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## **Pakistan's Approach to Climate Change Diplomacy: An Analysis of SDG13**

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### **Abstract**

This research critically examines Pakistan's approach to climate change diplomacy, focusing on the state's policies and strategies aimed at achieving SDG 13 targets. A qualitative methodology is being applied in this study to integrate policy analysis, secondary literature, and primary data that is collected through secondary resources to address the primary research questions. The results shown are that there are more challenges, such as constrained financial resources, underdeveloped infrastructures, and a population highly susceptible to extreme weather events. Despite these obstacles, Pakistan's institutional frameworks and policies reflect aspirations to address climate change at local, national, and international levels. However, systemic issues such as governance deficiencies, inadequate international support, and weak policy implementation continue to impede progress. Pakistan's position as one of the most climate-vulnerable nations, despite its minimal contribution to global emissions, necessitates tailored approaches distinct from those applied to other nations. The research highlights improvement, better compliance with climate policies, and more financing for adaptation and mitigation activities. Key recommendations are the development of consistent climate diplomacy strategies, mainstreaming climate change into national policies, and addressing governance gaps to support effective policy execution. All this is needed for Pakistan to achieve its climate objectives and meaningfully contribute to the global fight against climate change.



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**Keywords:** *SDG13, Climate Diplomacy, Pakistan, Policies, Mitigation*

## **Introduction**

At present, our world is facing irreversible changes as far as climate change is concerned. Countries, in particular, face the consequences of a wicked global problem whose solution is yet to be seen. For smaller countries, especially those in the global south, meeting and maintaining sustainable economic growth, progressive environmental policies, and the necessity to combat quicker and harsher climate change effects using available resources is an overall big challenge. From producing the right legislation and policies to endorse sustainable development, focusing on the right priorities, as well as regularly aiming to improve over time, evidence is now present of some lesser-resourced countries getting implementation on these Eco-ambitious green economy and sustainable development initiatives right (Khan 2019).

As for a country such as Pakistan, the adverse effects include frequent and expanding exposure to climate-related events, which include floods, unplanned urbanization, and sudden heat waves that have resulted in an increase in fatalities, among others (Ahmed 2016). Pakistan's highly proximate glaciers are also gradually melting, thus long-term water availability is among the top forthcoming important issues, which include water scarcity, reducing economic opportunities, and resource management conflicts. Addressing this contrived problem requires cooperation, governance, funding, support, fair burden sharing, and transparency (Bashir 2018). The subject of the announced paper is analyzing and getting better-verified good practices for climate change-smart diplomacy success. How a currently identified global issue or aspect, such as climate change and sustainable development, is successfully negotiated and installed into the global or regional decision-making process, either in a proactive or reactive manner.

## **Background of the Study**

In Pakistan, a number of policies have been introduced to counteract the drastic effects of climate change. Based on the principles of state responsibility, sustainability, the role of the private sectors and public, the right to a healthy environment and human rights, a new legislative framework has been developed to govern this realm (Pakistan 2012). However, when compared to the climate change threats that the country faces, these legislative attempts have not been enough to stop the long-term impacts of climate change in Pakistan (Rahman 2019). Despite the fact that many countries have made significant progress in developing an integrated and comprehensive approach to combating environmental challenges, the international community's response to climate change crises has fallen short of what is necessary, and little success has been achieved in reaching consensus on agreements that meet minimum benchmarks or coordination for joint action. In reflection of these failures, the responsible entities – the national climate change committee, the federal environment ministry, the federal climate change ministry, and the provinces, tasked by the 18th Amendment to initiate climate action plans – have not been able to agree on a climate change policy or on mutually agreed-upon principles to guide the government in addressing the challenges that climate change poses.



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## **Objective**

1. To analyze Pakistan's role in SDG13

## **Research Question**

1. What are the main challenges that Pakistan faces in meeting the target of SDG13?
2. What progress has Pakistan made toward achieving SDG 13?

## **Methodology**

This study adopts qualitative research design through secondary data analysis to examine the relevant sources. Relevant data were collected from books, reports, policy briefs, journals, and other credible sources for the purpose of gaining a deeper understanding of the topic. The sources were selected on the grounds of relevance, credibility, and publication date with preference to peer-reviewed and official sources. Information were examined using systematic review, comparing information from various sources in order to determine the most important views and trends. Ethical standards were upheld using proper citations of all the sources and abiding by the standards of academic integrity.

## **Significance of the Study**

It is integral to identify that what we do today for the ambitious climate action agenda will profoundly shape the legacy that we will be leaving behind for future generations. Our actions to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 and protect global commons will determine the fate of the business community and our future as a nation, but also for our world. By addressing today's interconnected complex and climate, social justice and sustainability challenges in corporate policy, diplomacy, and locally, practice and globally, we can achieve a resilient transformation that will deliver shared value for all. Pakistan's vision for 2030-2047 aims towards a sustainable future in which there is an economic transformation paradigm focusing explicit attention on stewardship of the environment and addressing the climate change-related challenges confronting Pakistan. It is noteworthy that the 2030 vision is supported by a long-term perspective, which highlights irreversible trends, comprising proactive policies that will unfold from 2030 to 2050.

This study will contribute to the broader literature on foreign policy, especially addressing international relations, cooperation, and political geography in the era of Sustainable Development Goals, that Pakistan recently wholeheartedly endorsed. Furthermore, through this study, it is vital to contribute to the broader discourse on climate diplomacy research. Pakistan, like many developing countries, is facing the negative repercussions of climate change in the shape of droughts, floods, heat waves, and sea intrusions, putting society at risk in terms of agriculture, energy nexus and water. These challenges call for a comprehensive approach and greater collaboration from different sectors, such as environmental, agriculture, foreign and economic to develop and implement solutions that will endure and prosper for the mutual benefits of all in keeping in view the international sustainable development agenda, particularly climate change.



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## Scope of the Study

This research paper is focused on the state of Pakistan and its approach to climate diplomacy. In doing so, a triangular analysis will be used that includes SDG 13, literature regarding climate diplomacy and Pakistan's current position. Climate diplomacy research has been growing widely in academic and policy circles, especially during the post-Kyoto Protocol era. Various aspects have been the subject of focus, including motivations for action on invasive/green conflicts, against shortfalls of common goods, to provide national or transnational opportunities for cooperation, multilateral action grounds, or the implementation of climate change agreements.

Pakistan's role and effectiveness in climate agreements have recently become a more important question than it ever has been. As the country is integrated into regional and international advocacy, its choices under national climate policy appear to conflict with goals. Green development and the generation of renewable energy, which has a large potential to reduce energy poverty and combat climate change, are the watchwords of its leadership, but current practices of energy-related restrictions show contradictory behaviour. These contradictions in policy arise from the specific positioning of the nation and manifest in the diplomat's core situation in the international arena in which such contradictions are inscribed and implemented.

## Research Gap

There is limited academic analysis of Pakistan's climate change diplomacy in alignment with SDG 13 (Climate Action). Existing research emphasizes socio-economic impacts rather than evaluating Pakistan's diplomatic strategies. This study addresses this gap by critically analyzing Pakistan's approach to achieving SDG 13. Additionally, this research focuses on the challenges Pakistan faces, including policy implementation barriers, resource limitations, and international cooperation issues, which hinder its progress toward meeting SDG 13.

## Understanding Climate Change Diplomacy

From the perspective of international relations studies, climate change diplomacy can be greatly extended from the broader context of environmental diplomacy that deals with international agreements to manage trans-boundary environmental risks (Zafar 2021). Climate change diplomacy specifically addresses the mitigation of greenhouse gases and their effects with respect to the least developed countries (Khan 2019). Most of the climate change actions are dealt with through "Climate Regime" and understood as the framework convention on climate change, including the protocol and its new agreement (UNFCCC December 12, 2015) however, state, multi-level regimes, multilateral agencies, and both national and non-state actors can negotiate, set new commitments, and implement universal and differentiated mitigation actions. Interests and positions can always change, but the common goal is still working for the future climate and nature. This can only be done through negotiations with principles and the confidence of being represented effectively.

As the evolution of international environmental governance expands from its traditional techniques of diplomacy and the development of legal and regulatory mechanisms that mitigate pollution by organizing national or regional efforts, economic privileges, and the development of market state relations of economic



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actors, trade representatives, and business sectors are being determined domestically (Rahman 2019). Most modern climate change agreements are designed as the "soft law" of international environmental governance (Bashir 2018). Other new regulations place costly and complicated burdens on private sectors. The processes also began to receive these processes, but the majority of agreements are signed by developing countries. Southern parties consider it important to assume their special needs to change their production and consumption patterns and adapt to the impacts of climate change (ministry 2013). Now, it continues by taking into consideration possible impacts. Can some of these needs support actions consistent with the sustainable goal?

### **Conceptual Framework**

This section reviews some of the most important themes of the literature on the concept of climate change, diplomacy, sustainable development goals, and Pakistan's approach to face the crisis, having recognized the broad category of literature written in this field. The section examines the different topics related to the concepts and roles of climate change diplomacy. The purpose of the contention is to offer crystal clear concepts to lay the groundwork for the ensuing study and to assemble a theoretical position so as to generate a link to the associated issues. The semantics of 'climate change diplomacy' is complicated and technically relatively new. Diplomacy, in general, is not one discipline, but rather the sum of several elements that, together with history and culture, represent the international and foreign relations of a state. It is easy to look at the definition of climate change diplomacy, a concept that refers to how the international climate negotiations deploy diplomacy. Diplomacy can be defined as the practice of advancing logical arguments in order to create a consensus to resolve a conflict. Diplomacy is not a science because it is not a predetermined scheme, nor is it art since it is based on current, unemotional issues (Khan 2019).

### **Key Actors and Stakeholders**

The main institutional arrangement with players' engagements and enforcement mechanisms designed for climate change diplomacy is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It is biased to focus on those milestones important to developing nations as well as on reversible ways that fall on the side of market-oriented policies, ignoring structural and perennial problems arising from development based on consumption and shareholder accumulation (Zafar 2021). The structure and dynamics of the climate negotiations and the types of policies prescribed by them appear to reflect too much the global regional discrepancies and the pursuit of individual national interests, resulting in a multilateral process that is institutionally weak, seeking to flexible commitments while addressing the problem without raising confrontational questions by the international community and broadening participation of a diverse group of countries. Although Cops fail to practically implement specific climate impacts, especially in areas like energy, poverty, and climate change, negotiations on technical topics dealing with the assessment of greenhouse gas-related concerns and endorsement of technologies that could contribute towards stabilization provide an effective platform for diplomatic engagements but quite limited access to state/non-state actor engagement, especially in the case of developing and least developed world regions (Rahman



2019).

### **The Significance of SDG 13**

In 1992, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was enacted to plan and work out solutions to handle the challenges posed by global warming and climate change. This breakthrough led to multiple climate change conferences, but there was a great discrepancy in getting developed and developing countries to agree on meaningful and effective protocols (Schmidt 2016). Despite the long existence of a legally binding instrument, parties such as the United States refused to ratify it, claiming that it did not sufficiently address concerns about the economic development of developing countries (Bodansky 2016). After about a decade of failures, the framework's limitations were rather revealing, and the urgency of science informing policymakers that something more concrete must be done, the United Nations adopted seventeen interrelated sustainable development goals so that humanity can tip the scales toward sustainability and continued prosperity for all. United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 13, the global action plan drafted to confront the climate crisis, is devoted to the global effort to prevent and manage negative impacts of climate change and is in sync with the Paris Agreement (UN 2015).

In 2015, the United Nations underwent two major events. The Millennium Development Goals expired, propelling the UN to introduce a new development agenda, known as the SDGs. Later in the year, the Paris Agreement was adopted as part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Paris Agreement, in essence, is an international brotherhood to be bound by support and goodwill, a host of promises from countries to cut down greenhouse gas emissions, few directives, no penalties, and ways to benefit from green investments (Kässi 2019). During the UN summit, Pakistan expressed its strong willingness to coalesce with the international community in addressing climate change. Although Pakistan is not in the top ten countries representing the highest share of GHG emissions, it is extremely vulnerable and highly prone both to climatic disruptions and mitigation costs, which could shake the country's development, security, and economic progress (WB 2019). Therefore, prioritizing SDG 13 could help SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), and SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy). At the same time, it could safeguard lives from natural disasters and food and water shortages by building resilient infrastructures." (Network 2019)

### **Overview of SDG 13: Climate Action**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers a framework for tackling the worldwide problem of climate change. The 13th Sustainable Development Goal, "take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts," requires that the world be carbon neutral by 2050 (UN 2015). In order to respond to both of these initiatives and combat climate change, all sectors of the economy must cooperate and function efficiently. Unfortunately, each sector, particularly the energy sector, which is the principal fossil fuel user, has its own national concerns, so it is difficult to gain cooperation and synergy among the sectors (Kässi 2019). This study takes a case of the agricultural sector in Pakistan to verify how different national concerns affect its low-carbon policy.



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Sustainable Development Goal 13 focused exclusively on climate action. By comparison, one of the Millennium Development Goals was climate change, which focused exclusively, albeit in a limited sense, on how to directly support sustainable development. In this respect, the inclusion of a separate goal on climate action in the 2030 Agenda marked a significant step forward (Paupp 2018). Its general thrust is also notable in that it sets a single target for the international community to pursue. Even if one were to disagree with the objectives of the Paris Agreement, it seems logical to conclude that the consensus it has achieved enhances the utility of the international commitment that the agreement enjoys.

### **Inter-linkages with Other SDGs**

The seventeen 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 169 targets are optimized to address the most pertinent social, economic, and environmental challenges of the 2030 Agenda. However, some concerns do exist regarding the feasibility of the sustainable development nature of the SDGs and the extent to which they can be successfully achieved. The reason for this is, among others, that none of these seventeen SDGs are sustainable in isolation, and that often conflicting trade-offs may occur, reflecting that the 2030 Agenda as a whole is quite ambitious (Nykvist 2016).

The importance of climate change mitigation and adaptation and its interconnections with the 2030 Agenda were recognized when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda and more specifically, Goal 13: “to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.” (UN 2015) However, comparatively limited research has been devoted to exploring this specific relationship between Goal 13 and the other SDGs. Meanwhile, much of the current focus lies on the capacity of the Paris Agreement on climate change and the linkages of the individual Nationally Determined Contributions with various components of SDG 13 in order to meet the NDC targets. (Hale 2018)

### **Pakistan's Climate Change Policy Landscape**

Pakistan's contribution to global greenhouse emissions is minuscule as a result of its insignificant per capita contribution. Yet it faces a significant challenge in dealing with the impact of climate change, particularly on its economic, human, and national security (WB 2019). The key areas likely to face challenges pertain to extreme events, the unpredictable monsoon cycle, sudden increases in variables affecting regional hydrology, declining availability of water, changing cropping patterns, and agricultural vulnerability (Fund 2020). Pakistan's ability to finance the large cost of future adaptation by the already stressed economy adds further uncertainty in meeting such challenges. It is, however, in its interest to lower the uncertainty of future impacts of climate change on Pakistan, as this will provide a more rational choice for the future. In light of the future cost of adaptation and the large limitations of funds already facing the nation, it is prudent for Pakistan to commence taking cost-effective action to tackle the chronic dimensions of climate change as early as possible.

The paper aims to investigate how Pakistan has responded to the challenge of climate change by reviewing existing laws, policies, and other relevant documents. The review hopes to provide a clearer landscape on the areas of its strengths and weaknesses regarding the objectives of its national climate policy,



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institutions charged with governance structure, and suggest a guide on what areas of future concern can be meaningfully addressed. The benefit of this inquiry would provide an assessment of Pakistan's readiness to implement its newly formed climate change policy and areas that warrant closer attention. The paper is structured as follows: First, the paper reviews Pakistan's existing climate change mitigation and adaptation commitments and the manner in which future national laws are likely to dovetail into its commitments. Thereafter, the review of broad objectives of the climate change framework, including the institutional aspect, is completed. Subsequent sections proceed to briefly analyze Pakistan's readiness to implement and discuss the paper's importance, scope, and methodological limitations (A. e. Khan 2021).

### **Historical Context**

The topic is problematic because in these days of the world's evolution, the quest for leaving no one behind is necessitating critical assessment of strategies to which commitments are being made. The efforts of developing countries, particularly the most vulnerable, deserve separate investigation. Before making a proffer regarding the possible research gap in presenting this paper, this study will first proceed by dazzling the reader. Then this research will present the genesis of this paper, followed by dropping an anchor in the historical context as this research give the reader the genesis of this paper. This paper shall give a picture of Pakistan's historic heart in relation to SDGs and climate change. This research shall also cast a preferential light on political will, strategic approach, and yes, point out the elephant in the room when it comes to implementation strategies, and finally, this research will give a concluding account.

Pakistan has historically shown a great resolve in environmental issues. It was the first Muslim country to sign and ratify the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change way back in 1992 (Zafar 2021). One of the earliest policy statements was the preparation of the 'Pakistan Environmental Policy 2005 (Pakistan 2012).' Other salient indicators towards understanding Pakistan's distinct approach are given by its preparedness, as revealed in several publications related to the state of country preparedness by early 2005 (Ahmed 2016), and also highlighted its preparedness with a more comprehensive document known as "Initial National Communication (A. e. Khan 2021)," and is due to submit the Biennial Update Reports in 2020. This document is also widely recognized in the scientific community as one of the cases of good practices in terms of the preparation process, especially in monetary savings. The emphasis of this document is largely on the practical benefits of its implementation as a foundation to solve urgent questions related to climate change (Nykqvist 2016). However, such an approach is not only about sustainability without understanding the implications. The end or the beginning (A. Khan 2019).

### **Key Policies and Agreements**

Fazal and Fuchs provide a detailed account of the key policy initiatives that Pakistan has taken, or intends to take, to mitigate climate change. The Zeal Pak Cement Factory is the only cement factory in the world that is CO<sub>2</sub> free (Bashir 2018). A 450-kW wind project had started in Karachi where a 150-foot-high wind turbine generates electricity through kinetic energy (Kässi 2019). Wind power plants had been planned by a consortium of Pakistan and Denmark on Gharo-



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Keti Bandar and Hyderabad under a joint investment of \$300 million.

In March 2009, the President of Pakistan inaugurated the Pakistan Professional and Volunteer Society whose goal is to promote hybrid and chip-based solar solutions in the country (Rahman 2019). The Pakistan Electric Power Company launched the country's first-ever grid-connected solar power generation project by installing a system at the Awan-e-Iqbal Railway Station. The Pakistani government has signed significant agreements to modernize its energy sector, including MFFs 1848-PAK and 1638-PAK. These MFFs include government and non-government projects to increase capacity and meet government development needs to 2016; and support in 2017-2021 and beyond via medium-term energy strategy update of institutional arrangements, an investment plan to develop a sustainable energy expansion program, and key policy and regulatory reforms (Hale 2018).

### **Pakistan's Diplomatic Efforts on Climate Change**

This research reviews studies conducted on Pakistan's climate change diplomacy to ascertain the existing climate change diplomacy adopted by Pakistan to negotiate justice and cooperation with developed countries to mobilize funds, knowledge, technology, and access to reduce the effects of climate change in cold-based countries. Concentrated efforts and efficient diplomacy are needed to mobilize resources and technology. Studies addressed the issues of how Pakistan historically and prospectively has dealt with international climate change agreements, money available for financing action and compliance, sunk costs, renewable sources of energy, carbon emissions, political economy, and climate justice grappling with what the country actually needs to protect or ameliorate existing relations between local and global effects of climate change. This review paid special attention to SDG 13 Climate Action and its part of principle 3, which targets to implement sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle in accordance with agreed sound international instruments to reduce their harmful effects on human health and the environment (UN 2015).

Pakistan considers Paris as one part of its focus on climate change and environmental security. Pakistan requested \$40 billion from the Green Climate Fund. As it pushed the agenda of climate justice, it won the "Champion of the Earth" award (A. a. Khan 2020). At COP22 in Marrakech, Pakistan's agenda for South-South cooperation, transformation of adaptation costs to resilience dividends, and conversion of sun and wind energy into tangible projects continued to win friends with countries from the global South seeking finance for loss and damage (Bashir 2018). At that point, Pakistan was a party to the Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund, Global Environment Facility, Montreal Protocol, and Kyoto Protocol and pledged an unconditional INDC to limit its annual emissions to 156 million tons of carbon dioxide during 2011-2030 (Fazal 2023). During winter 2015, COP21 also saw discussions on loss and damage in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which was in early discussions on the fifth assessment launches and the special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius and the projecting land use demands involving displaced people and migrants (T. e. Hale 2021).

### **Participation in International Forums**

Participation in international forums is another sign of Pakistan's diplomatic



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effectiveness, with each forum indicating Pakistan's ability to collaborate and negotiate with various regional groups. Pakistan participates in international forums to establish dialogue, build rapport, negotiate, and secure political support for a particular position or proposal. Accordingly, Pakistan has actively participated in international agreements, declarations, and policies to negotiate its terms. The Copenhagen Climate Meetings in 2009, the Cancun in 2010, Durban in 2011, the Doha in 2012, and the Warsaw in 2019 are a few examples of which Pakistan participated in a bloc or group but did not actively voice its position (Kässi, 2021).

The meeting in Paris was transformative due to the significant turnout and substantive proposals presented by Pakistan. Pakistan's commitment to the forum and its changed diplomatic strategy makes the meeting a key case study on climate diplomacy. The agreement prioritizes the adaptation needs of the most vulnerable countries, a result of the specific support and participation of the Vulnerable 20 Group that Pakistan chairs, as a special event was sponsored and a special section on the group was incorporated in the agreement (M. e. Bashir 2023).

### **Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements**

Pakistan has signed to participate and initiated many bilateral and multilateral agreements. Pakistan's international commitments are to ensure that it receives international cooperation and support in its efforts. Pakistan has signed various agreements related to the Kyoto Protocol, the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, and Pakistan's bilateral and regional cooperation. Pakistan has shown that it has taken concrete steps towards implementing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol (A. a. Khan 2020). The Government of Pakistan has developed relevant national communications. These first communications contained national inventory ideas and information on national circumstances, and national actions are in place to implement its commitments under the Convention for the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol (M. e. Bashir 2023). Furthermore, Pakistan has also submitted its second national communication with necessary information on how the relevant advanced calibration was achieved. The second national communication also contains information on Pakistan's national inventory, projected effects of ongoing policies and measures, and quantification of vital programs and policies on climate change concerns and adaptation to climate change (Fazal 2023).

Pakistan reiterated its seriousness to converge other UN enhanced work related to new and latest legal regulations leading to 2015 and to predetermine its own researched national permitted commitments beyond 2015. Pakistan has laws like the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act, the Sindh Environmental Protection Act, the Sindh Livelihood Support Project Act, and many more (Kässi, Pakistan's Climate Change Diplomacy and International Cooperation 2021). Pakistan has an Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority and a National Disaster Management Authority known as a comprehensive institutional setup for the prevention, mitigation, and management of natural disasters in Pakistan. It coordinates mapping, data generation, and analysis for disaster management and provides a communication site to collaborate between all officials. Pakistan has a National Disaster Risk Management Framework and National and Provincial Disaster Management Strategies. It forms disaster management plans



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and strategies while providing provisions and taking a resilient and adaptive approach to preparedness to deal with natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and precipitation changes according to the changing climatic conditions of Pakistan (Rahman 2019).

Furthermore, Pakistan has been actively participating in different international forums and is letting its voice be heard on the climate change negotiations front to ensure that Pakistan's interests and concerns are included in the international framework and circumstances. In conclusion, Pakistan has made many national, bilateral, and international commitments to take environmental actions and to solve global problems by joining hands. Pakistan is all set to commit collectively to ensure the living earth is conserved and preserved. The priority area concerning the survival of life on earth and all living beings associated with it is also a top priority. Pakistan is considering first expressing the environmental protection and conservation of its ground reality and seeks much-awaited international cooperation (M. a. Bashir 2018).

### **Analyzing the Effectiveness of Pakistan's Climate Change Diplomacy**

Drawing on the insights provided by the theories and approaches reviewed in the previous section, this section of the paper addresses the key research question for the current study: Is Pakistan's climate change diplomacy effective? The discussion seeks to determine the policies being made by Pakistan for climate change diplomacy and how effective their diplomacy is. Additionally, given the role of international relations in working on cross-boundary phenomena, we also assess Pakistan's climate change diplomacy in connection with SDG 13.

As a developing country, Pakistan does not hold responsibility for the emissions, but it is severely affected by climate change and has limited capacity to deal with such problems. However, Pakistan is currently pursuing a climate-friendly development path and is making an effort to meet its climate commitments through the adoption of both the National Climate Change Policy and Nationally Determined Contributions as the entry roadmap to integrate the environmental and climate change factors into the Economic Growth Framework of Vision 2025 (T. e. Hale, 2021). Efforts to achieve these targets attempt to move toward green quality growth by maximizing the current available economic and environmental plant capacity. The low-carbon emission strategy is the top priority in Pakistan's global position because it is instrumental in economizing on expensive energy resources, increasing resilience to climate change, and putting economic growth in the climate risk framework (A. e. Khan, 2021). It will allow Pakistan to consider the high risk of climate change and plan resilient growth that integrates climate risks and supply planning, measurable action plans for the NDCs, and climate-related funds to implement the goals. They seem to be committed to transforming and sustaining the goals through the implementation of key systemic sectors (Kässi, 2021).

### **Successes and Challenges**

There is a general consensus that Pakistan is going through extremely difficult times regarding climate change and issues that flow from it. However, Pakistan's performance on the international stage concerning climate change diplomacy has been far from impressive. Countries are recognized mostly based on their role on the international stage, and it is a cliché that Pakistan's role is not up to its status



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and its potential is not being fully realized. This is not to say that it has done nothing; however, it is an issue of how well it has been able to perform and push forth the agenda of a country facing the threats and challenges it faces. In the economic and political structure of the international arena, the success to push through its agenda hugely rests in the hands of Pakistan itself. This requires research and papers to be put out to help provide policy advisories and to flesh out the issues and explain where all the things lie (Buzan 2019).

However, as abovementioned, issues related to natural security are not new to Pakistan. Its history is replete with leaders not being able to act outside direct human threats. It has refused to act on water storage and has noted the reduction of snowfall in the various regions of the continent without planning any alternatives for what its repercussions are likely to be. There are a multitude of reasons. A significant factor in a nation's response is based on the fact of the polluter. Pakistan, having had one of the lowest overall carbon emissions yet recognizing the worst consequences from the developed world, will lead to an impasse in international environmental security negotiations (UNFCCC 2020). That is not to say that Pakistan has made no positive contributions to the fight. It signed and rates highly because of its role in the conservative rice industry phase. But critics point out that a certain amount is too paltry a sum for Pakistan's participation in the program to be rated as high as it is. Critics instead argue that the government's approach to address the issue is too violent in tone and treats it with more jaundice, considering the losses worth billions of dollars that would have been prevented by better regulation (Stern 2007).

### **Comparison With Regional and Global Peers**

In this section, we take stock of Pakistan's SDG 13 prospects by comparing it with global and regional peers, including Thailand, Mexico, Brazil, Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa. Examples from countries at different levels of development provide data points for both more advanced and less advanced strategies toward SDG success, improving context for prospects in Pakistan. We outline a number of peer-comparative analyses of strategies. For example, noting the variety of strategies that will emerge from country-specific needs, Bangladesh's National Adaptation Plan indicates a variety of potential government approaches or calls for academic input (S. a. Khan 2019). Mexico has also asked for active participation of multiple actors within and outside the country, and the South African INDC suggests that country input could take inputs on the NDC from all stakeholders, including local governments or other sectors not formally recognized in the process (S. a. Khan 2019).

### **Case Studies and Examples**

This section undertakes a closer look at Pakistan's approach to climate diplomacy regarding SDG 13 by analyzing a visit to Washington and provides an example of "Green Infrastructure Diplomacy." The analysis provides a fairly straightforward blueprint of recent trends and policy changes undertaken at the highest levels which promote an ecologically sound interaction with the rest of the world (Brunner 2017).

The environmental activities that China has engaged in as they relate to climate change treaties and agreements are important in determining the extent to which the BRICS countries, and particularly China, have moved. The discussion on



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China's approach to 'green' infrastructure foreign aid programs is detailed, specifically within the context of the Belt and Road Initiative and the geographical spread of projects championed under this umbrella (Carter 2018). Examining from a more global perspective, insight is provided into the early domestic constraints surrounding Japan's acceptance of the Kyoto Protocol, as well as the drastically transformative impact that signing on seemed to have on the country's environmental diplomacy and its doctrine. The focus is mainly on Japan's cooperation with China, with a view to reconciling tensions through shared actions taken on specific environmental issues (Stern 2007). There is also a hint at a need for further research on a wide variety of different dimensions and aspects of climate change diplomacy conceptually and from a theoretical perspective.

### **Specific Climate Change Projects in Pakistan**

Given Pakistan's multiple vulnerabilities to climate change, a number of projects have been implemented through various approaches. Several sectors and regions are being focused on in the execution of the projects, as well as the financing modality being used. Also, the issue of gender, women, and vulnerable groups has been gradually gaining attention in implementing projects. There is a need for some community-based policy needs assessment where more women and vulnerable groups can be facilitators. Results can be quite practical if this can be initiated (Bank 2023). Within Pakistan, access to support for climate change adaptation has been developed only in limited areas. The present climate change funding is highly insufficient, and if captured with a gender mainstreaming approach, it can yield significant scale benefits. An attempt is made to discuss and explore specific climate change project scenarios in Pakistan (Pakistan, 2017). The objective is to appraise specific climate change project progress and to attract institutions, practitioners, and multilateral institutions for strengthening both public and private sector coordination.

### **Discussion and Findings**

In 2015, a universal call to action was framed and agreed upon by 193 governments at the United Nations General Assembly. This called for partnership to help in the achievement of sustainable development for all. The result consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 targets. Every signatory is obliged to play its part in at least trying to achieve the stated goals by 2030. The agreed manifesto was named "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." One of the goals, SDG 13, aims to "take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts." The significance of this goal can be understood from the fact that it tackles probably the main problem faced by mankind. There is scientific evidence to support the theory that climate change and its impacts are already visible to all of us. Glaciers are melting, some cities are sinking due to rising sea levels, and weather patterns all over the world are changing (IPCC 2018).

Pakistan is listed among the top 10 countries most vulnerable to climate change. Despite the large body of scientific research, the people of Pakistan are mostly unaware of the term. This research is an effort to initiate the debate, and in this regard, the work is divided into two parts. The first part aims to critically analyze Pakistan's official stance on climate change by employing international relations



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theories to predict the future expected diplomatic initiatives. Pakistan's stance is analyzed in relation to the six central components of climate change diplomacy to predict the future stance (Buzan 2019). The second part critically reviews the research already done on Pakistan's position in relation to other members, aiming to understand why Pakistan does not make a similar arrangement with India. There is a huge bulk of reasons that have been collected from a large variety of research methodologies to support the statement. As no research reflects on the reasons stated, we aim to bring completely different theories together in order to provide an explanation. We then provide a critical insight and make suggestions for the future, which can largely benefit the research or practical stakeholders on the issue (Carter 2018).

### **Key Themes and Patterns**

Analyzing Pakistan's approach to climate change diplomacy in relation to SDG 13: A literature review. Key themes and patterns. In this section, the key themes and patterns of research in relation to SDG 13 and the individual players are presented. The most common research themes and patterns underpinning the study of climate change diplomacy have been tabulated and organized into an easily referenced and coherent format. It is evident that themes change over time with different research interests inspiring them. These themes, which cover most aspects of research in Pakistan's climate change diplomacy, have been integrated in identifying Pakistan's approach, the drivers of Pakistan's approach, any potential challenges and, most importantly, debate regulation strategies for any successful strategy employed. As the table shows, the main themes identified are international treaties and conventions, governance, policy, population explosion, mitigation and adaptation, capacity building, conflict and cooperation, economics, and order. However, this study intends to focus on Pakistan's policy and diplomacy approaches to the SDG, which promises to increase the role of government and international bodies. The analysis will assist policymakers in developing strategies that take into account the dynamics behind the diplomatic negotiations to achieve state success without forfeiting national and global good (S. a. Khan 2019).

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

The 72nd United Nations General Assembly held in September 2017 was significant for climate change discourse, not for a major climate change outcome, but rather for hosting a greater number of side events on climate change than the first UNGA in 1946 when climate change was unheard of. The major global event marked by increased diplomatic activity, alongside a widening spectrum of group interests, compels us to ask the fundamental question, "How does diplomacy manage change?" With its traditional immediate concerns about conduct between states and the avoidance of conflict, does modern multilateral diplomacy with its concern for the common good hold any promise for effectively managing climate change issues? This analysis employs the constructivist perspective of multilateral diplomacy in an examination of Pakistan's approach to climate change diplomacy in the context of the outgoing UN's SDG 13 titled 'Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.' Accordingly, Pakistan's position and the level of involvement in policy and practice in relation to agriculture between 2008–2018 are utilized as case studies. Pakistan's



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government is found to be more in compliance during the period when the international presence is higher than cooperating with the least presence. Internationally, Pakistan ultimately prefers cosmetic, lethargic diplomatic duties to its citizens back home. It is recommended that Pakistan integrate food security and climate change in the context of domestic legislation in a sustained broader diplomatic approach towards combating climate change and achieving the UN's SDG 13. (Keohane 2011)

### **Recommendations for Pakistan's Climate Diplomacy**

In a somewhat similar vein, it is emphasized that Pakistan's mitigation plan lacks ambition regarding a forestation and reforestation, and therefore, it merely limits Pakistan's ability to take credit for a forestation and reforestation. It was stated that the government's most recent pledge of reducing emissions by 5 percent is not enough. However, in its submission to the UN, Pakistan explained the success of the billion-tree project in the province of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and reiterates its commitment to expanding forest cover – a move that refers to natural carbon sinks that could absorb this extra burden Pakistan has taken upon itself. This line of inquiry, which suggests it is part of regional powers' strategy whereby they can avoid the difficult and costly steps of making the necessary infrastructural and industrial changes (and rely on “innate ‘capacity’”), by pointing to their natural bounty has been further problematized in the Brazilian case, which found that that country's antipathy towards mitigating activities stems from a prevailing paranoia about foreign intervention in internal (forest) affairs, citing external interference at a previous climate summit as an example. It was highlighted how Pakistan specifically mentioned allowing for afforestation, reforestation, and reduced emissions from deforestation as important strategies in its carbon reduction proposal. Pakistan, like Brazil, has also linked its development projects to its reforestation capping climate allowances. In order to fulfill its ambitions, the state has lobbied with the international community to include forests and biodiversity into the context of the climate regime. Both countries have said the money generated from the implementation of potential carbon mitigation schemes would be invested in the betterment of local communities. However, the carbon offset feature of the pollution cap sparked a debate during which it was discussed that while this could be beneficial in an environmental sense, these measures, part of latent regulation on fossil fuel combustion, might deviate these countries from the real goal – to cut emissions through alternative means. In Pakistan, this was a significant rhetorical concern, as debates began to surface that the carbon offset feature might not be sufficient to protect the competitive position of intensive industries that had significant emission caps and that were faced with competition from countries with less stringent environmental policies. Such developments had opened up the stage for political manoeuvring that effectively diluted the emissions trading scheme; mitigation measures in small, complicated economies like Pakistan were thus not utilized to their fullest potential but instead were subordinated to development objectives. The case of Pakistan's climate change diplomacy shows that such fears are indeed justified.

### **Conclusion**

Whether at regional diplomatic summits, through bilateral treaties, or within the multilateral frameworks of the United Nations, states are recognizing the



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importance of effectively addressing climate change. Pakistan is no exception to this trend. However, transnational cooperation to effectively combat climate change has proven difficult despite high stakes. It seems that the potential for co-benefits from combining climate change response strategies with those that address other pressing concerns might present the best chance for rapid action and progress on the complex climate change issue. The creation of the Sustainable Development Goals, building on the success of the Millennium Development Goals, offers a new framework designed to address the pressing global problems of the 21st century. If we accept the premise that the SDGs provide a path to addressing the world's most dire needs, and that they can do so in a connected and integrated way, then it seems clear that researchers should pay greater attention to the strategies of individual nations around the SDGs.

This paper has sought to evaluate Pakistan's efforts regarding the implementation of and international negotiations around one of the SDGs: Goal 13, which seeks to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. This paper has aimed to identify the domestic climate debate in Pakistan and to systematically analyze what is behind Pakistan's international diplomatic positioning when it comes to climate negotiations. This paper explored the academic literature on Pakistan's climate diplomacy and assessed Pakistan's track record in the climate change negotiations which are part of the United Nations International Framework Convention on Climate Change due to their critical role in Goal 13's implementation. Our conclusions are that the current state of academic research on Pakistan's climate change policies is quite small. While some outside scholars have contributed important insights in their efforts to understand the dynamics of both the national and international influences, the resultant research remains relatively narrow in scope.

### **Summary of Key Findings**

This paper will summarize the literature that was analyzed in the process of conducting research on Pakistan's approach to climate change diplomacy in relation to SDG 13. The literature was reviewed and categorized according to the scope of the investigation. Some literature is different from the research question but still influenced the studies. Results were also further divided into primary findings. The research concludes with its relation to the conceptual framework. A summary of key findings.

The literature reviewed was relevant to a specific research question that aims at understanding the diplomatic mechanisms through which Pakistan is influenced by the climate change diplomacy regime. Although the literature looked diversely at countries and themes, primary findings were still made and then further summarized into defence of primary findings and related to the conceptual framework of the study. First, the literature review found a range of methods used by governments, civil society, and other sectors to engage in climate diplomacy practices. Summary findings helped to present answers to review questions associated with the analyses, outcomes, and their positions within diplomatic theories containing national interest, bargaining models, economic diplomacy, soft power diplomacy, and science diplomacy. Responses to research questions provide insights into how climate change has plummeted and intensely affects physical and ecological changes. They also illustrate how climate change relates to political, social, and security challenges. At a party level, studies



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illustrated political ambition and self-interest as motives for engaging in diplomatic negotiations by structuring the international regime to serve domestic policy goals. Lastly, literature reviews demonstrate the limited influence of developing countries in negotiating fair and just international political outcomes.

### **Limitations and Future Research Directions**

The seat held by Pakistan at various multilateral institutions and its engagement in various global and regional bodies is a clear indication that Pakistan is presently playing favourable climate change diplomacy. This nation has also presented an example by becoming a signatory to the Paris Agreement ahead of the developed world. Despite this, the climate change adaptation program in Pakistan is slow when compared to the countries of the same region. There is a vast number of estimations currently available in the realm of evolving climate diplomacy, but very scant literature is available that exclusively addresses climate change diplomacy. The main focus of our study is to enhance the available literature on climate diplomacy to explicitly address the architecture of climate change as mentioned in Sustainable Development Goal 13.

Our study is not free from a number of limitations. Firstly, our study relies on the literature review, and the authors are cognizant of the fact that some published or unpublished work might have been missed in the review. Secondly, our literature review is based purely on the phrase "Climate Diplomacy" appearing in the titles of research works published in journals and conference proceedings. A mere mention of the words "climate diplomacy," "climate change policy," or "diplomacy of climate change" in the actual text of the research report is beyond the scope of this work. Thirdly, a publication bias might have affected our study. There is a possibility that a larger number of empirical reports are available that support the conclusion regarding Pakistani climate diplomacy, which has not yet been published. We didn't find any empirical work that tests and validates the findings of the present study. Finally, some external forces such as regulatory changes, political instability, and global policies may influence that part of climate diplomacy that has not been included in our review.

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