**Outcome of COP 29**

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The climate change phenomenon triggered by green-house gases by the industrialized nations is being billed as the biggest threat to the dwellers of the earth. It is believed that if this threat is not adequately addressed it might have devastating consequences not only for the poor countries which are suffering for no fault of theirs but also the major polluters. But the dilemma is that notwithstanding the recognition of the scale of threat that climate change poses to the entire humanity, the industrialized nations are neither showing the required commitment to reduce the emission of green-house gases nor are trying to help the most affected nations in conformity with the enormity of the climate-induced disasters including record-breaking increase in temperatures, severe flash floods and destructive storms.

The outcomes of COP 29 in Baku though mark some improvement over the previously promised initiatives but they still are not up to the desired level. The rich countries agreed on a $ 3 billion annual global climate fiancé target to support poorer nations in mitigating the effects of climate change which builds on a previous $ 100 billion per year committed by the wealthier nations last year. This agreement will run up to 2035. Rules for a global carbon market were also agreed upon, potentially unlocking additional financing for projects such as reforestation and renewable energy development. Though the UN Climate Chief Simon Stiell praised the deal as a step forward in combating global warming at the same time cautioning that its success relied on consistent and timely funding but most of the poor nations are critical of the package maintaining that it was not commensurate with the scale of the crisis. The other aspect of it is that even the financial commitments are not being honoured timely by the rich nations as is evident from the remark of the UN Climate Chief.

It is probably pertinent to have a look how the world came to realize the dangers of climate change.

Despite progress, the summit left critical gaps. It failed to outline concrete steps for phasing out fossil fuels or tripling renewable energy capacity – key pledges from the previous year. So long as the industrialized nations do not show unflinching commitment to phasing out fossil fuels and opting for increasing renewable energy capacity, the problem will keep aggravating and no remedial measure would have any positive effective. As the world grapples with intensifying climate impacts, global efforts to limit warming to 1.50C above pre-industrial levels remain far off track. According to the latest UN Emissions Gap Report global temperature is likely to go up to 3.10C by end of the current century. That is really an alarming prediction. In the words of UN Secretary General, the sooner we reconcile with nature the better.

However, the success and failure of the suggested solutions also depends on many other factors like financial constraints of the wealthier nations compounded by their own economic situations, geopolitical tensions and wavering political will. They have the potential to derail the momentum. The political will might prove to be the most stupendous factor in this regard. President Trump during his last stint in power had pulled out of the Paris Agreement and now in the wake of his victory there are apprehensions that he might adopt similar stance on this issue. Other Industrial nations might also have similar considerations of their own.

It is probably pertinent to have a look how the world came to realize the dangers of climate change, what efforts were made at the global level and how some nations failed to live up to their commitments. The nations of the world joined a treaty known as United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992 committing themselves to work collectively to limit average global temperature increases and the resulting climate change and to cope with whatever impacts were inevitable.

Realizing the inadequacy of the emission reduction provisions in the convention, another agreement known as Koyoto Protocol which legally bound the developed countries to observe emission reduction targets, was concluded in 1997. The first commitment period started in 2008 and ended in 2012. The second commitment period began on 1st January 2013 and ended in 2020. Regrettably US did not ratify the protocol and Canada withdrew from it in 2012. The second commitment period was also not given legal cover as a growing number of countries including Australia, US, Japan, New Zealand, Belarus, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Norway, Switzerland and Russia remained reluctant to commit to these targets. The proposed action to be taken by the developed and developing countries under the treaty included support for renewable energy, improving energy efficiency and reducing deforestation. Kyoto Protocol was succeeded by Paris Agreement where industrial nations made commitments for reductions in the emission of green-house gases and also assist the poor nations in coping with the effects of the climate change. Thereafter the COP has assumed the responsibility as forum to deal with climate change and its impacts. An incisive look at the deliberations of COP and the outcomes of the efforts made from that forum it is quite evident that there is still much to be desired and there is an urgent need to up-scale these efforts.

Pakistan ranks at number 7 out of the 10 most affected countries due to the climate change. The devastating floods during 2022 almost crippled Pakistan’s economy causing a loss of $ 30 billion. In addition to this 1739 people died and over 2.1 million were rendered homeless. Crops over 57 percent of agricultural land were destroyed.

The UN Secretary General visited Pakistan to see for himself the devastation caused by the floods and after ascertaining the extent of damage he had said” We see here in Pakistan, the nature is striking back with devastating consequences. I have seen many disasters in the world but I have never seen climate carnage on this scale.” He appealed to the international community to generously help Pakistan to tide over the losses caused by unprecedented floods and also advocated for ‘debt swaps’ with IMF and World Bank through which developing countries, including Pakistan — instead of paying back loans to foreign creditors — would be able to use that money to invest in climate resilience, investments in sustainable infrastructure, and green transition of their economies. At the COP he also pleaded Pakistan’s case and complained that Pakistan had not been provided the financial assistance that it required to meet the impending challenge.

The dilemma is that the wealthy nations even do not timely honour the financial commitments made by them triggering a constant struggle between the industrialized nations and the poor countries for the desired financial and technical support. The rich countries which are major contributors to the climate change phenomenon need to realize that by fulfilling their commitments to switch over to renewable energy and helping the poor nations to deal with its impact they will also be securing their own future.

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