

US-PAKISTAN GREEN ALLIANCE: ADVANCING BILATERAL COOPERATION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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



Introduction:

As the United States (US) and Pakistan celebrated 75 years of bilateral relations, a new step in this relationship is the formation of a Green Alliance between the two countries. This dynamic partnership is focused on facing the consequences of the climate crisis together and preparing societies and economies to adapt to a changing future. The US-Pakistan Green Alliance aims to boost bilateral cooperation on sustainable development, clean energy, and climate action. This is poised to not only enhance climate action efforts but also stimulate economic growth, improve the quality of life, and provide a model for other countries to follow. Climate change is not a problem that one country can solve alone but requires collective efforts from a strong coalition of partners. The Green Alliance builds upon the rich US-Pakistan history of environmental collaboration and through this the two countries will support each other to holistically strengthen climate resilience.¹

¹ Waqas Idrees, "US-Pakistan Green Alliance framework," Express Tribune, March 27, 2023, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2408376/us-pakistan-green-alliance-framework>

US-Pakistan Green Alliance Framework:

The US-Pakistan Green Alliance framework advances cooperation in agriculture, clean energy, and water. The US is committed to support Pakistan as it strengthens climate resilience, pursues energy transformation, and fosters inclusive economic growth.

Energy Sector:

- Updates to the Mangla and Tarbela Dam power stations to increase capacity and useful life.
- The US government is helping Pakistan increase its share of renewable energy from 34 to 60 percent by 2030, including by assisting with plans to install 10,000 megawatts of solar power.
- USD 500,000 project to restore electricity infrastructure in flood-affected areas in Sindh.
- A grant for further research and development of electric vehicles at the Lahore University for Management Sciences (LUMS).
- Support for a second cohort of the US-Pakistan Women’s Council’s Future of Women in Energy Scholars Program launched with Texas A&M University.
- Green Waste Energy Inc., USA is working in Sindh to convert municipal waste into clean energy.

Agriculture Sector:

- USD 4.5 million program from the US Department of Agriculture to strengthen fertiliser efficiency and effectiveness for Pakistani farmers.
- New US Agency for International Development (USAID) activities in Pakistan to promote climate-smart agriculture and climate finance.
- The US Army Corps of Engineers will start sharing weather data on glacial melt with the Ministry of Climate Change and other local stakeholders to strengthen Pakistan’s flood forecasting and disaster response capabilities.

2 “Fact Sheet: The U.S.-Pakistan “Green Alliance” Framework,” U.S. Mission Pakistan, Accessed April 18, 2023, https://pk.usembassy.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/76/20230407-Fact-Sheet-Green-Alliance-English.pdf?_ga=2.37969123.1367125554.1681794639-449956004.1679385251

- USD 20 million project to preserve soil and water resources for vegetable farmers in Punjab and Sindh, improving productivity by 10 percent.
- Improved irrigation for 5,500 agricultural hectares in Gilgit Baltistan, providing more than 4,000 jobs and helping more than 5,700 farmers increase production.
- Projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan helped 12,000 farmers improve management practices and technologies to increase yield and reduce harvest losses.
- Pakistani dairy companies bought nearly 2,600 US dairy cattle in 2022. These cattle produce more milk, have a smaller environmental footprint, and emit less methane.

Water Management Sector:

- Between the Mangla, Tarbela, and Gomal Zam dams, the US government has helped provide more than 95 percent of Pakistan's water storage capacity.
- Partnership with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh has helped over 1 million Pakistanis access clean drinking water and 2 million gain improved sanitation facilities.
- Following the 2010 floods in Pakistan, US rehabilitated damaged irrigation infrastructure in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to restore water to 180,000 hectares.
- To strengthen flood forecasting capabilities by sharing information on snow accumulation across five major watersheds.
- Through UN partners, the US government has provided desalination facilities to produce drinking water in refugee-hosting areas in Karachi.

Other Sectors:

- The US has contributed USD 1 billion to the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The GCF is financing climate mitigation and adaptation projects in Pakistan.
- US initiatives have helped Pakistan prevent 55 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions since 2017, helping work toward its goal of reducing emissions by 50 percent by 2030.
- The US government provides public, reliable information about air quality in Pakistan through its Air Quality Monitoring program.

- US Cotton Council consults Pakistani partners on cotton use, improving the efficiency of the USD 4.4 billion worth of textiles Pakistan exports to the US each year.
- The Pakistan-US Alumni Network (PUAN) has issued more than 20 small grants to members working on environmental efforts, including growing an urban forest in Quetta.

Pakistan-US engagements under the Green Alliance Platform:

Pakistan's Ambassador to the US Masood Khan while addressing a webinar on 'Pak-US Cooperation in Agriculture Sector,' organised by the University of Agriculture Faisalabad on November 19, 2022, said the recent momentum in Pak-US relations has opened vistas of opportunities in furthering Pak-US cooperation in critical areas including agriculture sector. US-Pakistan Green Alliance can potentially serve to revolutionise the agriculture sector of Pakistan with the help of US expertise.³

State Department spokesperson Ned Price, on January 11, 2023, at a news briefing in Washington DC stated that the US would continue to support Islamabad's efforts to strengthen its economy and deal with the consequences of last year's devastating floods. He also announced an additional USD 100 million of recovery and reconstruction funding, bringing the total US contribution to Pakistan's flood relief funds to over USD 200 million. The new USD 100 million in funding would be used for flood protection and governance, disease surveillance, economic growth and clean energy, climate-smart agriculture, food security, and infrastructure reconstruction. The funding also includes humanitarian assistance to support flood relief and recovery efforts in refugee-hosting areas as part of the broader efforts to form a US-Pakistan Green Alliance.⁴

In February 2023, US Department of State Counsellor, Derek Chollet along with his delegation in their two-day visit to the country, discussed a wide range of issues with Pakistan including strengthening of economic ties, cooperating to address the impacts of the climate crisis, and expanding people-to-people connections. Counsellor Chollet met with Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and discussed strengthening the US Pakistan bilateral partnership, including increased economic cooperation and Pakistan's needs as it continues to recover and rebuild

3 "Green Alliance to revolutionise agri-sector, cement Pak-US bonds: Masood," Radio Pakistan, November 19, 2022, <https://www.radio.gov.pk/19-11-2022/green-alliance-to-revolutionize-agri-sector-cement-pak-us-bonds-masood>

4 Anwar Iqbal, "US will continue to help Pakistan rebuild economy," Dawn, January 11, 2023, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1731077>

following the floods. He also met with Minister of Planning Ahsan Iqbal and discussed Pakistan's flood recovery and future opportunities within the US-Pakistan Green Alliance.⁵

Pakistan and the US held an Energy Security Dialogue on March 15, 2023, in Islamabad, which was chaired by Pakistani Federal Minister for Energy Khurram Dastgir Khan and US Department of State Assistant Secretary for Energy Resources Geoffrey Pyatt. At the conclusion of the Dialogue both sides affirmed a mutual commitment to advance the transition to renewable energy and promote a more stable, secure, and prosperous energy future for both nations. Both governments resolved to continue deepening bilateral partnership through the US-Pakistan Green Alliance framework.⁶

On March 16, 2023, Pakistan and the US concluded the second meeting of the Climate and Environment Working Group in Islamabad. Pakistan's Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman and the US Department of State's Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs Monica Medina led the delegations. Talks were focused on climate and environment issues, including climate change, energy transition, water management, climate-smart agriculture, air quality, biodiversity, and waste management including plastics recycling. The delegations discussed the impacts of the devastating floods in Pakistan in 2022 and emphasised the importance of building resilience to the impacts of climate change.⁷

The US Ambassador Donald Blome on March 20, 2023, said the US-Pakistan Green Alliance will continue to improve the lives of Pakistanis and Americans and have a positive global impact while speaking at an event held at the Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS) on 75 years of bilateral relations between the two countries. The alliance is also a prime example of strong and enduring partnership that would continue to improve the lives of Pakistanis and Americans and have a positive global impact.⁸

To celebrate Earth Day on April 22, Ambassador Donald Blome signed the Greening Diplomacy Initiative (GDI) Pledge, on April 18, 2023 to demonstrate the US commitment to supporting the U.S.-

5 APP, "US, Pakistan discuss strengthening economic cooperation," Dawn, February 18, 2023, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1737761>

6 Press Release, "Joint Statement on U.S.-Pakistan Energy Security Dialogue," U.S. Mission Pakistan, March 15, 2023, <https://pk.usembassy.gov/joint-statement-on-u-s-pakistan-energy-security-dialogue/>

7 Press Release, "Joint Statement on U.S.-Pakistan Climate and Environment Working Group," U.S. Mission Pakistan, March 16, 2023, <https://pk.usembassy.gov/joint-statement-on-u-s-pakistan-climate-and-environment-working-group/>

8 "Pakistan-US Green alliance prime example of strong, bilateral partnership: Blome," Radio Pakistan, March 20, 2023, <https://www.radio.gov.pk/20-03-2023/us-pakistan-green-alliance-prime-example-of-strong-enduring-bilateral-partnership-donald-blome>

Pakistan Green Alliance framework by example and tackling the climate crisis through the responsible stewardship of natural resources.⁹

Conclusion:

The US-Pakistan Green Alliance is a promising step towards a more sustainable future. The framework, which aims to tackle climate change and promote environmental sustainability, marks a significant shift in their bilateral relationship. It presents a unique opportunity for Pakistan to accelerate its efforts to combat climate change and promote sustainable development. It offers an excellent opportunity to work together to advance a shared goal. The eventual success of the framework will depend on long-term commitments and genuine effort from both sides.

⁹ Press Release, "Ambassador Donald Blome Signs Green Diplomacy Initiative Pledge," U.S. Mission Pakistan, April 18, 2023, <https://pk.usembassy.gov/joint-statement-on-u-s-pakistan-energy-security-dialogue/>