**Green resilience**

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Pakistan has successfully conducted an international donor conference in Geneva with the support of the UN and convinced the world to support flood victims in Pakistan. This conference has helped Pakistan collect around $10 billion for rehabilitation of flood victims and reconstruction of properties damaged in last year’s floods.

After pledging to the international community to provide financial assistance for flood-affected people, Pakistan should now focus on the local business community, especially targeting businesses damaging the environment and contributing to global warming. The government of Pakistan can convene a ‘national resilience conference’ inviting representatives from the business community who are directly or indirectly involved in carbon emissions, and are the reason for accelerating climate change and environmental degradation like oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) companies, housing societies, mine owners, transport companies, etc.

According to the report ‘CO2 Emission from Pakistan’s Energy Sector 2021’ – published by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) – Nepra has reported that the country’s energy sector has introduced the necessary shift. The report says that “in 2019-20, the sectoral contribution shifted to 35 per cent for gas; 26 per cent, for oil, 8 per cent, hydro, 15 per cent for coal, 3.5 per cent nuclear and one per cent for LPG, while LNG and renewable energy contributed 11 per cent and one per cent, respectively.”

According to information shared by the minister of energy in the Senate in 2020, “50 companies – including 15 local and 35 foreign – are working in Pakistan to explore and produce oil and other natural resources.” The consumption of fossil fuels is a major cause of carbon emissions. Similarly, the real-estate and development sectors mushroomed rapidly in the last two decades.

Every day a large number of new housing societies are being launched and huge amounts are spent on their publicity advertisements to multiply profits. Not only do such development projects occupy huge lands and clear green areas, they also reduce the country’s forest cover. This reduction is making Pakistan more vulnerable to climate-change disasters. Similarly, the industrial sector is another source of producing huge carbon emissions and causes many environmental disasters in the form of wastes.

Agriculture and livestock also produce greenhouse gases (GHG). The mining sector also has huge negative environmental impacts like deforestation, erosion, contamination and alteration of soil features, contamination of local streams and wetlands, and an increase in noise levels, and dust in the air. Similarly, the transportation network in Pakistan is also a source of pollution and has huge earnings as well.

A ‘national resilience conference’ will raise awareness among the business community about the issue of climate change and environmental challenges in Pakistan. It is also important to apprise them about the negative impacts of their businesses on the environment, leading to many catastrophes faced by Pakistan. All big companies contribute to social causes under their corporate social responsibility (CSR). The business community should be communicated effectively to play their part to invest in the 4RF strategy. (Resilience, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, Recovery).

The government can establish a ‘green fund’ at the national level. The business community can be given options to either invest in green projects or contribute to a ‘national green fund’. Those interested in giving donations can deposit a mutually agreed amount in the national green fund on a yearly basis. The government can utilize this amount for different projects of clean energy, forest conservation, mass awareness, etc. The government can also allocate various projects to different business communities for implementation under their corporate social responsibility (CSR) on a short- and long-term basis. Under short-term goals, different projects related to rehabilitation and reconstruction for flood victims can be assigned.

Under long-term goals, various green projects can be allocated to profit makers. A fixed amount to invest in green projects or donations to the national green fund can be linked to some percentage of annual profit of these businesses after mutual consensus. Companies/industries involved in the business of carbon fuels can be allocated the responsibility to convert different residential areas and government offices to solar energy. Owners of housing colonies can be assigned the task to collaborate in the forestry sector and support in increasing the forest cover as a permanent assignment. They can be allotted various regions and roadside areas to grow trees.

Moreover, they can also contribute to developing climate-resilient infrastructure in their colonies. Similarly, mine owners can be asked to support in the training of communities that are more vulnerable to climate-led disasters. They can also contribute to projects related to the mainstreaming of gender in climate change to ensure inclusivity. Landlords and those associated with the livestock sector can be asked to provide research grants and scholarships to students in the fields of climate change and environmental studies to support disadvantaged students. Moreover, they can also contribute to provide electric vehicle public transport and install charging points with the support of national institutions.

Climate change is a collective problem that requires collective efforts at all levels to mitigate and adapt to it. But, those responsible for proliferating climate change disasters at the national and international levels due to their unsustainable businesses are accountable and must compensate.

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