**The Knowledge Forum**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Pakistan should make a forceful case for climate reparations**

Karachi: 10 November 2022: Experts at a discussion session on “Understanding COP27 in the context of climate change in Pakistan” have hoped that the Sherm El Sheikh conference would respond to the concerns of the nations most affected by climate change.

They urged the UN member countries, particularly the big polluters, to end the double standards of talking about climate change and then continue to contribute polluting the world environment.

The session was organized by The Knowledge Forum (TKF), a local think tank at the Karachi Press Club on Thursday, which was attended by academics, students, members of civil society and climate activists.

The speakers demanded that Pakistan should seek compensation and debt relief in the wake of the climate crisis that the country has been battling in recent years.

They also demanded to raise the current relief amount for flood affectees from Rs. 25000 under the BISP, to Rs. 100,000. “The 19 poorest of the poor districts that have been affected by floods should have their electricity bills waived off for three months at least,” said Dr Aqdas Afzal from Habib University.

Muhammad Mustafa Amjad, Programme Manager at The Renewables First, in his online presentation said that it is positive that COP27 process is being mainstreamed in Pakistan. “This conference has been happening for the last 27 years every years, but it is only this year, particularly in the context of the recent floods that Pakistan is actively engaged,” he said.

He said that the COP process has come a long way. “We have to run fast to catch up with the developments as Pakistan falls among the top ten countries vulnerable to climate impact.”

Mustafa Amjad noted that the climate conference and debate is also geo political as discussion this year is focused on energy in the context of the Ukraine war. “Countries like Pakistan can benefit from these discussions as energy is also a critical issue for us.”

 “We must pursue nature based solutions to deal with climate change impacts rather than relying on traditional, fossil fuel based means of addressing challenges,” he suggested.

He said that global debate about mitigation in global south should have a more grounded approach, which means switching towards clean energy and focusing on mitigation.

“We must seek global commitments to end reliance on fossil fuel and also give up our reliance on dirty means of energy production,” he added.

Dr. Aqadas Afzal, Professor at the Habib University said that this year, the delegation of the Government of Pakistan has made intensive preparations and presented an important agenda at COP27.

He said that in a recent interview, the Prime Minister of Pakistan disagreed with the idea of seeking reparations for the impact of climate change. “This is a flawed approach. We should have been seeking reparations forcefully. We must point straight to those responsible for the climate catastrophe and demand them to play a role in helping us deal with the crisis that was created by them,” he suggested.

In his view despite good preparations and a strong delegation, Pakistan’s position at the COP27 is apologetic rather than aggressive. “We are not slaves any more and should present the reparation case to the world,” he added.

Dr. Aqadas suggested establishment of a global reparation secretariat in any country of the Global South.

“IMF and WB should revisit concessional lending conditionalities in the context of the climate change realties. Big lenders should provide debt relief to Pakistan on $ 94 billion debt otherwise they must stop talking about climate change.”

Outlining the need for internal reparations, Dr Aqdas Afzal said that out of 94 districts affected by floods 19 are the poorest of the poor and must be compensated to the fullest for their losses.

Abira Ashfaq of the Karachi Bachao Tehreek and Faculty of IBA in her remarks said that the marginalised communities within the country are the worst victims of climate vulnerabilities and faulty development approach.

“More than 1.2 million people have migrated only from Badin district in recent years due to climate change impacts and faulty projects such as LBOD,’ she said.

In her view, addressing the grievances of the local communities is as important as raising the impact of climate change at the global level. “Genuine Environmental Impact Assessment is must before initiating mega development projects.”

Ms Abira suggested that the government should have special housing projects for climate migrants and must stop demolitions of the houses of the low income communities.

She suggested that the affected communities should be consulted on climate mitigation as they are the main stakeholders. “COP27 should be organised in areas such as Dadu which has been bearing the worst impact of the recent floods. She also questioned the role of multinationals, especially oil and gas companies in perpetuating the impact of climate change. “Rather than guidelines, the UN should have a convention for businesses to address the impacts of their actions on the environment.”

The event was moderated by Ms Zeenia Shaukat, Director of the Knowledge Forum.

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