



Institute of Regional Studies

Link National Security with Human Security



ISLAMABAD December 9, 2020: Climate experts called for linking national security with human security in a virtual conference on climate change and its impacts on Pakistan here on Wednesday. The conference titled “Framing Pakistan’s Climate Profile 2020-2030: Future Projections and Pathways to Resilience” was jointly organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) and Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC).

Experts from Pakistan as well as abroad were of the view that human security had not been prioritized

in Pakistan and called for greater attention toward climate security, food security, climate vulnerability, disaster mitigation, and management of internal migration. The participants of the conference also called for greater regional cooperation on climatic issues in South Asia.

Water security emerged as one of the key subjects discussed during the conference. Dr Ghulam Rasool, Regional Programme Manager of the Mountain Environment Regional Information System (MENRIS), warned that if the current trends of warming continued, one-third of the glaciers in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan (HKH) region could melt by the year 2100. He further stated that water security was the first to be affected by climate change. Dr Rasool strongly advocated for transboundary cooperation on climate change.

Dr Abid Qayum Sulehri, the Executive Director of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), called for better policies for ensuring food security. He was of the view that the government’s policies to incentivize the cultivation of water-intensive sugarcane and rice in the cotton belt had caused Pakistan’s textile industry to import cotton for manufacture. He was further of the view that beetroot needed to be incentivized for cultivation instead of sugarcane, which was a less water-intensive crop.

Irrigation engineer Mr Arif Anwar and Mr Basharat Saeed, Water Resources Specialist at the World Bank, called for better regulation of surface and groundwater use through licensing and charging of levies for securing a water-secure future for Pakistan. Dr Azeem Khan, Chairman of the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), was of the view that the construction of Diamer-Bhasha dam scheduled for completion in 2028 would ease the water-related climatic pressures on Pakistan.

Maj Gen (Retd) Asghar Nawaz, Chief Executive/Managing Director of two thermal power plants of Fauji Foundation, emphasized the important role that could be played by the Local Governments if they were involved in climate responses in Pakistan. He maintained that currently all implementation-related decisions were stopping at the provincial level, which should not have been the case. Dr Ahsen Tehsin, Disaster Risk Management Specialist at the World Bank, urged bringing gender into the discussions on climate change.

Amb Nadeem Riyaz, the President of IRS, called for raising awareness among the masses on climate change and involving communities in climate responses. Dr Zeba Sathar, Senior Associate and directs the Population Council's office, regretted that population planning no longer featured high on the development priority agenda of the government. She highlighted the higher incidence of multidimensional poverty in the rural areas most vulnerable to temperature rise and linked it with higher prevalence of population growth. Dr Saqib Jafarey, Professor at City University of London, was of the view that while Pakistan was quite strong on bringing out high quality policy documents, it was lacking in implementation.

Other speakers of the conference were the Chief Executive of CSCCC Ms Aisha Khan, Mr Ahmad Kamal from the Federal Flood Commission, Senior Scientific Officer at Global Change Impact Studies Centre (GCISC) Dr Arif Goheer, former chairman of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lt Gen (Retd) Omar Hayat, Senior Consultant with Pakhtunkhwa Economic Policy Research Institute (PEPRI) Dr Usman Mustafa, and Ambassador Shafqat Kakakhel.