**Pakistan post-Glasgow**

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The 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) closed with an unexpected, compromised deal – from ‘phasing out’ of carbon emissions as agreed in the Paris Agreement in 2015 to ‘phasing down’ in the Glasgow Climate Pact. However, COP26 President Alok Sharma struggled to hold back tears following the announcement of a last-minute change to the pact by China and India that softened the language of the final draft about “the phase-out of unabated coal power and of inefficient subsidies for fossil fuels” to “phase down” coal use.

Both China and India are Pakistan’s next-door neighbours, with high industrial growth, and also the distinction of being two of the top polluters. Their intentions are obvious with regard to the softening of the Glasgow Climate Pact. Though China has recently looked to scale down coal-fired plants on its own soil, it has exported some to Pakistan under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Some have been installed while some are in the pipeline. Pakistan should also say no to coal-fired power plants. This will represent a clear stance and political will of the state to genuinely reduce carbon emissions under the UNFCCC regime.

Second, Pakistan should take up the air and water issues with China and India as top priority. Both countries have damaged air quality severely with their environment-unfriendly practices. Burning of agricultural field residues by Indian farmers, especially around the border between the two countries, have caused severe smog within India and in neighbouring cities in Pakistan. Likewise, Pakistani farmers, brick kilns, vehicular and industrial emissions should also be checked around the year. Heavy fines and imprisonment are the only solution, not anti-smog teams when the smog is actually a reality cities are facing. This has to happen every year because the authorities responsible for monitoring and implementation are grossly inefficient. Someone has to wake them up.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres at the closing of COP26 said about the deal: “It reflects the interests, the contradictions, and the state of political will in the world today. It is an important step but is not enough. We must accelerate climate action to keep alive the goal of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees”.

For the last six years, developed countries were not delivering the $100 billion climate finance commitment, and now China and India have further dented the very essential efforts needed to save the planet. The UN secretary-general has rightly asked nations to go “into emergency mode” by ending fossil fuel subsidies, phasing out coal, putting a price on carbon, protecting vulnerable communities by fulfilling their financial commitments.

Pakistani civil society representatives present at COP26 shared their views at the debriefing session organised by the Ministry of Climate Change. Pakistan was elected as a member of the Six Non-Annex 1 members bureau, the standing committee on finance, the adaptation fund board, the consultative group of experts, the Paris Agreement compliance committee, the Warsaw international mechanism on Loss/damage, adaptation committee, and the technology executive committee. The country will also be chairing the G77+China group, and the Asia-Pacific Group next year (COP27).

While appreciating the prime minister for his vision and the efforts of SAPM Malik Amin Aslam, we need to also ensure vigorous implementation of policies and laws to show genuine progress on the global commitments. Some policies and strategic frameworks were launched before going to COP26. Pakistan’s National Determined Contribution (NDC) to COP26 was declared as one of the best. The country has promised 15 percent reduction in carbon emissions from its own resources. Before asking for more funds from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) or from the World Bank or GEF, the Pakistan government needs to check the implementation of its grant-driven projects that have suffered rampantly from flawed leadership.

Whereas some projects have delivered the objectives recently including the REDD+, Sustainable Forest Management and Generating Global Environmental Benefits (GGEB) and will be successfully concluded in coming weeks, the leadership of the GLOF-II (Scaling-up of Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) risk reduction in northern Pakistan) has failed to deliver since 2017.

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