

This year's report is particularly relevant for Pakistan as climate change is fast "increasing variability in the water cycle, inducing a greater number of extreme weather events, reducing the predictability of water availability, and adversely affecting water quality". Three water-related issues are central to climate adaptation in Pakistan:

1. a) Water stress, reflected in increasing uncertainty and scarcity.
2. b) Hazards and disasters reflected in floods, droughts, storms surges, and glacier lake outbursts.
3. c) Water quality is reflected in the deteriorating quality of ground and surface water used for drinking, irrigation, and industry.

As the early warning systems continue to be underdeveloped and underutilized, the national meteorological and hydrological services remain weak. National public institutions mandated to provide hydrological information, therefore, lack the necessary capacities needed to provide climate services for water. The results are perilous: human, social, and economic losses are continuously soaring as floods have globally increased by 134 percent and droughts by 20pc in the last two decades. This gives Pakistan all the more reason to augment climate services.

Despite international support and growing climate vulnerabilities, Pakistan has not developed its National Framework for Climate Services (NFCS). The presence of an NFCS will provide an institutional mechanism to coordinate, facilitate and enhance collaboration among national institutions to improve, jointly produce, deliver and use science-based climate projections and services. Some regional countries like China and India who developed robust national frameworks have successfully accessed global science and technology, as the GFCS seeks to build on continued improvements in climate forecasting to increase access to the best climate data. Planners, investors, and vulnerable communities have the right to benefit from easy-to-use information so that they can plan and cope with projected trends and scenarios.

Since Pakistan's datasets on temperature, precipitation, soil moisture, snowfall in glacial areas, ocean conditions, and winds are absent or inaccessible, policymakers are not always informed about long-term historical averages of these parameters or their risks. Development planners end up shooting in the dark by taking decisions without knowing long-term projections and trends. However, Pakistan's leadership remains fully committed to addressing the concerns and threats of climate change. As multiple projects of reforestation took place in the last few years to tackle natural disasters.

President Trump's Visit to India: Pakistan's Diplomatic Success on Indian Soil

written by admin | October 24, 2021



The United States of America and India have come a long way from being crestfallen to being fully cooperative with each other on strategic concerns and matters. While the association between two States became sore amid India's nuclear ambitions in 1998, Bill Clinton, former president of USA, revitalized the ties in 2000 and since then the strategic and economic ties have only gotten sturdier. Fast forward to 2019, as per Indian Ministry of External Affairs, India was anticipated to acquire \$18 billion worth of arsenal from USA along with bilateral military exercises. USA based Indian diaspora has also been very active in promoting India's interests and popularity. Indians are also among the richest immigrant communities in the USA. Despite the fact that India is the US's largest trading partner, they do business of about \$142 billion a year. The USA filed a lawsuit in the World Trade Organization against India and called it a source for US's trade deficit by subsidizing exports.

On February 24th of 2020, US President Donald Trump addressed the Indian audience in Ahmedabad during visiting India to meet with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. While being on stage President Trump proclaimed to be all set to sell arsenal, energy and "best and most feared" military equipment of worth whopping \$3 billion to India. While making all the statements that Indian media, political leadership and audience wanted to hear, President Trump made a comment that sent a chill down their spines. President Trump, while standing on Indian stage placed on Indian soil, said that the USA is now enjoying good relations with Pakistan and all the efforts made by Pakistan are paying off well in progressing towards a new beginning, harmony, stability and reduced tensions. President Trump did not just stop there, he went

on and said that the Trump administration is working very closely and positively with Pakistan to decrease the risk of militancy along the border.

President Trump's statements praising Pakistan for its efforts on Indian soil were not well received by Indian media and leadership. As Pakistani media, leadership and Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi highlighted that the importance of these statements cannot be denied, Indian media went frenzy and kept bringing up the past references of terror attacks to keep the reputation of Modi government intact. The statements in favor of Pakistan made the Modi government concerned to the level where PM Modi refused to hold an unscripted press conference to avoid any more controversy which might have further killed the euphoria of Indian audience. The reference of having good relations with Pakistan at a public meeting with PM Modi cannot be accidental on part of American president and US's soft policy towards Pakistan qualifies to be an irritant for India in pursuit of having great strategic partnership with the USA.

Among all the commendations for the Modi government, President Trump was unsuccessful in mentioning his remarks over the protest happening in India over its Citizenship Amendment Act and religious persecution of Muslims minority in India. Meanwhile, Pakistan's media and political leadership is thrilled to have received an acknowledgment for their efforts, whereas Indian media has tried it best to curb the idea that Pakistan is a partner in bringing and maintaining. President Trump's acknowledgment of Pakistan's efforts is not only a manifestation of Pakistan's successful foreign policy but also have given legitimacy to Pakistan's and its citizens sacrifices worldwide. The praising statements have given a blow to India's hoax narrative that Pakistan is the problem, rather Pakistan is a part of solution in peace process which is clearly reflected by Pakistan's active participation in US-Taliban peace talks.