**Loss and damage**

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Climate change is one of the most critical security issues for human beings, posing serious social, environmental, and developmental challenges.

The effects of global climate change in Pakistan are evident in the form of changes in the weather pattern, increased frequency of droughts, floods, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOF), changes in agricultural patterns, decrease in freshwater supply, and the loss of biodiversity. Pakistan contributes less than one per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions but is ranked among the top ten vulnerable and climate-affected countries.

In 2022, Pakistan experienced one of the most severe floods in history, causing extensive loss and damage to the country's infrastructure, economy, and livelihoods. The country received 243 per cent more rainfall than usual and the month of August in 2022 was recorded as the wettest August since records began in 1961.

The floods submerged one-third of the country under water, displaced around eight million people, and affected 33 million people. Sindh was the worst affected province with close to 70 per cent of total damages and losses, followed by Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Punjab.

The PDNA report assessment estimates the total damages to exceed $14.9 billion, and total economic losses to reach about $15.2 billion. The housing; agriculture and livestock; and transport and communications sectors suffered the most significant damage, at $5.6 billion, $3.7 billion, and $3.3 billion, respectively. It is estimated that the total damage is equivalent to 4.8 per cent of FY22’s gross GDP.

The estimated needs for rehabilitation and reconstruction are at least $16.3 billion which is projected as much as 1.6 times the budgeted national development expenditure for the fiscal year 2023. The floods destroyed 6,700 kilometers of road, 269 bridges, and 1,460 health facilities, and damaged 18,590 schools. The floods of 2022 have also had a great impact on the national poverty rate. It is expected that the national poverty rate may increase by 3.7 to 4.0 per cent pushing between 8.4 and 9.1 million people below the poverty line.

In November 2022, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that around 20.6 million people, including 650,000 flood-affected refugees and host communities, require humanitarian assistance. The report also shows that approximately 7.9 million people may be temporarily displaced.

Alas! This is a huge destruction for a country struggling with economic stability and human security threatened by human and climate-induced issues. It needs to be understood that people are still suffering post-disaster impacts in the form of diseases, migrations, loss of shelter, and social and economic issues.

Loss and damage funds are meant to support long-term adaptation and resilience efforts. However, the procedure of securing financial resources to address loss and damage (L&D) is complex and challenging for Pakistan. The terms Loss and Damage Financing and Adaptation Financing are often misunderstood and confused. The loss and damage financing aids in reducing L&D, and the adaptation and mitigation financing, aims to prevent loss and damage.

Pakistan also faces issues with data availability to access loss and damage funds that require substantial evidence of the adverse impacts of climate change the country is experiencing, as well as the costs incurred. The government, academia and indigenous think tanks need to work to cover the data gap.

Despite all these issues, Pakistan is eager and has taken various steps to combat climate-induced disasters. Pakistan is a signatory to many of the international conventions such as the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement, and has enacted the Climate Change Act in 2017 which provides comprehensive national adaptation and mitigation policies, plans, and programs, for climate-induced challenges in Pakistan. The Convention, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement emphasize the importance of financial assistance from industrialized countries to those that are poor and more susceptible to the impacts of climate change.

Disaster after disaster without any mitigation, rehabilitation, and reconstruction plan and more importantly without financial resources and aid, Pakistan will face a devastating impact on its economy and the lives and livelihoods of the people.

There is a dire need of adequate financial resources, comprehensive disaster risk reduction strategy, and coordination among the responsible institutions and international cooperation to effectively respond to the adverse effects of a changing climate and resilient recovery.

Pakistan, like many other countries, has multiple development priorities, such as infrastructure development, poverty reduction, education, and healthcare. Allocating resources to cope with climate-induced issues and acquiring loss and damage funds can be difficult in the face of these competing needs with limited resources and administrative capacity.

Keeping in view Pakistan’s limited fiscal resources loss and damage caused by the 2022 floods and the current economic crisis, it is very challenging for Pakistan to recover from the damage without international aid assistance. Therefore, under the Paris Agreement, Pakistan should be assisted in reparation and climate change adaptation and mitigation and the government needs to make a proper strategy to present Pakistan’s case in COP28.

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