**Post-Glasgow Climate Pact**

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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 softening the language of the final draft about “the phase-out of unabated coal power and of inefficient subsidies for fossil fuels” to “phase down” the coal use. A sheer disappointment for the world of the process as to how could two countries jeopardise the phrasing of the deal.

Both China and India are Pakistan’s next-door neighbours with high industrial growth, and two of the top polluters. Their intentions are obvious with softening the Glasgow Climate Pact with a phrase “phasing down” (the emissions). Though China has recently stated no to the new coal-fired plants, it has exported some to Pakistan under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Some have been installed while some are in the pipeline. Pakistan also has to say no to the coal-fired power plants and cancel the LOIs issued last year. This will represent a clear stance and the political will of the state to genuinely reduce the carbon emissions under the UNFCCC regime.

Secondly, Pakistan shall take up the transboundary issues with China and India on water and air quality on top of the priority. Both countries have damaged the air quality severely with their environmentally unfriendly practices. Burning of the agricultural field residues by the Indian farmers especially around the border between the two countries have caused a severe impact of smog within India and neighbouring cities in Pakistan. Polluters shall pay the sufferers. Likewise, Pakistani farmers, brick kilns, vehicular and industrial emissions shall also be checked around the year. Heavy fines and imprisonment will be the only solution, not the anti-smog teams when the smog has happened. It has to happen every year because the authorities responsible for monitoring and implementation are grossly inefficient and in deep sombre. Someone has to knock them down.

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UN Secretary-General António Guterres at the closing of the 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, the developed countries were not delivering the $100 billion climate finance commitment, and now China and India have done another dent to the very essential efforts to reduce the sufferings and to save the earth planet from the climate impact. The UN Secretary-General has rightly asked the comity of 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.

Indeed, a pleasure to listen to Pakistan playing very well at the COP26. The civil society representatives present at the COP26 shared their views at the debriefing session organised by the Ministry of Climate Change. They hailed the leadership of Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) Malik Amin Aslam Khan that made Pakistan chair several sessions of the COP. Pakistan was elected as a member of the Six Non-Annex 1 members bureau, standing committee on finance, adaptation fund board, consultative group of experts, Paris Agreement compliance committee, Warsaw international mechanism on Loss/damage, adaptation committee, and technology executive committee. Pakistan will be chairing the G77+China group, and the Asia-Pacific Group next year (COP27).

While appreciating the prime minister for his vision of the climate action and efforts of SAPM Malik Amin Aslam, we need to have a vigorous implementation of the policies and laws to show genuine progress on the global commitments. Some policies and strategic frameworks were launched before going to the COP26. Great indeed. Pakistan’s National Determined Contribution (NDC) to the COP26 was declared as one of the best. Also asked for a $100 billion grant in a decade to reduce 50 per cent of its carbon emissions. The country has promised a 15 per cent reduction in carbon emissions from its resources. Before asking for more funds from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) or the World Bank or GEF, the Pakistan government needs to check the implementation of its grant-driven projects that have suffered rampantly from the 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. Known as inefficient, lousy and rude, the GLOF-II Project Director, Joudat Ayaz, is a senior bureaucrat working as an Additional Secretary with the Ministry of Climate Change. No action against him despite extremely poor performance over the years. The project had to conclude this year but extended to 2024. Will Pakistan be able to pitch itself for another Green Climate Fund project after this havoc with the GLOF-II? Very steadfast, blunt and upfront Azam Khan, the Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Imran Khan, and SAPM Malik Amin Askam have to rethink about replacing such lousy leadership of their projects with someones that dare to deliver.

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