



**Pakistan Climate
Crises Charter
2022**

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We, as global citizens and residents of Pakistan, sign this Climate Crises Charter and pledge to do our best to contribute to the cause of this Charter. This Charter has been developed in the aftermath of the floods of 2022, that are a stark reminder that Pakistan remains ground zero vis-à-vis the impacts of climate change. In a relatively short span of time, the country has faced droughts, heatwaves, cloud bursts, forest fires, riverine flooding, glacial lake outburst flooding, locust attacks, and a rising incidence of dengue; among a plethora of climate induced impacts. This Charter builds on the recommendations that were put forward following these extreme weather events, as well as the input provided by civil society organizations, governmental entities and concerned citizens. The implementation of this Charter requires a two-pronged approach, whereby we address the identified gaps and inadequacies at the local and national levels through improved governance mechanisms, and simultaneously take up the case internationally, highlighting it at appropriate fora such as climate negotiations and the United Nations General Assembly.

The Charter proposes the following actions:



Action 1: Advocate for loss and damage financing internationally

Pakistan contributes less than one per cent to the global greenhouse gas emissions. However, it remains one of the most vulnerable countries impacted by the effects of climate change. The Government of Pakistan should make all endeavours to take up the issue of loss and damage¹ at climate negotiations² and align with other relevant forums such as the Climate Vulnerable Forum, a group of 58 members that is already advocating on behalf of most vulnerable communities and nations.

Action 2: Address institutional governance issues

Effective communication and coordination among relevant agencies at the federal, provincial and district level remains a key challenge that must be addressed. Acknowledging and addressing capacity gaps³ within the existing institutional frameworks must be highlighted and prioritized.

Action 3: Develop an effective local government system

There is a need to prioritize the development and retention of a functional local government system. This is necessary for the effective formation of adaptation plans and emergency response plans. Moreover, it will enhance the capacity of local communities to perceive and address risk, and respond to crises.

Action 4: Map climate risks and vulnerabilities

A nation-wide risk management and vulnerability assessment⁴ needs to be carried out with a focus on infrastructure and its ability to cope with floods and other climate induced disasters. These assessments should be linked with district and national level land use plans and local zoning regulations. The floods of 2022 have highlighted, once again, the need to ensure that the natural flow of water is not impeded by encroachment⁵ in the river bed and the flood plains. Additionally, Early Warning Systems⁶ need to be reviewed considering the risks, vulnerabilities and associated needs of communities at the local level.

Action 5: Prioritize and mainstream local level adaptation

There is a need to develop Pakistan's National Adaptation Plan through a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process. This should be followed by sub-national, district and tehsil level plans. Local level plans should include localized hazard and risk assessment information that can be dovetailed with development planning, while ensuring the participation of local communities e.g., community-based organizations. There is a need to develop a framework for action that synergizes existing policies and frameworks, including a Climate Change Policy, National Water Policy, and other relevant national and regional frameworks.

Action 6: Incorporate nature-based solutions in the development paradigm

All future infrastructure and development projects must incorporate nature-based solutions/ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) and green infrastructure approach into the designs which should include, but are not limited to, rehabilitation of degraded riparian zones; development of riparian corridors along rivers; maintenance of natural flow paths through streams and canals; rehabilitation of natural wetlands; development of artificial wetlands using natural depressions across the country; formulation and implementation of a watershed management policy that includes reforestation, soil conservation and improvement in land use in the catchment areas; and carry out necessary legislations at the national and sub-national levels.

Action 7: Address vulnerabilities in disadvantaged communities

The challenges arising from climate induced events are likely to compound existing socio-economic challenges, and therefore, there is a need to focus on the communities that are more prone to being impacted by the effects of climate change which already have a high proportion of vulnerable populations, such as women, children and the elderly. These populations have a near zero ability to absorb the economic and social shocks that such events create and thus, the focus should also include developing contingency plans to protect these vulnerable populations.

Action 8: Mainstream crisis response across local communities

The current crisis response mechanism revolves around cash payments by the government. However, this is an unsustainable model, especially in the context of increasing extreme weather events. As such, there is a need to explore insurance mechanisms that address, for example, household losses and farm losses. Furthermore, there is a need to develop community engagement programmes⁷ to build the capacities of vulnerable communities as first responders.

Action 9: Address population management concerns

Population management should be included as a critical risk management strategy that can reduce the vulnerability of disadvantaged communities. These include communities disaggregated by demographic risks, such as pregnant and lactating women, children under five and the elderly, in local level adaptation.



¹ This entails developing a mechanism to account for losses at the earliest so that a detailed overview exists prior to COP 27 and to conduct a detailed study on debt swap scheme for climate, as suggested by the UN Secretary General.

² Including the upcoming COP 27, particularly in regard to formation of a loss and damage financing facility. Pakistan is chairing the G77 + China this year and could use this opportunity to vociferously highlight this issue.

³ A comprehensive plan is needed to build institutional capacities particularly at the local level to mitigate the adverse impact of climate change. Currently, there is dearth of technical, human and financial capacities at the local level that must be augmented to build resilience.

⁴ A scientific study may also be planned to evaluate compatibility of our infrastructure to cope with the climate crisis. The study should make recommendations on climate resilient infrastructure that is both socially and environmentally sustainable. Plan and execute a pilot project based on recommendations of the study on a suitable scale and at a location which has high climatic vulnerability.

⁵ Furthermore, drainage is curtailed by infrastructure development such as roads, highways, railway lines, etc. There is a need to ensure that drainage mechanisms such as via culverts exist to ensure attenuation of excess water.

⁶ The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) is integral in terms of forecasting the scope, scale and extent of potential extreme weather events. Yet, it lacks greatly in terms of technical capacity to accurately forecast. The capacity of the PMD needs to be enhanced in terms of human and technical resources.

⁷ These can include development of Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs).