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The Politics of Climate: South Asian Geopolitics and Pakistani Responses to Global Climate Negotiations

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Abstract

The strategic location of Pakistan in South Asian climate geopolitics and its reactions to the global climate negotiations, especially those conducted by Conference of the Parties (COP) and Group of Twenty (G20), is explored in this research paper. Based on the latest trends of COP27-30, the paper will examine how Pakistan has used its climate vulnerability (i.e. the disastrous 2022 floods and frequent 2025 monsoon disasters) to push climate justice and the creation of the Loss and Damage Fund. The study explores the multifaceted nature of interactions between the regional forces, especially the India-Pakistan-China triangle, and the capacity of Pakistan to manoeuvre in the international climate forums. This paper will claim based on policy analysis and discussion of diplomatic language, that although Pakistan has not been without triumphs on a symbolic level in the climate negotiations, structural factors such as institutional capacity, economic turmoil, and regional geopolitical tensions still stand in the way of successful climate diplomacy. The recent information on the 2025 floods that led to 946 fatalities, 6.9 million individuals, and enormous agricultural and infrastructure damages supports the increasing trend of weather disasters. It turns out that the climate negotiation approach that Pakistan uses aims at the point where vulnerability is exploited, coalition formation with the Global South, and great power competition is overcome, but it still struggles to transform diplomatic achievement into practical climate finance and adaptation aid.

Keywords: Climate Geopolitics, Pakistan, South Asia, Climate Negotiations, COP, Loss and Damage, Climate Finance, SAARC, G20, Climate Diplomacy, 2025 Floods

Introduction

The Climate Crisis and South Asian Vulnerability

The South Asian region is the first to suffer the brunt of climate crisis in the world, recording excessive expenses even though it contributed the least to past global greenhouse gas emissions. The area soon hosts about a quarter of the global population, and the changing climate is increasing in severity, endangering human security, economic growth, and political stability (Dialogue Earth, 2024). This is the example of Pakistan: a country, which contributed to less than 1 percent of total global emissions, but was among the most climate-prone countries in the whole world. The disastrous trend of floods in Pakistan has been growing exponentially over the last years. The 2022 floods in Pakistan covered 1/3 of the country, took away the lives of 1,739 people, displaced millions of people, and estimated damages of up to 30 billion dollars (United Nations, 2022). Worse still, this trend has been followed with disastrous frequency. The 2025 monsoon season

caused a new disaster, as, since the end of June, torrential rains and flash floods affected the country causing 946 deaths (incl. 255 children), over 1,062 injuries (incl. 320 children), and impacting about 6.9 million people on the country (as of mid-September) (Kanwal, 2025; UNICEF, 2025). In 2025, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had the greatest number of deaths with 504 and 1.57 million people affected, and Punjab had the worst flood in forty years with 5.1 million people affected and 1.97 million evacuated. It has destroyed 229,700 houses, 790 bridges, 2,811 kilometers of roads, and killed more than 22,800 livestock and destroyed about 2.2 million hectares of agro land (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [UNOCHA], 2025; National Disaster Management Authority [NDMA], 2025). This repeated trend of calamity-inflicted climatic events sharply depicts the existential quality of climatic hazards on South Asian countries. Such a weakness is present in the context of a complicated geopolitical environment with decades-old historical hostilities, nuclear threats, and regional interests. The India-Pakistan opposition, the growing authority of China in its programs, such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and the massive Global North-South divide in climate responsibility all contribute to the way the South Asia states interact with the global climate governance regime. The climate diplomacy of Pakistan can hence not be interpreted as a policy that is concerned with the environment, but should be approached as a strategic statecraft that functions at a number of scales being simultaneously applied.

Research Questions and Objectives

A number of questions are interconnected in this study:

1. What is the strategic positioning of Pakistan in international climate talks, and why did it have a diplomatic position when it comes to repetitive climate disasters?
2. How are South Asian geopolitics of the region, especially its relations with India and China, limiting or facilitating Pakistani diplomacy on climate change?
3. To what extent has Pakistan succeeded in turning climate vulnerability into a diplomatic advantage and getting tangible climate financing?
4. How do domestic political and economic issues influence the formulation of the commitments of the international climate of Pakistan?
5. How do the trends over the increasing frequency and intensity of the flood disasters in Pakistan between 2020-2025 look?

The essential purpose of the given paper will be the thorough examination of the climate negotiation approach of Pakistan in the general perspective of the South Asian geopolitics that will become informed with the most recent data on climate effects and flood patterns up to the year 2025.

Significance of the Study

It is important to know more about the climate diplomacy of Pakistan because of a number of essential reasons. First, it provides reminisces of how the third world countries prone to climate change exploit the global platforms to advance their national interests in pursuit of global climate justice. Second, it shows how regional geopolitics essentially defines the possibility of climate cooperation, which can be applied to other conflict-stricken areas. Third, the case of the Pakistan experience of the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund teaches important lessons regarding the disconnect between the breakthrough diplomacy and the actual climate finance being delivered. The frequency of Pakistan flood disasters, which occurred in 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025, proves a growing tendency toward climate vulnerability, and the situation requires attention and action on an international level. Lastly, the paper is a contribution to more general arguments regarding the success of multilateral climate governance and the involvement of the Global South in transforming international politics of the environment.

Literature Review

Climate Geopolitics: Theoretical Foundations.

Climate change and international relations have formed an intersectional research topic and the discipline of climate geopolitics has developed into a more specific area of study. Conventional approaches perceived environmental problems as low politics, which ranked second to security and economic factors (Conca and Dabelko, 2002). Nevertheless, recent studies identify climate change to be fundamentally altering geopolitical order, power balance and state behavior (Oels, 2012; Dalby, 2014). Climate geopolitics involve a variety of approaches: competition between the largest powers to lead in climate matters, competition to share the burden and to take responsibility in history, competition to design the architecture of climate finance, or to use climate vulnerability as a bargaining resource at the international level (Goldthau and Sitter, 2015). The various multilateral climate forums such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties, have been the venues where the longstanding geopolitical struggles are overlapped by the emerging geopolitical environment of environmental diplomacy producing complex forms of negotiation that are both cooperation imperative and compete states interests. Literature in climate negotiations stresses the existence of North-South divide as a recurring theme in world politics concerning climate change (Roberts and Parks, 2007; Ciplet et al., 2015). The industrialised countries, who have done most of the historical emissions, have always opposed making binding pledges to offer climate funds and transfer of technological advancement to the developing nations. This conflict finds its expression in the discussion of climate justice, common responsibilities and differentiated responsibilities, operationalization of the principles set out in the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement. The introduction of the Loss and Damage Fund at COP27 could be the change in this dynamic, but the difficulties in its implementation are still acute (Global Witness, 2024).

Small State Acting at Multilateral Climate Forums.

Literatures on small state action in international relations provide useful information in the examination of climatic diplomacy in Pakistan. Although Pakistan is not usually defined as a small state due to the size of its population and having nuclear capabilities, it acts as a middle power with minimal resources as compared to the other major economies, and has its limitations just like any other small country during climate negotiations (Cooper et al., 1993; Neumann and Gstohl, 2006). The literature on the strategies utilized by small states in multilateral forums reveals some of the typical strategies - coalition building, norm entrepreneurship, strategic use of international law, and exploitation of procedural opportunities in institutional environments (Björkdahl, 2008; Ingebritsen, 2002). These measures have been successfully used by climate vulnerable states with the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) being one of the most effective examples of collective response of vulnerable countries (Betzold, 2010). The leadership position of Pakistan in the G77+China coalition echoes the same strategy coalition-building to enhance the influence than the state capacity. Nonetheless, the literature also singles out major constraints to the small and midsize powers. The constrained availability of resources restricts involvement in technical negotiations, institutional capacity problems are limiting the quality of implementation, and relying on the major powers to finance climate negotiations builds an imbalanced relationship of power that undermines the bargaining position (Ciplet et al., 2013). These structural constraints should be seen as Pakistan's climate diplomacy.

South Asian Regional Climate Cooperation.

The situation in South Asia poses challenges to climate cooperation in the region. Climate change is an issue that affects all regions equally, but regional collaboration in climate matters has not yet taken place (Mirza, 2011; Ahmed and Suphachalasai, 2014). In 1985, the South Asian Association

of regional Cooperation (SAARC) was formed and this organization has made many climate-related declarations/action plans such as the Dhaka Declaration and SAARC Action Plan on Climate Change (2008) and the Thimphu Statement on Climate Change (2010). These efforts have however remained symbolic and little can be achieved on the ground considering that there is political tension especially between India and Pakistan. The studies of the climate activities conducted by SAARC reflect structural frailties of the organization, such as the absence of binding commitments, insufficient institutional capacity, the inability of institutions to finance their activities, and the prioritization of the environmental cooperation over larger bilateral conflict (Mukherji, 2020; Rahman et al., 2012). The suspension of SAARC summits since 2016 due to the tensions between India and Pakistan in effect rendered the mechanisms of climate cooperation in the region useless at a time when the effects of climate were getting severe. Other researchers have suggested different frames such as sub-regional ones under the Bay of Bengal Initiative of Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) or sector-specific collaboration on the management of Transboundary Rivers and disaster relief (Vij et al., 2017). According to recent studies, climate change may ironically bring renewed South Asian cooperation, since the reality of an existential threat due to climate change may overcome historic geopolitical boundaries (Dialogue Earth, 2024). Nevertheless, the skepticism is well deserved with decades of unsuccessful attempts of regional integration and the further entrenching of the India-Pakistan hostility over the recent years.

Development of Climate Policy in Pakistan.

The literature exploring the Pakistani policy towards climate policy follows a historical trend of very little involvement in early climate negotiations to more active involvement over the years after realizing the dire situation the country faces. The initial literature described the climate policy in Pakistan as a non-proactive, underfunded process that involves little coordination among the concerned ministries in the government and a lack of awareness among citizens (Khan et al., 2020; Salik et al., 2015). The original Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of Pakistan under the Paris Agreement were seen to be too little and relied on foreign financial assistance. The floods in 2022 were a moment of radical change in the climate pattern of Pakistan. Studies that examine the post-flood diplomacy of Pakistan include the fact that the catastrophe offered incentive as well as strength to advocate more proactively on climate issues (Zardari, 2022). The chairmanship of Pakistan on behalf of the G77+China at COP27 placed it in a good position to advocate the Loss and Damage Fund, personal tragedy into diplomatic opportunity. Nonetheless, according to the researchers, there are still some significant gaps between the international advocacy and domestic climate action of Pakistan, and the adaptation measures are not completely implemented because of political instability, economic crises, and governance issues (Sustainable Development Policy Institute [SDPI], 2023). The National Adaptation Plan (2023) of Pakistan is the largest domestic climate policy framework ever to date, which focuses on water security, agricultural resilience, urban adaptation, and reducing the disaster risk. However, dry evaluations cast doubt on Pakistan whether this can be achieved without a strong foreign handshaking and domestic institutional change (The Diplomat, 2024).

Critical Gaps in Current Literature.

As the research on the topic of climate geopolitics and South Asian climate vulnerability continues to expand, there are still significant gaps in research. To start with, the regional geopolitical conflict issues are not analyzed in terms of their specific contribution to climate negotiation strategies and outcomes. Although the analysis of North-South relations is well-developed, the role of the India-Pakistan rivalry on climate cooperation has not been investigated thoroughly. Second, the study of climate diplomacy in Pakistan is usually done in isolation as opposed to within the context of South

Asian geopolitics or the influence of China in the region via CPEC. Third, the incongruity between the diplomatic achievements of such forums as COP27 and the real situation with climate financial provision is an issue that should be investigated more thoroughly and specifically in terms of the institutional and political obstacles to accessing the guaranteed funds. The study attempts to fill these gaps by offering a comprehensive study of the climate diplomacy of Pakistan that considers geopolitical issues of the region, the domestic politics-economy of the country and the complexities of multilevel governance issues of implementing international commitments into practical climate action.

Theoretical Framework

Geopolitical Theory can be applied in Climate Negotiations.

This study uses geopolitical approach to study climate negotiations as they are viewed as spaces where conventional politics of power collide with new environmental demands. Geopolitical theory argues that the actions of states are the result of strategic calculations regarding the power, security and interests in a state of anarchy that exists in the international system (Waltz, 1979). Nevertheless, traditional realist assumptions about the conduct of states have to be adjusted when they are applied to climate politics, where collective action problems and long-term risks make it difficult to make the usual security calculations (Falkner, 2016). Green political geography concept of environmental geopolitics acknowledges that environmental concerns are becoming more decisive on the strategic contestation, coalition building and conflict relations (Dalby, 2002). The climate negotiations are the arenas where states work to achieve several goals at the same time: to promote national economic goals, achieve a place in climate finances, act as a norm entrepreneur, handle domestic political strains, and play a role in solving global problems. These are multilayered motivations that need to be understood to analyze the climate diplomacy of Pakistan. The geopolitics of the region has a large-scale impact on the possibilities of climate cooperation. The experience of the South Asian region with the territorial conflicts without resolution, nuclear rivalry and asymmetric power relations presents some unique limitations to collaboration in the field of the environment. The regional hegemony in India, the counter-balancing tactics in Pakistan, and the increasing influence of China with the help of economic integration all predispose the manner of climate issues negotiation and implementation at the regional levels.

Small State Diplomacy and Coalition Politics.

Small state theory gives us an idea of how less powerful actors manoeuvre through multilateral institutions. Studies determine a number of sources of power by smaller states; they include the moral power with vulnerability, expertise and technological knowledge, institutional organizational talents in procedures, and coalition building to consolidate power (Keohane, 1969; Ingebritsen, 2002). The climate diplomacy of Pakistan echoes most of these approaches, especially coalition building based on G77+China and strategic application of climate justice rhetoric to establish moral leadership. Climate negotiations on coalitions follow several axes; developed or developing countries, fossil fuel producers or renewable energy champions, climate vulnerable countries or high emitters, and different regional blocs. Pakistan is a member of a number of overlapping coalitions: G77+China, Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC), and informal groups of flood-stricken countries. The coalitions give enhancement of the weak voices of nations and technical negotiations coordination. Nevertheless, the diversity of the coalition might also bring conflicts in case of conflicting interests between the members, which should be handled with diplomacy. The outsized influence of certain small and middle powers can be explained with the use of the theory of entrepreneurial diplomacy by the means of strategic issue framing, coalition building and window-dressing (Betsill and Corell, 2008). The example of Pakistan being on the frontline to form the Loss and Damage Fund can be considered such an entrepreneurial act where

the 2022 floods had caused an emergency that Pakistan has used diplomatically via its G77 chairmanship.

Frameworks of Climate Justice and Equity.

Climate justice theory offers normative basis on the demands of the developing countries on climate finance, transfer of technology and burden sharing with reference to historical responsibility (Shue, 1999; Caney, 2010). This framework is based on various ethical principles, which include the polluter pays principle, the ability to pay, consideration on vulnerability, and intergenerational equity. These principles support the needs of developing nations in the climate talks such as compensation of loss and damages proposed by Pakistan. The principle of climate justice is operationalized through the concept of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) entrenched in the UNFCCC which acknowledges that climate change is a shared problem, but states have different responsibilities to the issue depending on the level of their contribution and the ability to resolve them (Rajamani, 2000). Nevertheless, CBDR has also been challenged, as developed nations are moving to gain responsibilities towards emerging markets such as China and India, which makes it hard to build north as well as south coalitions. The rhetoric of climate justice in Pakistan relies on such frameworks a lot as it portrays Pakistan as a victim in climate injustice by industrialized countries creating the climate problems historically. This framing has both moral and strategic functions: it creates ethical grounds of compensations and creates solidarity with other vulnerable developing countries. Nevertheless, the disparity between the justice principles and the real financial flows is too big to answer the question of the effectiveness of justice-based advocacy.

Global Environmental Governance Power Politics.

Global environmental governance theories look at how global institutions, norms, and power relations precondition group responses to transnational environmental issues (Young, 2002; Biermann and Pattberg, 2008). The climate regime is marked by the features of the complicated multilevel governing, in which the power is dispersed on the international, regional, national, and sub-national levels. To comprehend the climate diplomacy in Pakistan, it is necessary to examine the strategic positioning of Pakistan in all these levels of governance. There are various mechanisms by which power can be utilized in climate governance: structural power of economic resources and market size, instrumental power of agenda-setting and procedural control, discursive power of framing and norm creation, and institutional power of governing structures (Barnett and Duvall, 2005). The developed nations have an advantage in all these dimensions, which brings about asymmetric situations in the negotiation process. But vulnerability itself can produce its own form of power what could be called a vulnerability leverage where the states affected by climatic conditions leverage their plight to take a moral high hand and political focus (Betzold, 2010). The example of the post-2022 floods in Pakistan demonstrates that the dynamic is effective, but vulnerability as a power resource may not be as lasting and effective as questions.

Methodology

The study involves the use of a qualitative case study approach, which tries to examine climate diplomacy in Pakistan between the years 2022 and 2025, and includes COP27 to COP30. The case study method makes it possible to have a strong contextualization of Pakistan strategic decisions under geopolitical restrictions in the region and the global processes of climate governance (Yin, 2018). The analysis synthesizes the policies analysis, discourse analysis, and process tracing to explain the interactions of domestic factors, regional politics, and global negotiations to define the Pakistani climate diplomacy. The study takes the form of a multi-scalar analysis of climate politics, focusing on the global level of climate finance structure and the UNFCCC negotiations; on the

regional level of South Asian geopolitics and the dynamics of the SAARC; and on the domestic level of Pakistani climate policies development and implementation. This multi- scalar method shows how the limitations and opportunities of the different levels pre-determine the choices of Pakistan and the results of its negotiations.

The Overview of the Escalating Flood Crisis in Pakistan: Pattern Analysis of 2020-2025.

2020 Floods: Early Warning Signs.

The 2020 monsoon season earlier gave signs of the increased vulnerability to climatic conditions in Pakistan. The floods used to impact more than 410 individuals who lost their lives, 400 individuals were injured, and more than 134,000 homes were damaged, with Sindh alone having over 133,000 houses damaged (Kanwal, 2025). The infrastructure was badly affected as there were 41 roads and bridges damaged, 28 mosques, shops, or hotels as well as 7 power houses that were disrupted in different areas. The 2020 floods did emphasize the vulnerability of the urban setting especially. National statistics have shown that as of the end of August, 163 people had been killed, over 100 injured, and 1,590 houses, nine bridges and ten roads had been damaged, initially reported. The season continued, with increasing rains, hitting more than 2.27 million people, damaging 214000 homes and destroying 1 million acres of crops in Sindh alone, which caused 23600 people to be relocated to 200 relief camps (Kanwal, 2025).

The 2022 disaster: A Watershed Moment.

Pakistan had experienced a climatic catastrophe in 2022 with the floods. The resultant deaths, injuries, and displacement of 1,739 people, 12,800 people, and displacement of 7.9 million people respectively were caused by flash floods, glacial lake outburst floods, and heavy monsoon rains, and 33 million people were affected overall and 20.6 million people needed humanitarian support (Kanwal, 2025). The floods took away around 1.1 million cattle, 2 million houses were ruined or damaged and 13,000 kilometers of highways and 436 bridges were washed away. The floods were equally accompanied by the health crisis. It claimed 8 million individuals require health assistance, and food insecurity was affecting more than 14 million residents, and 2,000 health facilities were destroyed and 3.5 million children were displaced in their education (Kanwal, 2025).

Continuing Destruction: 2023-2024 Floods.

New monsoon rains in 2023 further complicated the current crisis, with the city of Lahore receiving its largest amount of rains in 30 years, and 86 more number of deaths reported. Its economic effect was devastating as the overall losses amounted to over 30 billion- about 10 percent of the Pakistani GDP. The disasters kept on recurring in the same pattern. In Pakistan, this year the floods that took place led to 226 fatalities and 349 injuries throughout the country, more than 5,813 houses were damaged and nearly 24 km of roads were destroyed (Kanwal, 2025). It especially affected the Balochistan area where more than 4,100 houses were destroyed, 22 km of roads were ruined, and 697 livestock were lost. The monsoon season of 2024 was unusually intense with the amount of rainfall amounting to 318 percent above normal in certain areas. It resulted in the loss of 280 lives, people were injured in 523 cases and animals were killed in 677 cases, which have dealt a massive blow to rural livelihoods, relying on animal husbandry (Kanwal, 2025). Sindh had been hit the hardest with 39,145 homes destroyed, 10, 234 of them being completely destroyed, and Balochistan had suffered more than 206 kilometers of road damage.

2025 Floods: A Fatal Pattern that is gaining strength.

The 2025 monsoon has also been one of the worst seasons in the history of Pakistan to attest to the developing trend of climate-induced disasters. Starting at the end of June 2025, the unprecedented heavy monsoon rains and flash floods caused 946 deaths (255 children among them), over 1,062

injuries (320 children among them) and afflicted an area of about 6.9 million people across the country by mid-September (UNICEF, 2025; Kanwal, 2025). The breakdown by provinces demonstrates how devastating the disaster was. The greatest losses occurred in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where 504 individuals were killed or injured and 1.57 million people affected, and Punjab recorded the worst floods in four decades, and 5.1 million individuals were affected, 1.9 million displaced, more than 1.05 million acres of cropland were submerged, and 100 nutrition centers were disrupted, exposing 5,000 children to the threat of malnutrition (UNICEF, 2025; Kanwal, 2025). In Sindh, 68 people (31 of them children) were killed, 87 injured and 91 buildings damaged by urban flooding in Hyderabad, Karachi and Mirpurkhas and a great deal of agricultural damage had been caused. Gilgit Baltistan was experiencing both a combination of glacier lake outburst floods and flash floods. About 229,700 homes, 790 bridges, and 2,811 kilometers of roads were destroyed, and more than 22,800 livestock were killed due to the disaster that destroyed an estimated 2.2 million hectares of cropland (UNOCHA, 2025; NDMA, 2025).

Comparative Analysis: Escalating Frequency and Energy.

According to the data of 2020-2025, the flood disasters in Pakistan have a number of serious trends:

Rising Fatality Rates: The 2022 floods were the lethally most severe with 1,739 fatalities; although the 2025 floods had 946 deaths (as of mid-September), this is a large number, especially considering the ratio of child victims (255 children or 27 percent of the total fatalities).

Geographic Expansion: The separate flood incidence has demonstrated geographic increase with the 2025 floods devastating places that had been resilient in the last couple of years with the worst flooding in Punjab in 40 years.

Infrastructure Vulnerability: The total damage of infrastructure over the 2020-2025 period is the destruction of thousands of homes, hundreds of bridges, and thousands of kilometers of roads, which demonstrate that the infrastructure in Pakistan is not adequately prepared to floods (Kanwal, 2025).

Farmland Destruction: The recurring destruction of farming lands and herbivores over several years has led to continuously escalating food crises, and millions of acres have been displaced in every big flood.

Vulnerable Populations: It has turned out that children have become very vulnerable, as the 2025 floods have demonstrated unequal child victimization and child nutrition and education infrastructure damages.

Climate Negotiation Strategy in Pakistan in the light of the recurring Disasters.

The Reactive to Strategic: The Development of the Pakistan Strategy.

The involvement of Pakistan in the international climate negotiations has gone a long way considering its rising pattern of disaster. The 2022 floods act has changed the tide, yet the repetitive character of disasters up to 2025 has necessitated a radical change of focus regarding crisis management and response to crisis management as a long-term strategic positioning. The 2022 floods gave an incentive and a negotiating bargaining point towards more aggressive climate politics. The loss and damage fund, which G77+Chairmanship of Pakistan at COP27 has positioned Pakistan as a well-positioned player to lead on this agenda and convert personal tragedy into diplomatic gain. The effectiveness of the creation of this fund was the greatest Pakistani climate diplomacy success that indicated the ability to lead a coalition and frame issues. Nevertheless, the disasters that happened in 2023, 2024, and 2025 have shown gaps in the rhetoric and the internal capacity of implementing the diplomatic rhetorical messages. Although Pakistan is a successful advocate in the international arena, the trend of recurrent floods proves that

diplomatic success on its own is not enough without building the resilience of its domestic and international financial assistance (Kanwal, 2025).

Making the most of Vulnerability: The Double-Edged Sword.

Pakistan has been able to use its experience in floods as a witness of climate injustice to the global arena. The floods in 2022 first offered unquestionable facts of frailty and ethical dominion to demand worldwide action. Nevertheless, the tendency up to 2025 has its commonality that both creates opportunities as well as challenges to the diplomatic strategy of Pakistan. On the one hand, the fact that climate disasters are ongoing underlies the arguments of Pakistan concerning the necessity of loss and damage compensation. The 2025 floods that followed close on the heels of the devastating 2022 event only confirm that Pakistan is not experiencing a single disaster but a systematic trend of destruction caused by the climate that needs long-term international assistance (Kanwal, 2025). Conversely, a recurrence of disasters raises the likelihood of these disasters producing some disaster fatigue among global donors and attention span. The issue faced by the Pakistani diplomats has become the ability to remain internationally connected and show domestic toughness and preparedness.

New Priorities: COP30 and Beyond

The continuity and the evolution of the climate diplomacy by Pakistan were portrayed in the representation by their COP30 in Belem 2025. Notably, subnational leadership was also formed given that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif headed the delegation instead of the Prime Minister and indicated both the increasing significance of provincial climate action and potentially softer federal demands following minimal progress on priority finance matters at their previous COPs (The Diplomat, 2024). The 2025 monsoon floods that happened at the same time as the COP30 negotiations gave direct-time testimony to the advocacy positions of Pakistan. In their negotiation over better climate finance and loss and damage provision, Pakistani negotiators may mention efforts currently underway to manage a disaster, which would establish an unparalleled urgency in their diplomatic communication.

The new priorities of Pakistan in COP30 have highlighted:

Direct Access to Loss and Damage Fund: Pakistan has been urging authorities to ease application processes and ensure quick disbursement systems in case of fresh disaster data since, according to it, red tape causes the loss of lives in the current emergency.

Scaled Finance Climate commitments: On the basis of revised damage estimates of 2023-2025 floods, Pakistan has offered tangible demonstrations that the current pledge of Loss and Damage Fund at $700 million is less than 1 percent of what is actually required.

Finance Priority: Due to the frequent occurrence of floods, the priority has now shifted to adaptation investment especially in early warning systems, flood-resistant infrastructure, and disaster preparedness.

Technology Transfer: Following the experience of recent flood responses, Pakistan has been keen to highlight the importance of using technology-based responses of climate-resilient agriculture, early warnings, and disaster management.

Loss and Damage Negotiations: The Diplomatic Triumph in Pakistan.

The most notable contribution that Pakistan can make to international politics in climate change is its leadership on loss and damage. The notion of loss and damage can be defined as impacts of climate that cannot be absorbed and which cannot be undone by an adaptive process - permanent losses and damages that are irreversible. These are the submergence of small island states, the long term displacement of people in non-inhabitable areas, destruction of cultural heritage sites,

ecosystem, and human fatalities due to severe weather conditions. Vulnerable countries had promoted loss and damage as early as the 1990s, but were always opposed by developed countries based on fearing an open-ended liability in case of climate damages. The early advocacy was led by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), although not very successfully. The Warsaw International Mechanism of Loss and Damage 2013 was a compromise as it stipulated forums of discussion but not a commitment to fund those forums. The developed nations especially the United States always vetoed the loss and damage financing initiatives at the later COPs. The Crisis that broke this stalemate was the 2022 floods that hit Pakistan. The timing of the disaster (when it happened months before COP27, when Pakistan occupied the role of G77 chair) posed an unprecedented leverage. To establish the Loss and Damage Fund, Pakistan used the following strategic opportunities:

Coalition Building: Pakistan engaged the G77+China block, AOSIS, LDCs, and African nations in a form of hard work to join pressure on the developed nations. The negotiators of Pakistan also held a lot of bilateral consultations which guaranteed the solidarity of the developing countries and avoided the divide and conquer approach by the reluctant developed nations.
Strategic Framing: Pakistan has strategically reframed loss and damage and made it not charity but justice- compensation due to damages that emissions not created by Pakistan bring. Such moral packaging struck the world and the opposition of the developed countries seemed cruel and unfair, especially in light of the tragedy that had befallen Pakistan in the recent past.
Diplomatic Pressure: Pakistan would use contacts with friendly developed countries, especially in European countries to develop support to finance the loss and damages. The representatives of the country did a widespread media outreach which created pressure on the opposing governments.
Negotiating Flexibility: Core demands were still made but Pakistan demonstrated flexibility on the administration details such as accepting the World Bank government even though the developing nations wanted an independent administration and accepting operationalization of funds in phases as well as making smaller initial capitalizations with a promise to expand in the future. The COP27 agreement on the formation of the Loss and Damage Fund was a historic milestone, which confirmed the diplomatic policy of Pakistan. Yet post-implementation has shown that there exist huge discrepancies between the principle and practice. Fund channeling is appallingly poor. The governance structures are biased towards the donors and not the recipients. The application processes have a high chance of duplicating bureaucratic hurdles that afflict other climate finance schemes. The difference between the loss and damage finance and the current adaptation or humanitarian assistance is unclear, creating the fear that announced contributions indicate repackaged current commitments and not necessarily new ones.

Fine-tuning Advocacy: The Fact that Climate Finance is not a Simple Task.
The main element of the international climate advocacy of Pakistan is climate finance. The justification of the country lies through a series of interrelating arguments: United States has a historical responsibility in climate change and thus, should provide funds to vulnerable nations; Pakistan has a high vulnerability and therefore there are strong moral claims; international commitment on climate finance has been a break down and thus, credibility lacks; and provide sufficient climate finance which is not only to Pakistan but also to the overall climate stability in the world because unchecked vulnerable nations hinder collective action on climate change. The climate financial requirements in Pakistan are both high and complex. The 2022 floods on its own cost between 16 billion in reconstruction and rehabilitation in addition to the total damages of $30 billion (World Bank, 2022). The National Adaptation Plan shows that an adaptation cost of over 14 billion up to 2030 is possible in the priority areas. To meet the targets of NDC mitigation investments, extra tens of billions are necessary, especially related to renewable energy

infrastructure and industrial transformation. These numbers are out of the fiscal capacity of Pakistan especially with the prevailing economic crises and thus external finance is crucial. Nevertheless, there are chronic difficulties as to accessing climate finance. The main multi-lateral climate finance tool, the Green Climate Fund (GCF), entails complicated application processes that demand technical skills most of which are lacking by the vulnerable nations. Pakistan has also been getting a number of GCF grant on adaptation projects but the amount is still small compared to the requirement. Climate finance provided bilaterally by developed countries tends to be conditional on aid or carry commercial interest or repackage the previously existing development aid under climate brands as such.

Domestic Restraints and Foreign Dreams.

Challenges and ambition on climate, focus on improving economic performance.

The climate ambitions in Pakistan are faced with extremely tight economic limits which essentially restrict the capacity of the implementation irrespective of the international obligations. The nation has gone through repeated economic crises that were marked by balance of payments problems, high inflation, unsustainable debts as well as fiscal deficits. By 2024, the external debt of Pakistan is note of more than 130 billion and debt servicing takes up more than 40 percent of government revenues (Pakistan Observer, 2024). The foreign exchange reserves are volatile and they go down under three months of import cover which is a crucial economic stability margin. These are economic issues that will directly limit the capacity to invest in climate. Budgets of governments are made in such a way that the servicing of debts, the military expenditure and basic social services are prioritized leaving little to be used in climate efforts. The Climate Change Ministry is allotted around 0.1% of the federal government budget, which is a substantial amount showing the low priority of climate in politics despite the rhetorical promises (SDPI, 2023). The provincial governments have the same budget limitation and therefore cannot make the adjustment investments despite having the primary responsibility of taking care of the climate-affected sectors such as agriculture, water, and disaster management in the context of the federal structure of Pakistan. These economic-climate tensions are represented in the energy sector of Pakistan. There is a chronic power shortage in the nation, which limits the economy and social well-being. To satisfy the energy demand, it takes enormous investments, yet renewable energy that is compatible with the climate often has high upfront capital expenditure as compared to fossil fuel counterparts, although the operations may be less expensive. Pakistan has increased both renewable and fossil fuel capacity in parallel, installing solar and wind power plants and, at the same time, setting up coal and gas plants funded by CPEC. This rather paradoxical policy is a mirror of facts of development dilemmas: immediate energy requirements, lack of capital, compulsion to take advantage of existing financing even in a climate-unoptimal situation.

Climatic Policy is affected by Political Instability.

Another significant limitation to the effectiveness of the climate policy in Pakistan is political turmoil. There has been a high rate of changes of government, military intervention and civil-military power play in the country which brings policy discontinuity and institutional weakness. Since 2018 and 2024, Pakistan has been a politically turbulent country: Imran Khan's (2018-2022) administration was terminated due to a no-confidence vote, and then a coalition led by Shehbaz Sharif, a caretaker government, and further political polarization between the PTI party led by Khan and the coalition government. This political instability corrupts climate policy in a number of ways. First, incessant changes in the government cause policy discontinuity since new governments leave or alter the efforts of previous governments. Climate policy must be long-term and long-term implementation, whereas political instability generates short-term thinking that is dedicated to short-term survival. Second, government resources are used in political crises that

could have been used to deal with climate problems. Environmental issues can never be given priority when governments are facing existential political threats. Third, institutional memory and technical expertise are also destroyed because politically-appointed officials are changed every time a government changes and this undermines implementation capacity.

Infrastructure Weaknesses that are Unveiled through the frequent floods.

The frequency of occurrence of the floods has revealed systematic deficiencies in the drainage systems, flood control capacity and urban planning of cities in Pakistan, such as Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi, which had undergone the same experience of urban flooding in the past (Kanwal, 2025). The pattern of damage during floods can be analyzed to identify that there are multiple failures of critical infrastructure:

Poor Drainage Systems: The urban drainage systems installed decades ago do not accommodate the increased rainfall patterns, and most of the systems are far lower than the desired capacities.

Deferred Maintenance: The current flood protection systems are poorly maintained and have embankments, channels, and control structures that are currently below the functional standards.

Encroachment Problems: The floods are aggravated by unlawful building in the floodplains and natural drainage systems, even in the urban regions in which the development of the natural drainage systems is prohibited by policies.

Weaknesses of Early Warning Systems: Although Pakistan has established systems to predict the occurrence of major rivers, the 2025 floods showed that there are still gaps in the whole early warning system in the local area when cloudbursts and flash floods occur especially in mountainous areas where evacuation time is minimal (Kanwal, 2025).

Capacity and Coordination Problems of Institutions

This experience in response to floods has been acquired by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs). Nevertheless, institutional capabilities are difficult to manage in the case of responding to massive disasters, and coordination issues between federal, provincial, and district levels do not eliminate gaps in emergency response (Kanwal, 2025). A disaster response analysis of 2020-2025 floods indicates that the same coordination challenges are present:

Federal-Provincial Tensions: Constitutional sharing of responsibilities between the federal and provincial governments creates a problem of coordination during emergencies, as the distribution of resources and power is a source of disagreements.

Low Technical Adequacy: Reduces the competence of other agencies to respond effectively to crises: The technical competence of most district-level authorities is low in terms of flood forecasting, risk assessment, and emergency management.

Information Gaps: The real-time information collection and dissemination systems are still underdeveloped, which negatively affects evidence-based decision-making in the time of fast-changing flood conditions.

Resource Constraints: The emergency response resources such as rescue gear, relief supplies, and human resources cannot be deployed to handle a large scale disaster in multiple provinces at the same time.

Alignments and Strategic Partnerships.

China-Pakistan Climate Cooperation: CPEC Dimension.

The China-Pakistan relationship has greatly influenced the trajectory of climate in Pakistan by investing in energy infrastructure, potential of technology transfer, and geopolitical location to negotiate climate. The flagship of the Belt and Road Initiative is called the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, through which China has committed to investing more than 62 billion dollars'

worth of infrastructure development in Pakistan, the largest part of which is composed of energy projects (CPEC Authority, 2024). The implications of climate change at CPEC are highly unclear. The initial stages were focused on coal-fired power plants with a capacity of several gigawatts ready to invest in them raised the intensity of the emissions of Pakistan and entrenched the reliance on fossil fuels over decades. These investments were a result of the availability of Chinese finance on coal technology and the desperate situation faced by Pakistan to have a quick expansion in capacity to produce electricity without the worry of the emission issue. Such projects as Sahiwal Coal Power Plant (1,320 MW), Hub Coal Power Plant (1,320 MW) and other coal power projects amounted to an addition of about 5,320 MW of coal-fired capacity to Pakistan, at a time when the global climate requirements were in imperative need of decarbonization. Nevertheless, the subsequent stages of CPEC are considerably changed to be more energy-saving. China has funded several large solar and wind power projects in Pakistan such as the Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park in Bahawalpur (one of the largest solar power plants in the world), numerous wind farms in the Sindh province and hydropower projects. CPEC renewable energy projects comprised about 30 percent of CPEC energy portfolio by 2024, but coal project of previous stages still prevails in the real generation (All Pakistan Chinese Enterprises Association, 2024). This change indicates China leads itself in domestic renewable energy as well as pressure exerted on BRI projects by the international community to align its climate dynamics. There is more than energy infrastructure in the China-Pakistan relationship of climate. Pakistan has the potential of energy transition through Chinese technology transfer in renewable energy production, battery storage and electric vehicles. Nevertheless, this movement is minimal and most of the equipment is imported instead of produced locally and creates the dependence on technology without developing the capacity. Chinese climate finance to Pakistan is nearly exclusively in the form of commercial loans and not grants and it is adding to the debt burden of the Pakistani country as it helps in the provision of infrastructure related to climate.

Cooperation with Global South Coalitions

The climate diplomacy of Pakistan has been dependent on the coalitions of politics of Global South groups especially on the G77+China bloc. Group of 77, which was formed in 1964, has 134 developing countries that represent about 80 percent of the world population. G77+China is also involved in the coordination of the developing countries positions on the negotiations at UN including the climate talks, which offers collective bargaining to the negotiating blocks of the developed countries. Pakistan, being the G77+China chairmanship in COP27 was a major diplomatic chance that the country took advantage of agenda setting power, coordination functions and forums to either represent collectivity of the developing countries were granted to the chairmanship. Pakistan took advantage of this stand to give priority to the financing of losses and damage making it not only a Pakistani issue but rather a basic issue of justice to all vulnerable developing countries. This framing established widespread coalition backing which proved to be the major factor in defeating the opposition of developed countries. Nevertheless, G77 +China is extremely varied- least developed nations to developing ones, small island nations to continental superpowers, oil exporters, renewable energy champions. Divergent interests and priorities have to be handled in order to make the coalition stay united. Pakistan has mostly sided with more climate-sensitive G77 members who strongly promote a robust climate action and finance, but disagreements arise between the G77 members and other developing countries when topics such as the phase-out of fossil fuels are discussed because there are key oil and gas producers in the G77 who are interested in the continuation of fossil fuel use.

Relationships with Developed Nations: Negotiating Complexity.

The connections of Pakistan with developed nations have an overwhelming influence on access to climate finance and technology transfer opportunities, but they are complicated by the geopolitical rivalry between different countries, the issues of governance, and the tension between both nations. The main providers of official climate finance are the United States, European Union, the United Kingdom, and other members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), but there are several barriers on the way of Pakistan in accessing such resources. The relations between the United States and Pakistan have been characterized by a lot of turbulence in the past decades. The 9/11 attacks made Pakistan an important U.S. counterterrorism ally, where the United States provided Pakistan with significant military and economic support. Nonetheless, there have been ongoing tensions due to mutual mistrust, the different interests of the two on Afghanistan, the relationship between Pakistan and China, and the consideration of the United States to the nuclear program of Pakistan. By the 2020s, the relationship between the U.S. and Pakistan had reached a personal cold war, security aid was cut back and Pakistan was seen as getting closer to China. These are the geopolitical tensions, which influence climatic cooperation. Other European countries contributed significantly more to the Loss and Damage Fund, whereas the United States contributed only 17.5 million dollars, which was manifested by the lack of political intent to provide significant Pakistan aid (Climate Home News, 2023). Pakistan climate finance by the U.S. is accompanied with governance reforms which according to Pakistan are intrusive. The focus of the U.S. on climate investment being led by the private sector does not auger well with the Pakistani preference to use the public climate finance. The relations between the European Union and Pakistan have better climate cooperation opportunities. The EU has offered major development aid to Pakistan such as climatical programs. The member states of EU such as Germany, France, and Nordic countries have been more liberal in terms of their contribution to Loss and Damage Fund and largely accommodating to the developing country stands on climate finance. In the EU-Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan, there are elements of climate cooperation related to the renewable energy, lessening the danger risks, and water management.

South Asian Climate Geopolitics: Regional limitations to cooperation.

Regional Power Politics: India-Pakistan-China Triangle.

It is impossible to conceptualize South Asian climate geopolitics without examining the tripartite power relationship between India, Pakistan and China three nuclear armed countries that have no resolve of the territorial differences and whose regional interests remain at loggerheads. This geopolitical structure is the basic determinant of regional climate collaboration and at the same time predetermines the way in which every state would participate in international climate conferences. India being the largest economy and highly populated country in South Asia is strategically positioned in climate politics in the region. The Indian duality of being a major emerging economy and a developing country exposed to climate influences makes it complex to negotiate internationally. India has always stressed its right to develop and at the same time has been making investments on the renewable energy with great success having reached a high level of solar capacity growth (Climate Group, 2023). India also dominates in the regional level in climate matters, with India being at the forefront of promoting global solar projects such as the international solar alliance but also being opposed to the high commitment in binding emission reduction measures that could limit the growing economies. The 2023 G20 Presidency of India was a historic claim of climate leadership that saw the theme of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” (One Earth, One Family, One Future) support interconnectedness and sustainable development (G20 India, 2023). The presidency emphasized on climate finance, growth of renewable energy and the

Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) program that advocates sustainable consumption. But India, as the advocate of the Global South in the climate agenda, does not sit well with its refusal to include Pakistan in the G20 process and its contribution to the stalemate in SAARC. Pakistan has a less advantageous status, it is a middle power that is limited by the economic crises, political conflicts and security issues, but has the great strategic significance by its location, nuclear potential and the alliance with China. The climate diplomacy of Pakistan functions in several limitations: it has scarce resources to invest in climate, it relies on external funds and the environmental issues are put second after security and economic needs that are more immediate. The 2022 floods, however, are ironically raising the climate profile of Pakistan, which has become an opportunity in diplomacy that Pakistan has capitalized on.

Climate Cooperation Workings and Limitations of SAARC.

In 1985, the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation was formed and its objectives were to integrate and cooperate in developing the region. The environmental concern slowly came into focus in SAARC resulting in a number of programs on climate. Institutional frameworks such as the SAARC Coastal Zone Management Center, SAARC Forestry Center, SAARC Disaster Management Center, and SAARC Meteorological Research Center had been developed by the SAARC Environment Action Plan (1997) (Globalex, 2024). These institutions formally offer a platform of technical cooperation in matters relating to climate. SAARC climatic systems have spread across decades. This was premature acknowledgment of the global climate dangers, the Dhaka Declaration and SAARC Action Plan on Climate Change (2008). They were followed by the Delhi Statement on Cooperation in Environment (2009) and Thimphu Statement on Climate Change (2010). The SAARC Convention on Cooperation on Environment (2010) and SAARC Agreement on Rapid Response to Natural Disasters (2011) were the legal frameworks to cooperate with (Globalex, 2024). In 2014, the countries in the SAARC signed the SAARC Framework Agreement on Energy Cooperation (Electricity) to aid in the regional power trading. Nonetheless, such efforts have been symbolic with little action being taken. Political goodwill has been wanting as the wider bilateral tussles especially between India and Pakistan have dwarfed environmental collaboration. It has not held a summit since 2014, and the 2016 summit in Islamabad was cancelled because India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Afghanistan boycotted it following tensions between India and Pakistan following a terror attack (Wikipedia, 2024). This paralysis has persisted effectively halting the mechanisms of climate cooperation in the region at the time when the effects of climate escalated.

Implications of the G20 Presidency in India and the Region.

The 2023 G20 Presidency of India served as the tool to claim the leadership in climate matters and create the global agenda of sustainable development. The Presidency focused on a number of climate-related priorities: mobilizing climate finance, tripling renewable energy capacity by 2030, the Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) initiative that encourages sustainable consumption, reducing disaster risks, and the approach to the circular economy (OECD, 2023). India has been able to win the membership of the African Union in the G20 which has made it a champion of the interests of the developing countries. The G20 New Delhi Leaders Declaration had important commitments on climate. Leaders accepted to triple the renewable energy capacity and to increase energy efficiency by 2030 two times. They demanded that climate finance should be increased to trillions and promised to create an ambitious New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate finance with a lower limit of 100 billion dollars per year (G20 India Synopsis, 2023). The Green Development Pact focused on inclusive, balanced and integrated growth and sustainability of the environment. Nevertheless, critics of the declaration criticized it on the grounds that it did not negotiate the language of phase-out of fossil fuels, and that it had weak implementation

mechanisms. The tripling of renewable energy is a significant commitment, but unless there are corresponding commitments on the reduction of fossil fuels, this would not have much impact. Climate finance commitments were to a large extent repeated commitments made in the past with no new binding mechanisms on how to deliver them (European Parliament, 2023). To Pakistan, the G20 Presidency of India was very regional. G20 proceedings were quite notable as Pakistan was invited, but in the past years, it was not a member. When India decided to host G20 meetings in Kashmir, the land Pakistan claims, Islamabad registered its official objection and China boycotted (Business Today, 2023). This exclusion represented the isolation of Pakistan in the region, and the capacity of India to use the world arena to isolate Pakistan at the diplomatic level.

Discussion: Findings Synthesis and Critical Analysis.

Strategic Opportunities and Achievements of Pakistan.

Nevertheless, there are a number of strategic opportunities to be considered when it comes to increasing the effectiveness of climate diplomacy in Pakistan and gaining the support of more people in the world. The 2022 floods increased awareness of the climate vulnerability of Pakistan across the world, which opened up the possibilities of long-term advocacy and mobilizing resources. Pakistan must keep global focus by routine records of impact of climate, compelling communication of human aspects of climate change, and continuing advocacy on the foundation of developed moral authority. The example of the successful use of the Loss and Damage Fund by Pakistan shows that sustained advocacy, coalition-building, and exploitation of political opportunities can succeed even in dealing with major powers that are stubborn. This success serves as the confirmation of additional involvement in the multilateral negotiation process, which concerns climatic issues and provides certain hope that vulnerable countries may not only be the passive participants of the process but also be able to impact the governance systems to become more responsive to their needs and requests. Another opportunity is diversification of partnerships. The over-reliance of Pakistan on Chinese climate funding is weak. Diversifying with increased collaboration with the European nations, Japan, South Korea and international institutions would offer alternative sources of finance and lessen concentration in leverage. The ability to build stronger ties with the sympathetic developed countries that have shown leadership in climate matters would have generated allies in the developed country negotiating blocks.

Organizational Obstacles to Good Climate Diplomacy.

The climate diplomacy in Pakistan has several institutional obstacles that could not be completely faced with individual strategic ameliorations. Climate governance is saturated with fundamental power imbalance between the developed and the developing countries. The developed nations have command over the funds of climate finance, have technological superiority, leadership in international institutions and have the ability to maintain large-scale diplomatic activities that overwhelm the capacities of the developing countries. The number of delegation members of Pakistan to COP negotiations is small in comparison to the main developed countries which restricts the ability to take part in many of the parallel negotiating tracks. The North South structural divide sets up a never-ending struggle in climate talks. Such divide is observed in differentiation, debate, burden sharing, and finance provision and conditionality. The climate advocacy in Pakistan is based mostly on the assertions of this North South split, which are that, the developed nations must pay, that Pakistan should not bear the cost of development, that climate financing must be in the form of grants rather than loans. Nevertheless, this framing has not gone without opposition among the developed countries interested in watering down differentiation and the emerging economies whose standpoints make North-South accounts plain sailing. The most basic obstacle would be the existing disjunction between international commitments and reality on the global climate regime. First-world nations never follow through on climate finance

commitments, transfer of technology is low and cuts in is below the required levels. This trend is indicative of the fact that the international climate commitments are good but they do not have enough enforcement mechanisms to make people keep their commitments.

Lessons to Vulnerable Developing Countries.

The history of climate diplomacy in Pakistan can teach a number of lessons to the other climate-sensitive developing countries trying to make their way through global environmental governance:

Coalition Building Effectiveness: It is the case in Pakistan regarding the Loss and Damage Fund that continued coalition building amongst vulnerable nations can help the developed countries come to terms with particular issues. The most important ones consist of disciplined advocacy in the long run, political opportunism, cohesiveness in the activity of the various developing nations towards similar objectives, and right-framing, which asserts moral authority.

Vulnerability as Diplomatic Resource: Vulnerability to climate can be strategically used to create diplomatic advantage although this is tragic. Pakistan successfully converted sufferings in floods into globality and bargaining power. Small island states are facing submergence, African countries are suffering droughts, Central American countries are suffering hurricanes, other vulnerable countries can similarly take advantage of their experiences to exercise moral authority and political attention.

Thresholds of Diplomatic Success: The experience of Pakistan also cautions against the idea that diplomatic breakthrough in international forums always leads to material rewards. The time lapse between the creation of the Loss and Damage Fund and the adequate capitalization explains how the vulnerable countries can affect agendas and fail to enforce resource transfers.

Geopolitical Realism: Greater geopolitical structures predetermine the opportunities of cooperation in climate. Even discussing supposedly technical environmental concerns, vulnerable countries have to maneuver through the heavy competition of the great powers, the disputes of the regional countries, and the obligations of the alliances. The relationship with China and the tense relations with India as well as the intricate relations with the West all precondition the choice of climate collaboration in Pakistan.

Implications on Regional Climate Governance.

The experience of Pakistan sheds light on larger issues touching on the climate governance of the region in South Asia and possibly on other regions of conflict. Institutional architecture depends on the political will. SAARC has very elaborate environmental cooperation structures on paper-declarations, action plans, specialized centers but has very little tangible results given that the key members are at daggers. It is probable that by establishing more institutions or plans with no consideration of the underlying political impediments, this pattern will be duplicated. Regional cooperation may be not as viable as sub-regional and sector oriented approaches. Instead of pushing all eight SAARC members to work together on all climate-related matters, which is impossible in the fresh climate of India-Pakistan antagonism, narrowing in on certain transboundary problems (river management, response to disasters, sharing of knowledge) in voluntary groups of countries can bring a viable payoff. The role of external powers in the process of climate in the region should be more considered. CPEC investments in China, the U.S. climate financing mechanisms, the lending priorities of the multilateral banks of the development and the investments of the Gulf states in energy are all important factors that affect the climate trajectories of the South Asian region but are not much driven by the regional institutions. To make realistic analysis of climate governance at the region, it is important to understand how the competing interests of the external powers intersect with the regional climate needs.

Conclusion

Summary of Key Arguments

This study has discussed the climate diplomacy of Pakistan in the South Asian geopolitical complicated and global climate governance context. A number of fundamental arguments are brought out through the analysis. Climate vulnerability has provided a strategic advantage to Pakistan, especially after the 2022 floods and the frequent 2025 disasters have targeted the country to attain major diplomatic accomplishments such as the top-ranking in formulating the Loss and Damage Fund at COP 27. This success shows advanced diplomatic skills of the climate vulnerable developing nations when political available chances are matched with continued advocacy and successful coalition formation. The institutional positioning that was offered by the G77+Chairmanship of Pakistan at COP27, together with the persuasive stories of vulnerability, defeated decades of opposition to loss and damage financing by the developed countries. However, there has not been proportional diplomatic breakthrough to material deliverance of climate finance. The gross inadequacy of the Loss and Damage Fund vis-a-vis the demands is extremely insufficient, and the details of the operation create access uncertainties. These differences between the formal political bargain and the reality on the ground in the deal implementation speak volumes of the imbalances in the power distribution in the international climate regulation when the weaker states influence the agenda-setting but cannot make the resources to flow. The movement of giving more promises than they can keep is also a characteristic of larger climate finance construct and it undermines the efficacy of multilateral climate governance. The essence of climate cooperation of Pakistan is limited by the nature of the South Asian regional geopolitics. The India-Pakistan conflict cripples the SAARC which is stifled in climate coordination of the region despite the equal vulnerability and goes to international climatic forums. The marginalization of Pakistan by India in the G20 processes calculated when India was its chairperson is a pointer to how regional antagonism acts negatively as far as multi- regional South Asian response to the common climate threats. The increasing might of china led by CPEC provides Pakistan with alternative ways other than association but is also associated with other complexities like debt loads and increase in fossil fuel infrastructure. The domestic restrictions severely limit the capability of Pakistan as far as international commitments are concerned. The actual impediments to climate action are to do with the repetitive economic crises, political insecurity, institutional weaknesses, small technical capacity, and not political will. The pressure that Pakistan is putting on conditional NDC targets is rather concerned with the realistic assessment of the implementation capacity than the diplomacy. There is an incongruence between the increase in the global climate advocacy and the national development of fossil fuels demonstrating that there exist inconsistencies between the demands of development and climate goals in the context of lower-middle-income countries of the Pakistani nation.

Policy Recommendations

Due to this analysis, Pakistan has a series of policy suggestions to its countries in the region and the international community.

For Pakistan:

Empower Climate Institutions: Have an ingenious National Climate Authority, which can coordinate the ministries and the provinces, so that the disjointedness and disunity of the various policies is reduced to a minimum. The government must invest on technical capacity to negotiate complicated climate finance frameworks and undertake adaptation programs.

Prioritize High-Impact Adaptation: Target domestic resources on adaptation investments with immediate payoffs recognizable benefits early warning systems, flood defenses, drought-resistant

agriculture, ecosystem-based adaptation. It can be shown that the available resources are utilized effectively to substantiate international support requests.

Introduce Land-Use Planning: Have regulations that are against building in floodplain areas and natural drainage paths. Eradicate current encroachments that are contributing to flooding in urban regions.

Increase Early Warning Systems: Increase flood forecasting and early warning systems to deal with flash floods and cloud bursts especially in mountainous areas. Weather radar and automated monitoring stations and community-driven warning systems should be heavily invested in.

Prepare Concrete Loss and Damage Applications: Complete elaborate applications to the Loss and Damage Fund in written form showing the needs, proposed use of resources, capacity to implement and monitoring systems.

In the case of South Asian Regional Actors:

Divorce Climate and Bilateral Conflicts: Appreciate the fact that climate dangers do not necessarily respect political boundaries but instead demand collaboration despite a lack of resolution of conflicts. Develop climate cooperation structures that do not involve Kashmir and other disputable matters to be solved.

Create Transboundary Water Systems: Decree all inclusive water sharing contracts that include the effects of climate change on melting glaciers and the monsoon cycles. The problem of water insecurity is a threat to all the South Asian countries and needs collaborative measures.

Design Regional Climate Data Infrastructure: Develop common climate surveillance systems, early warning systems and research capabilities. Scientific collaboration has the ability to overcome political barriers partially and develop knowledge bases of future more general collaboration.

To the International Community:

Build up Damage and Loss Fund: Developed countries are forced to make tremendous pledges, not in hundreds of millions of dollars but in tens of billions of dollars annually. Existing commitments are less than 1 percent of needs making the fund more of a showpiece than a practical tool.

Make Finance Accessible: Minimize bureaucracies, technicalities and complexities in accessing the available finances by vulnerable countries. The existing systems benefit those countries that have high institutional capacity instead of those that have the highest need.

Offer Grants and not loans: Climate finance must be in the form of grants and not loans to the countries that are already having problems in regard to debt sustainability. The debt additions to cover damages on climate of these countries is not contrary to the tenets of justice.

Keep Firm to Historical Promises: Developed nations need to regain credibility by delivering on their long-standing promise of annual commitments of climate finance of $100 billion and publicly reporting on the achievement thereof. The repeated violation of promises will destroy the whole framework of the climate cooperation.

Support Regional Climate Cooperation: International actors must promote and facilitate South Asian climate cooperation by programs of the multilateral development bank, technical support, and diplomatic assistance to conflict resolution facilitating the environmental cooperation.

Future Research Directions

This paper has pinpointed a number of issues that need to be explored to learn more about climate geopolitics and vulnerable nation politics:

Implementation Studies: The research focusing on the discrepancy between the success of climate diplomacy and the real delivery of resources would shed light on the barriers to the transfer of formal agreements into tangible results. Mechanism-specific case studies through monitoring

of a pledge to disbursement to implementation would expose the locations of breakdowns and inform reforms. The experience of Pakistan of access to Loss and Damage Fund may yield useful information at the time when the fund is operational.

Regional Comparative Analysis: Comparative studies of the influences of regional geopolitics on climate cooperation in other contexts: South Asia, Middle East, Central Asia, Southeast Asian would be an interesting way to test the results of the study regarding the constraint of geopolitics in promoting environmental cooperation. Are trends that are observed in South Asia general, or are they regional?

Subnational Climate Action: The increasing significance of provincial and municipal climate initiatives are given a lot of research that should be systematic. What are the ways the subnational governments go around climate action in times when federal governments have political or economic very tight limits? What are new forms of financing or governance at subnational levels?

Climate-Security Nexus: Future studies on the intersection of climate-related issues and security in conflict-prone areas would improve the awareness of climate change as the threat multiplier or the catalyst of cooperation. India-Pakistan situation, especially on water security and migration caused by climate, provides critical empirical grounds on such study.

Chinese Climate Diplomacy in South Asia: The contribution of China to South Asian climate paths based on BRI investments is worth more analysis. How does the commitment to climate in China conflict or reach domestically with the patterns of international investment? What is the maneuvering of recipient countries to accept climate finance offered by China and yet retain climate aspirations?

Final Reflections

The climate diplomacy in Pakistan shows how vulnerable agency states can be in the processes of global environmental governance and how limiting they can be. The establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund demonstrates that long-term advocacy, coalition-building, and exploitation of political opportunities can be applied to breakthroughs even in cases with major powers that have proven hard to get to the table. This achievement justifies the necessity to continue participating in the multilateral climate talks and offers a reason to believe that the vulnerable nations are not only helpless observers, but they can shape the policies of the governance structure so that it can be more responsive to their interests and demands. But the invariable dislocation between the success of diplomacy and material results the fund laid by and insufficiently capitalized, promises made and never kept, plans adopted and never executed, indicates the limitations inherent in structure, to which even individual diplomatic talent may not be successful. Asymmetries of power, conflicting domestic interests of nations and problems of collective action are present in climate governance, which disadvantage the vulnerable developing nations in a systematic way in spite of the sophistication in diplomacy. The repetitive character of the Pakistan flood catastrophes, where the major ones occurred in 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 proves that Pakistan is not experiencing a single disaster, but a consistent pattern of climate-related devastation that needs to be supported internationally on a long-term basis, rather than just a symbolic victory of the diplomatic community (UNICEF, 2025; Kanwal, 2025). The devastating 2025 floods, with 946 fatalities and 6.9 million people impacted, happened only three years following the devastating 2022 floods, which highlights the increasing sense of urgency around the issue of climate change to Pakistan and other at-risk countries. The South Asian regional geopolitics is an example of how climate change, though an undoubtedly universal problem that should be tackled collectively, is still marred by the historical grievances, territorial and great power rivalry. This logical compulsion of cooperation is beset by the political reality of deep distrust, which create tragically unproductive patterns in which mistrust in each other cannot result in collective action. More

importantly, is whether the multilateral climate regime can be functioning at all under so-called geopolitical situations of rivalry, distrust, and power imbalance to end the planetary crisis. Climate change needs a scale-wide global cooperation as world politics takes an alternative step towards fragmentation, nationalism and the great power politics. This is how the experience of Pakistan can be summed up, namely, accordingly with the moral demands and scientific demands, there are political limitations and structural injustices and that produce the results of governance that are considerably lower than existential dangers demand. Nevertheless, we cannot abandon the concept of multilateral climate cooperation since we have found no alternative mechanisms that can be employed to organize a collective action on the levels that are needed. Weaker states like Pakistan still must not stop at advocacy, coalitions, pressure on the developed countries, and any possible means of obtaining resources and making a difference in the governing process. It will be a partial success, slow improvement, and frustrations that will not fade away, but the other alternative, to give up or equate and withdraw, will ensure failure. The history of climate diplomacy in Pakistan, as it has been accomplished and sometimes not, is a manifestation of the difficulty of the climate issue and the hard path through which vulnerable states go in climate politics of the world.

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