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Issue Brief

Outcomes of COP22

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In today's globalised world, environmental factors are going to play a major role in not so distant a future, in the social and economic development of countries, especially the underdeveloped ones. Conference of Parties (COP22) was a United Nation's (UN) Conference on Climate Change in Marrakech, Morocco held between November 7-8 2016, to put these environmental changes into perspective and find solutions for them.

The industrialisation and urbanisation around the world has adversely affected the environment we live in. The negative effects on economic growth and development can be seen in the form of climate change and erratic weather patterns.¹ The developing countries including Pakistan are suffering the most from these changes, and Pakistan is among the top ten countries which have been severely affected by climate change.² Sustainable development cannot be achieved around the world if environmental degradation goes unabated. In the 70th UNGA meeting in 2015, the UN put forward its long-term development plan into motion in the form of its new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs consist of 17 major goals, with goal number 13 framed as, 'Take urgent action to combat Climate Change and its impacts'³, and which exclusively deals with climate issues and how they relate to sustainable development going forward. The SDGs came into action in 2015 and will last till 2030 and are mainly aimed at helping the developing countries to pursue their economic growth, whilst having minimum negative impact on the environment.

At COP22, Pakistan was represented by Mr. Zahid Hamid, the Minister for Climate Change, who headed a 20-member delegation to Marrakesh. In his speech to the plenary, he pointed out that Pakistan had recently ratified the Paris Agreement and had also submitted to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change its plan for curbing carbon emissions in the form of a newly revised Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) document. The document foresees a four-fold increase in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and seeks financial and technical assistance of \$40 billion in order to bring down these emissions by 20%. He highlighted the recent actions taken by the government, including the National Climate Change Policy, along with a framework for its implementation, and a National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy. Pakistan has also developed a National Sustainable Development Strategy, and its National Assembly has passed a resolution adopting the SDGs agenda as its own national development agenda.⁴

COP21 which was a UN Conference held on Climate Change in Paris in Nov-Dec. 2015, led to an unprecedented Paris Agreement where almost 200 countries signed a landmark agreement on Climate

Change, and for the first time agreed to take action to restrain greenhouse gas emissions. This was achieved after two weeks of relentless negotiations, where all nations of the world came up with a new deal that targets to stop the release of heat-trapping gases into the atmosphere by 2050.⁵ The outstanding achievement of the Paris agreement, which will come into effect in 2020, is that all countries will be required to work on Climate Change.

COP22 led to Marrakech Action Proclamation⁶ in which all countries agreed to urgently raising ambition and strengthening cooperation to close the gap between current emissions trajectories and the pathway needed to meet the long-term temperature goals of the Paris Agreement. A new coalition of countries, including Australia, the UK and US, was also set-up with an aim to help developing nations deliver on their climate plans.

In Marrakech, it was decided that the presidents of COP22 and the forthcoming COP23 would consult with countries on the organisation of their Climate Action and report back on their findings in a year's time. A new fund to encourage transparency efforts was established and given a \$50m injection of cash from countries including Australia, Canada and Germany.⁷ Meanwhile, 47 of the world's poorest countries, which have grouped together as the Climate Vulnerable Forum, committed to generating 100% of their energy from renewable sources as soon as possible. They also pledged to update their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) before 2020 and to prepare long-term strategies. The Conference successfully demonstrated to the world that the implementation of the Paris Agreement is underway and the constructive spirit of multilateral cooperation on climate change continues.

Notes and References:

¹ R.K.Pachauri, and A.Reisinger, "Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report," Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, December 2007, 104.

² Nadeem Javed, "The Pakistan Millennium Development Goals Report (PMDGR) 2013," *PMDGR Report (2013)*, http://pc.gov.pk/PMDGR-2013/PMDGR2013_Summary.pdf

³ Lauren Boucher, "Sustainable Development Goals vs. Millennium Development Goals: What You Need To Know," *Population Education*, May 01, 2015, <https://www.populationeducation.org/content/sustainable-development-goals-vs-millennium-development-goals-what-you-need-know>

⁴ Rina Khan, "From Paris to Marrakesh," *Dawn*, November 19, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1297297>

⁵ "United Nations Conference on Climate Change," *United Nations*, November 30 - December 12, 2015, <http://www.cop21.gouv.fr/en/>

⁶ Graham Readfearn, "Marrakech Climate Talks Wind Down with Maze of Ambition Still Ahead," *the Guardian*, November 18, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/cop-22-un-climate-change-conference-marrakech>

⁷ Sophie Yeo, "COP22: Key outcomes agreed at the UN climate talks in Marrakech," *Carbon Brief*, November 19, 2016, <https://www.carbonbrief.org/cop22-key-outcomes-agreed-at-un-climate-talks-in-marrakech>