



Institute of Regional Studies

Address Climate Change for Food and Water Security



ISLAMABAD November 18, 2020: “It is very important to respond to climate change because it affects availability of water and food security, which are essential for life,” said Ms Aisha Khan. The Founder and CEO of the Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC) and Mountain and Glacier Protection Organization (MGPO) was speaking at an event on the impact of climate change on South Asia organized by the

Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) here on Wednesday.

Ms Khan was of the view that as the effects of climate change become more pronounced, droughts and natural disasters recur more frequently, which could lead to out-migration from affected areas and aggravate conflict over scarce resources. She shared that some recent studies had found correlation not only between climate and conflict but also between climate and gender-based violence, including domestic violence as well as sexual abuse.

Ms Khan shared that Pakistan was consistently ranking among the top 10 most vulnerable countries to climate change in the world. Ms Khan further shared that 700 million people had been affected by climate-induced disasters in South Asia in the past one decade alone causing economic damages worth \$150 billion from the year 2000 to 2017.

Ms Khan maintained that since the livelihoods of 31 per cent of the 1.89 billion population of South Asia were associated with agriculture, it was imperative for South Asian countries to address climate change adaptability on priority and to coordinate their policies on the subject with each other through information sharing.

Ms Khan argued that while climate change affected everyone, the marginalized were affected more because of their relatively greater vulnerability. “Since 10 percent of South Asian population lives below the poverty line that makes it 189 million individuals who would be directly affected by climate change,” said Ms Khan.



Ms Khan stated that while the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) had served the region well for 50 years, it was time to revisit some of its aspects in light of the new realities of the twenty-first century climatic conditions. She urged think tanks like IRS to conduct in-depth research on revisiting the IWT in light of the new realities. She also urged the think tanks to play their role in raising awareness about climate change among the masses. “While Urdu newspapers rarely publish columns on climate issues, the ones published in English-language dailies use a very technical language with which the public cannot usually relate,” she said.

Ms. Khan also pointed out that climate change is a collective threat which will affect the human security of 1.89 billion people of South Asia and, thus, requiring a collaborative regional approach. “Think tanks and civil society organizations can play an important role in highlighting this subject,” she said.

President IRS Amb Nadeem Riyaz thanked Ms Khan for her candid presentation and assured her that IRS would keep climate change and the region high on its research agenda.