

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE RESILIENT PAKISTAN

By
Mian Ahmad Naeem Salik
Research Fellow

Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP), ISSI

Edited by
Dr Neelum Nigar

January 25, 2023

(Views expressed in the brief are those of the author, and do not represent those of ISSI)



Background

Pakistan has long been considered one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change in the world. While Pakistan is one of the lowest contributors to climate change, it is one of the most impacted countries in the world. Pakistan ranked 8th among the top 10 disaster vulnerable countries in the Global Climate Risk Index in 2021 and was hit by both heatwaves and devastating floods in 2022.¹ According to the latest report of the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), Pakistan needs at least \$16.3 billion for post-flood rehabilitation and reconstruction. The PDNA report, released by the representatives of the government and the international development institutions, calculated the cost of floods at \$30.1 billion – \$14.9 billion in damages and \$15.2 billion in losses.²

In this regard an International Conference in Geneva, convened specifically to support the affectees of climate induced disaster in Pakistan on January 9, 2023. It was co-hosted by the Government of Pakistan (GOP) and the United Nations (UN). The Conference brought together governments, leaders from the public and private sectors, and civil society to support the people and GoP to deal with the aftermath of the losses incurred due to floods.³ The objective of this Conference was to present the 'Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction Framework' (4RF), which lays out

¹ APP, "Pakistan 8th most climate vulnerable country," The News, January 13, 2023,

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1030114-pakistan-8th-most-climate-vulnerable-country>

² "PAKISTAN FLOODS 2022 Post-Disaster Needs Assessment," Government of Pakistan, October 2022,

<https://www.undp.org/pakistan/publications/pakistan-floods-2022-post-disaster-needs-assessment-pdna>

³ Press Release, "Pakistan: Flood Damages and Economic Losses Over USD 30 billion and Reconstruction Needs Over USD 16 billion - New Assessment," World Bank, October 28, 2022,

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/10/28/pakistan-flood-damages-and-economic-losses-over-usd-30-billion-and-reconstruction-needs-over-usd-16-billion-new-assessme>

a multi-sectoral strategy for rehabilitation and reconstruction in a climate-resilient and inclusive manner, and, secondly, to secure international support and forge long-term partnerships for building Pakistan's climate resilience and adaptation.

In his opening remarks, UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres urged the international community for massive investments to help Pakistan and added that no country deserves to endure what happened to Pakistan.⁴ In his speech, Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shehbaz Sharif thanked the international community for organising the Conference and stated that Pakistan witnessed a monsoon on steroids last year that affected 30 million people, among which more than eight million people were displaced. At the Conference, the Prime Minister also launched the 4RF plan. Meanwhile Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also expressed his gratitude to the entire international community, including the UN Secretary General, for standing with Pakistan in its efforts to rebuild and rehabilitate the flood affected areas and added that Pakistan needs considerable support over the next several years from the international partners to ensure rehabilitation and reconstruction in the flood-hit areas.⁵

The 4RF

The 4RF is a strategic policy document, prepared in follow-up document to the government- led Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) that was prepared with the help of global institutions. It will form the basis for the government's comprehensive disaster recovery plans and is a critical starting point to ensure that transformational measures are taken for resilient recovery and that the disaster will not have multi-generational impacts through reduced developmental gains. The framework aims to be a foundation on which the country will build and strengthen long-term resilience to natural hazards and climate change.⁶

Under this plan, Pakistan aimed to arrange 50 percent of the \$16 billion reconstruction expenditures itself, while for the remain amount, it asked for support from the international community in the rehabilitation and reconstruction process.⁷

⁴ Naveed Siddiqui, "Pakistan exceeds target, raises more than \$9bn for flood recovery," Dawn, January 9, 2023, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1730748>

⁵ "FM thanks int'l community for supporting Pakistan to rebuild flood affected areas," Radio Pakistan, January 10, 2023, <https://www.radio.gov.pk/10-01-2023/fm-thanks-intl-community-for-supporting-pakistan-to-rebuild-flood-affected-areas>

⁶ Amin Ahmed and Syed Irfan Raza, "Geneva moot to focus on flood damage today," Dawn, January 9, 2023, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1730694>

⁷ "Geneva moot - PM Shehbaz shares vision to bring flood-stricken people back on their feet," Dunya News, January 9, 2023, <https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/688246-Pakistan-needs-16.8bn-dollar-for-rehabilitation-of-flood-affected-areas>

Outcomes of the Conference

- Pakistan was able to raise approximately \$10 billion in the form of pledges from states and international financial institutions to support its flood recovery efforts.
- The European Union expressed full solidarity and support for the Pakistan 4RF program in line with its Global Gateway strategy.
- The conference marked the beginning of a structured process of support for Pakistan's recovery with broader long-term sustainable development in a resilient manner.
- The participants affirmed their assistance and support for the immediate relief efforts for a resilient recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of Pakistan.

Breakup of the pledges made by the countries, monetary bodies, and the international organisations:⁸



Source: Government of Pakistan | January 10, 2023



As per Government officials, about 90 percent of the pledges have come in the form of project loans which will be rolled over the next three years.⁹

⁸ Zubair Qureshi, "Pledges made at Geneva moot are reflection of world's growing trust in Pakistan: PM," Gulf News, January 11, 2023, <https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/pakistan/pledges-made-at-geneva-moot-are-reflection-of-worlds-growing-trust-in-pakistan-pm-1.93154709>

Action Plan

The Conference outlined several action plans for structured process of support for Pakistan, some of which include:¹⁰

- Developing detailed plans for specific recovery interventions based on the PDNA 4RF.
- Focus should be from the immediate-to-long-term as the country transitions into sustainable reconstruction.
- The recovery process will be rooted in an inclusive whole-of-Pakistan approach by taking both local and international stakeholders on board.
- Development of a long-term Resilience Framework, which will guide building resilience and Pakistan's capacity to withstand future shocks.
- Facility will be established within Pakistan's Ministry of Finance with a dedicated fund to finance the professional development of viable projects.
- Effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be put in place to ensure transparency in funding allocation and spending.

Conclusion

Pakistan is extremely vulnerable to climate change and will continue to suffer the consequences in the future too. The country is already under financial distress and the recent floods added to its economic woes. The Conference afforded an excellent opportunity to Pakistan to present its vision, priorities and action plans to the international community, which indeed demonstrated its support and solidarity for the people of Pakistan through high-level participation and generous pledges. This opportunity was utilized optimally and the Conference culminated in outlining the principles and action plans for Pakistan's resilient recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Going forward, it is important to keep working closely with international partners to sustain the momentum and follow-up on the commitments made at the Conference. Since most of the pledges are in the form of

⁹ "90% of Geneva pledges are project loans", <https://profit.pakistantoday.com.pk/2023/01/11/90-of-geneva-pledges-are-project-loans-what-does-that-mean/>

¹⁰ "International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan Geneva, 9 January 2023," MOFA, January 9, 2023, <https://mofa.gov.pk/international-conference-on-climate-resilient-pakistan-geneva-9-january-2023/#:~:text=International%20Conference%20on%20Climate%20Resilient%20Pakistan%20Geneva%2C%209%20January%202023,-January%209%2C%202023&text=Co%2Dhosted%20by%20the%20Government,the%20devastating%20floods%20in%202022> .

project loans, it is essential to ensure effective institutional mechanisms for allocation of funds, monitoring and evaluation processes so as to enable targeted spending of the money. It is equally important that Pakistan continues pressing for fast operationalisation of the 'Loss and Damage' Fund as agreed at the COP27, an outcome of excellent climate diplomacy by Pakistan in its capacity as the Chair of G77 & China. Pakistan helped achieve this global outcome, and should assiduously follow-up on it so that this major gap in climate finance infrastructure is filled as early as possible and the needs of the countries vulnerable to the adverse impact of climate change, including Pakistan, are addressed.