

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

ROAD TO

COP30

26 FEBRUARY 2025

Conversations



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POST EVENT REPORT
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Disclaimer: The discussions and report have followed Chatham House rule.

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Post Event Report

Roundtable Discussion on “Road To COP-30”

The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the premier global forum for climate negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Since its inception in 1995, the COP's agenda has evolved from setting emission reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol to forging global commitments through the Paris Agreement. In recent years, the focus has expanded to climate finance, carbon markets, adaptation strategies, and loss and damage mechanisms.

As Pakistan prepares for COP-30, it must navigate a rapidly shifting global climate landscape while addressing its own vulnerabilities. With increasing climate risks and financial constraints, Pakistan's approach must be strategic—securing climate finance, strengthening regional alliances, and advocating for just and equitable climate policies.

Under this premise, the Institute for Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis (ISSRA) National Defense University (NDU), conducted a consultative discussion titled “Road to COP-30” on 26th February 2025. The aim of the discussion was to outline Pakistan's key priorities, policy directions, and engagement strategies to maximize benefits from COP-30.

The event brought together subject matter experts, policymakers, and international climate activists, including Sri Lanka's Minister of Environment, Dr. Dhamika Patabendi, and Coordinator to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Climate Change, Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam.

Key Takeaways

- The global response to climate change must be fair and equitable, with commitments distributed justly. However, reducing climate finance and support from the Global North indicates a shifting of priorities from climate action to geopolitical agendas. Therefore, Pakistan must navigate this landscape carefully and protect its national interests while advocating for a balanced climate action agenda.
- A key milestone of Pakistan's participation at COP-29 was the introduction of the "Carbon Market Policy" under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. However, carbon markets pose complex challenges—developing nations must ensure equitable access, secure fair trade terms, and align them with national priorities before delving into it.
- Pakistan's COP-30 agenda hinges on two key interventions: firstly, revised NDCs to shape climate action using precise carbon emission data, and secondly, ongoing IMF engagement for a \$1-1.25 billion concessional loan under the Resilient Sustainability Framework (RSF) to align the FY2025 -26 budget with climate targets.
- Developing an indigenous climate data system is crucial for Pakistan's independent policymaking and strategic leverage. Establishing a regional consortium for data exchange can enhance cooperation and integrate climate action more effectively.
- As one of the most climate-vulnerable and economically challenged countries, Pakistan cannot rely solely on COPs for financing. On the adaptation front, it must focus on developing indigenous adaptation plans and preparing projects for public-private partnerships (PPP). On the mitigation side, strengthening regulations for industry, energy, and transport sectors is crucial to improving air quality and protecting marine ecosystems.
- Pakistan's COP-30 agenda should prioritise securing financial assurances, ensuring access to climate finance, developing regional carbon markets, and building resilient infrastructure to enhance sustainable development and climate resilience.
- Pakistan should participate and contribute in the ongoing Climate-Peace-Security Nexus agenda dilated in the COPs.
- As home to the world's largest glaciers outside the polar regions, Pakistan must prioritise “hydro sovereignty” and lobby at international forums like the Arctic Council to include the preservation of the cryosphere in global climate discussions at COP-30.

- Pakistan's COP-30 agenda should prioritize technology transfer to strengthen its indigenous renewable energy capacity. It is crucial to safeguard the country's hydro and solar potential from being overshadowed by Western agendas and ensure that collaborations with South Asian partners serve national and regional energy interests first.
- Asia has success stories in the domain of the environment, and there is a need for a South- South knowledge transfer to share stories of pride and scientific achievements and enhance dialogue in a more systematic manner for a shared future ahead.



Summary of The Proceedings

- A more pragmatic and equity-driven approach is needed to align climate finance with the real needs of the Global South. Climate discussions, often shaped by a Western liberal perspective, tend to overlook the realities of developing nations, as seen in COP-29's underwhelming \$300 billion annual commitment—only half of the requested \$600 billion.
- Amid prevailing skepticism about COP reinforcing existing power structures, developing nations have enough opportunity to align global climate priorities with their national development goals and carve the best out of this forum to effectively mitigate both global political and environmental challenges.
- The era of grants is over; it is time for states to develop indigenous programs for attracting finance and ensuring access to global climate facilities, and that is only possible through multilateral and bilateral diplomatic collaboration on the environmental front.
- Global shifts will play a crucial role in shaping the COP-30 agenda. The U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, the neglect of the Green Climate Fund (GCF), and the decline in European environmental funding—amid the Ukraine war—demonstrate how the Global North has deprioritized climate action in favor of political interests.
- The issues of funding and data sharing must be advocated more rigorously at all forums, particularly at the regional level, to ensure that developing nations retain agency and are not overshadowed by the climate agendas of the Global North.
- At COP-29, agreements on "Carbon Markets" under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement were signed. It is crucial for developing nations to advocate for the establishment of regional carbon markets to ensure a fair balance between global climate commitments and national economic interests.
- Carbon credits present a complex and nuanced challenge. Before prioritizing them, countries must first establish equitable market access, secure favorable trade terms, and carefully evaluate their alignment with national priorities.
- Pakistan has very limited participation in creating a global knowledge base on climate change, which impacts Pakistan's stance on climate action plans. Therefore, to put forward a comprehensive and firm stance in front of the international community, the development of an indigenous climate knowledge base is premier.

- Pakistan has been compelled to take greater responsibility in addressing climate-related social challenges, yet international support remains absent. While successful models like BISP, Akhuwat, and NRSP demonstrate Pakistan's commitment, but their reliance on loans exacerbates the country's financial strain, particularly in meeting IMF obligations. This cycle of debt-driven climate action is unsustainable, and the international community must develop equitable solutions to break this financial deadlock for developing nations.
- Financing remains the cornerstone of COP, shaping the foundation of negotiations through diverse mechanisms and frameworks. For Pakistan, the key priority is ensuring equitable access to climate finance to support its climate resilience and development goals.
- Pakistan's agenda for COP-30 sprouts from two major interventions. Firstly, the revised Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) will chalk out the future trajectory of climate action based on realistic assessments. Secondly, the ongoing engagement with IMF over the development of a “Resilient Sustainability Framework (RSF)” to acquire \$1-1.25 billion concessional loan and bringing the budget FY2025 - 26 sensitive to climate targets.
- The government has proposed dividing the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) Fund into adaptation and mitigation brackets and same is proposed to provinces to divide Annual Development Programme (ADP) fund into adaptation, mitigation and consolidated brackets so as to attract the domestic and international private sector to develop projects accordingly.
- The Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models of Sri Lanka and Jordan offer valuable insights for Pakistan in securing climate finance and advancing mitigation efforts. Sri Lanka's approach to carbon credit generation and ecosystem restoration, along with Jordan's success in integrating PPPs into renewable energy, transport, and waste management, highlight effective pathways.
- As one of the most climate vulnerable and economically challenged countries, Pakistan cannot rely solely on COP for financing. On the adaptation front, it must focus on developing indigenous adaptation plans, closing the financing gap, and preparing projects for public-private partnerships (PPP). On the mitigation side, strengthening regulations for industry, energy, and transport sectors is crucial to improving air quality and protecting marine ecosystems.

- Pakistan is focusing on waste management and clean air initiatives for integration into voluntary carbon markets. Feasibility studies are shaping marketable waste solutions, while efforts like EV adoption, mass transit expansion, and emissions monitoring aim to reduce air pollution and generate carbon credits.
- Sri Lanka's approach to climate change is centered in adaptation, to integrate adaptation priorities into national policies and equitably cater to all communities nationally and regionally.
- Role of INGOs should not be relied upon as their funding source derives their agenda. Therefore, countries like Pakistan and Sri Lanka should work on indigenous adaptation and mitigation plans rather than waiting for a contagion to land.
- Accountability and reliance in carbon emission quantifications are of prime importance, and the Sri Lankan model of sectoral accountability is a roadmap for fellow South Asian countries to ensure transparency in their climate actions.
- Pakistan's climate agenda must prioritize the development of resilient infrastructure to mitigate the escalating ecological challenges.
- Jordan presented the Climate-Refugee Nexus Initiative at COP-27, an initiative focused on highlighting the refugee burden and advocating for climate commitments. Pakistan and Jordan, both hosting large refugee populations, can collaborate on this theme in discussions at COP-30 to further this agenda.
- Strengthening regional cooperation through interoperable data systems and transboundary data sharing is vital for informed climate policymaking. Establishing a regional consortium can enhance collaboration on water and air pollution, leading to more effective climate action.
- As home to the world's largest glaciers outside the polar regions, Pakistan has a strategic opportunity to champion cryosphere conservation at COP-30. With glaciers being historically overlooked in national policy, the 2025 agenda should focus on 'conservation of hydro sovereignty' and lobby to integrate the cryosphere into global stock take.
- Technology transfer is central to meeting global climate commitments and advancing Pakistan's energy transition. Pakistan can use COP-30 to advocate for access to clean energy technologies, strengthen its indigenous renewable energy capacity, and collaborate with South Asian partners to maximize hydro and solar potential.

- As Pakistan prepares its third NDCs, consultations at the provincial level need to be conducted to realistically assess targets, and a documented process of provincially determined contributions should be launched to synthesize reflective commitments.
- The gender perspective has largely been overlooked in climate discussions. Therefore, Pakistan's COP-30 agenda must integrate a gender-inclusive approach, ensuring that upcoming policy directions explicitly address gender desegregation.
- Pakistan can draw key lessons from regional climate initiatives. China's progress in Global Development Initiatives (GDIs) highlights the importance of strategic collaboration to advance shared climate goals. Meanwhile, Sri Lanka's commitment to carbon neutrality by 2050—targeting 70% renewable energy by 2030—demonstrates the need for a clear roadmap in energy transition. Pakistan must leverage these insights to strengthen regional partnerships, accelerate renewable energy adoption, and enhance climate resilience.
- Asia has success stories in the domain of the environment, and there is a need for a South-South knowledge transfer to share stories of pride and scientific achievements and enhance dialogue in a more systematic manner for a shared future ahead.

Conclusion

The road to COP-30 is marked by shifting global priorities, dwindling climate finance, and the need for developing nations to navigate these challenges strategically. With the Global North deprioritizing climate action in favor of political agendas, Pakistan must take a proactive stance—securing financial assurances, advocating for regional carbon markets, and ensuring fair trade terms to balance global climate commitments with national economic interests. Regional collaboration, public-private partnerships, and technology transfer are key to enhancing climate resilience. Pakistan must also integrate gender-responsive policies, indigenous adaptation frameworks, and innovative waste management solutions to address its unique climate challenges.

At COP-30, Pakistan should lead vulnerable nations in securing equitable climate finance and advancing energy transition. By fostering regional alliances, reinforcing domestic policies, and presenting a unified stance, Pakistan can strengthen its influence in global climate negotiations and build a more sustainable future.

Moreover, participants of the discussion expressed a great deal of interest in continuing this agenda through more consultative discussions on diverse themes deliberated in this discussion and to propose a consolidated stance and roadmap for Pakistan's COP-30 strategy.

Picture Gallery





