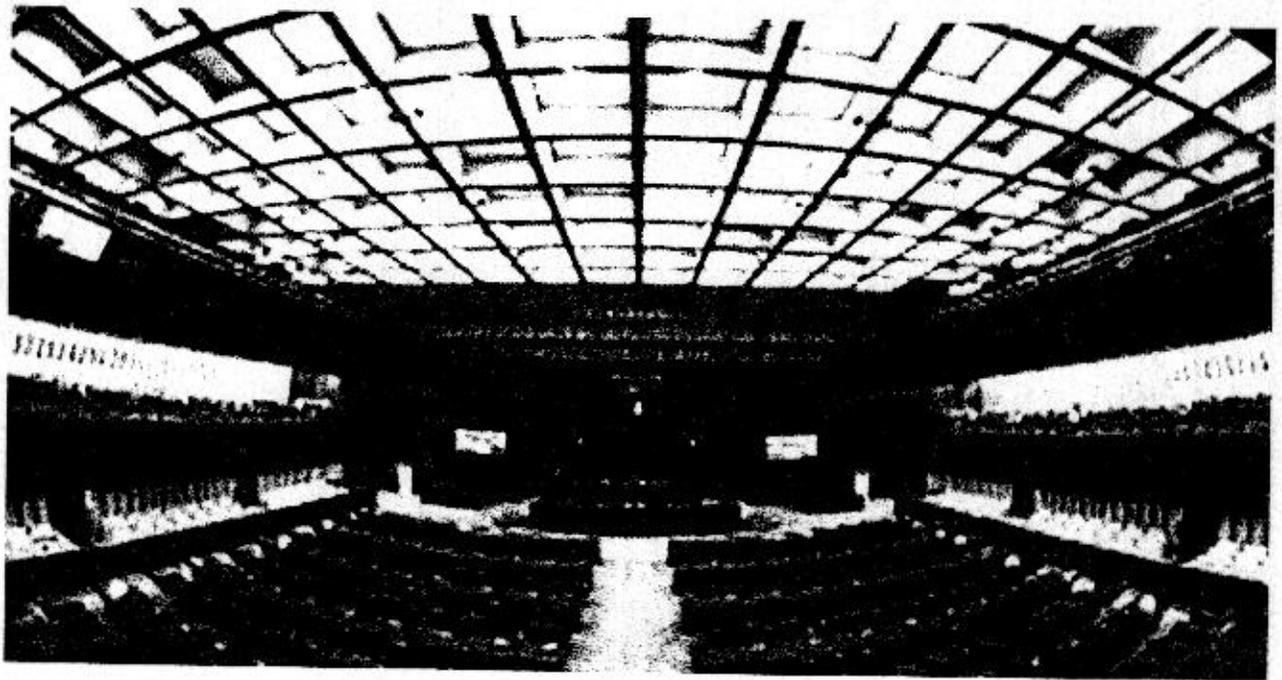


**Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination**



**Annual Report (2024-25)**



**Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination**

PRESENTED BY  
CHAIRPERSON, SENATOR SHERRY REHMAN

# Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination

## Foreword by the Chairperson

I have the honor to present this Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination for the period spanning March 2024 to March 2025. This period has been marked by intensifying climate impacts across Pakistan, underscoring the critical role of this Committee in providing oversight, guidance, and fostering collaborative action to address these multifaceted challenges.



As we navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing climate, the Committee has remained steadfast in its commitment to ensuring that environmental considerations are mainstreamed across all sectors of governance and that robust policies are formulated and effectively implemented. Our deliberations have been driven by the imperative to safeguard Pakistan's natural resources, protect its vulnerable populations from climate shocks, and contribute meaningfully to global efforts in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions.

This report encapsulates the key agenda items addressed by the Committee during the reporting period, highlighting the diverse range of issues that demand our immediate attention. From developing a comprehensive national climate action plan to scrutinizing the implementation of environmental regulations and preparing for international climate negotiations, the Committee has actively engaged with relevant ministries, departments, and stakeholders to foster informed decision-making.

The challenges we face are significant, but so is the potential for transformative change. Through diligent oversight, constructive dialogue, and a commitment to evidence-based policymaking, the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination aims to play a pivotal role in shaping a resilient and sustainable future for Pakistan. I thank all honorable members for their continued guidance and support.

**Honorable Senator Sherry Rehman**

Chairperson, Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination

# Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination

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## **Executive Summary**

This Annual Report provides an overview of the activities and key deliberations of the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination during the period of July 2024 to March 2025. Under the leadership of Senator Sherry Rehman, the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination remained actively engaged in addressing Pakistan's pressing climate and environmental challenges. The Committee held 13 meetings, focusing on a broad and impactful agenda that reflects the cross-cutting nature of climate change. The Chairperson emphasized Pakistan's minimal contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions in contrast to the significant climate vulnerabilities it faces. Drawing upon her experience at COP27 and her pivotal role in establishing the global Loss and Damage Fund, she called for a proactive, informed, and technically sound approach to climate governance.

The Committee's agenda during this period was comprehensive, encompassing the development of a national climate action plan, disaster risk reduction, environmental regulation and enforcement, legislative scrutiny, water resource management, plastic pollution, the transition towards sustainable energy, and Pakistan's engagement in international climate forums.

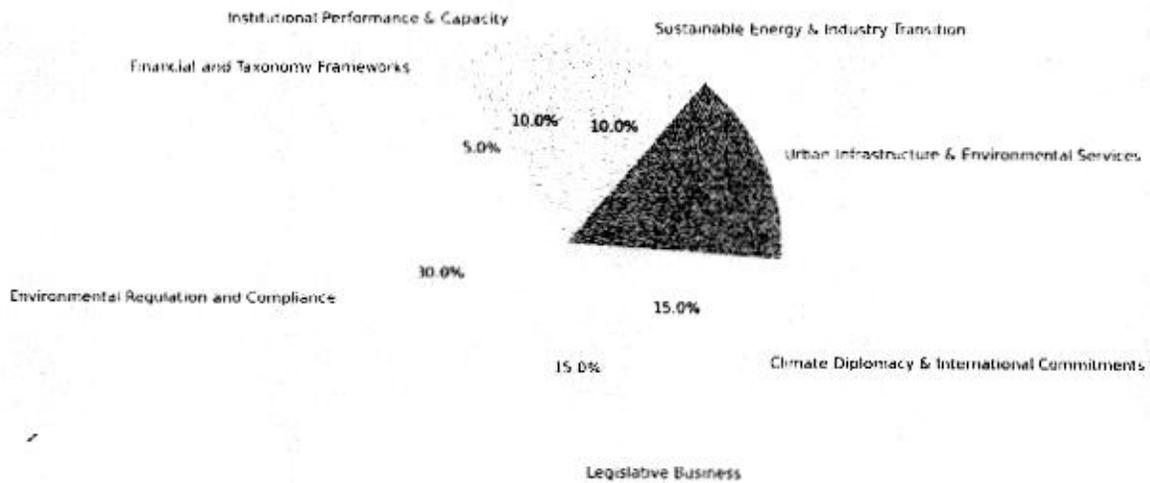
Key highlights of the Committee's work include in-depth briefings from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on monsoon preparedness, detailed reports on environmental incidents such as the Margalla Hills and H-9 Sunday Bazaar fires, and thorough considerations of crucial legislation like the Islamabad Nature Conservation and Wildlife Management Bill, 2024, and the Pakistan Trade Control of Wild Fauna and Flora (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

The Committee also placed significant emphasis on monitoring the implementation of environmental regulations, particularly those related to plastic bag usage, and reviewed the performance and capacity constraints of the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination. Furthermore, the Committee actively engaged with stakeholders on critical issues such as single-use plastics regulations and the challenges surrounding water management at Rawal Dam.

## Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination

Looking ahead, the Committee remains committed to its mandate of providing effective oversight and fostering collaborative efforts to build a climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable Pakistan. The following pie chart illustrates the committee's performance:

Sectoral Focus of Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change (2024-25)



## **Acknowledgment**

The Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination gratefully acknowledges the invaluable contributions of individuals and institutions whose support and collaboration have been instrumental in advancing its work during the reporting period.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the Chairman Senate and all Members of the Committee for their unwavering support and patronage in pursuing Pakistan's climate agenda. Their dedication and leadership have been vital to the Committee's ability to address the complex environmental challenges facing the country.

We acknowledge the valuable input provided by the following organizations and institutions:

- The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) for their briefings on disaster risk preparedness and response mechanisms.
- The Capital Development Authority (CDA) for addressing sanitation and environmental concerns in Islamabad.
- The Director General of Environmental Protection for insights into pollution management at Rawal Dam.
- The Ministry of Power for updates on solar energy initiatives and renewable energy transition.
- The Ministry of Industries and Production for their engagement on the Electric Vehicle (EV) policy.
- The State Bank of Pakistan for their informative presentation on the development of Pakistan's Green Taxonomy.

## **Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination**

- The Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination for their overall cooperation and partnership in advancing the Committee's mandate.

Finally, we express our heartfelt appreciation to Mr. Mughees Ahmad Shaikh, Joint Secretary, Secretary to the Standing Committee and the dedicated staff of the Senate Secretariat for their tireless efforts, logistical support, and commitment to ensuring the Committee's smooth functioning.

## Composition of the Committee



Chairperson,  
Senator Sherry Rehman



Federal Minister for Climate Change and  
Environmental Coordination,  
Senator Musadik Masood Malik



Senator Syed Shibli  
Faraz (Leader of  
Opposition)



Senator Agha  
Shahzaib Durrani



Senator Anwaar ul  
Haq



Senator Dr. Zarqa  
Suharwardhy  
Taimur



Senator Bushra Anjum  
Butt



Senator Manzoor  
Ahmad



Senator Naseema  
Ehsan Shah



Senator Qurat-Ul-  
Ain Marri

*Secretary to the Standing Committee: Mr. Mughees Ahmad Shaikh, Joint Secretary, Senate of Pakistan*

## Introduction

The Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change has emerged as a key institutional forum championing Pakistan's environmental integrity and resilience in the face of escalating climate challenges. With climate change increasingly threatening ecosystems, public health, livelihoods, and economic stability, the Committee has demonstrated a robust and proactive role in shaping national responses and international advocacy. Its performance reflects a holistic approach, integrating legislative oversight, inter-agency coordination, community engagement, and international climate diplomacy.

Throughout its deliberations, the Committee has dealt with a wide spectrum of critical issues. It took serious note of the increasing frequency and intensity of forest fires in the Margalla Hills National Park, calling for enhanced fire control systems, better enforcement against illegal encroachments, and preservation of the park's ecological balance. The Committee advocated for stronger urban environmental governance, supporting initiatives like urban forestry and green infrastructure to mitigate pollution and heat stress in rapidly urbanizing areas.

The Committee brought critical attention to environmental hazards stemming from the widespread use of non-biodegradable plastics—particularly by the tobacco industry—and the mismanagement of hospital and municipal solid waste in Islamabad. It called for stricter enforcement of environmental regulations, the adoption of cleaner production practices, and enhanced oversight of industrial waste disposal. The Committee also actively monitored the implementation of the ban on single-use plastics, urging the government to scale up recycling infrastructure and promote sustainable alternatives. It emphasized the need for public awareness campaigns and policy incentives to support eco-friendly practices and ensure compliance by manufacturers, particularly within local industries.

The Committee has played a pivotal role in advancing climate legislation to enhance Pakistan's environmental resilience and fulfill both national and international commitments. Notably, the Committee considered and approved two landmark bills: the *Islamabad Nature Conservation and Wildlife Management Bill, 2024*, which seeks to preserve urban biodiversity and protect ecological systems within the capital territory; and the *Pakistan Trade Control of Wild Fauna and Flora (Amendment) Bill, 2024*, which reinforces the

## **Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination**

regulation of wildlife trade in line with Pakistan's obligations under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). These legislative measures represent critical progress in fortifying the country's environmental governance and aligning its legal architecture with global conservation standards.

The Committee also emphasized the need for a sustainable energy transition, recognizing the urgency of reducing Pakistan's reliance on fossil fuels and accelerating the shift toward renewable energy sources. This reflects a broader understanding that climate change mitigation must be aligned with energy security, economic resilience, and technological innovation.

It has consistently followed up on Pakistan's readiness and engagement with global climate processes, particularly preparations for the upcoming COP-29. Recognizing the importance of a credible international presence, the Committee has encouraged stronger participation in climate negotiations and emphasized Pakistan's stance on climate justice and equity.



**SENATOR SHERRY REHMAN, PRESIDING OVER A MEETING OF THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE AFTER BEING ELECTED AS CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMITTEE AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE ISLAMABAD ON JUNE 12, 2024.**

Another area of active engagement has been climate finance. The Committee has scrutinized the country's access to international climate funds and the need to streamline institutional mechanisms to secure and effectively utilize climate finance for mitigation and adaptation projects. It highlighted the importance of transparency, technical capacity-building, and provincial coordination in accessing resources from the Green Climate Fund and similar platforms.

Moreover, the Committee reviewed national climate policies and called for improved integration across sectors such as water, sanitation, agriculture, and disaster risk reduction. It expressed concern over the poor quality of drinking water in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, and urged rapid action to upgrade water filtration and sewage treatment infrastructure.

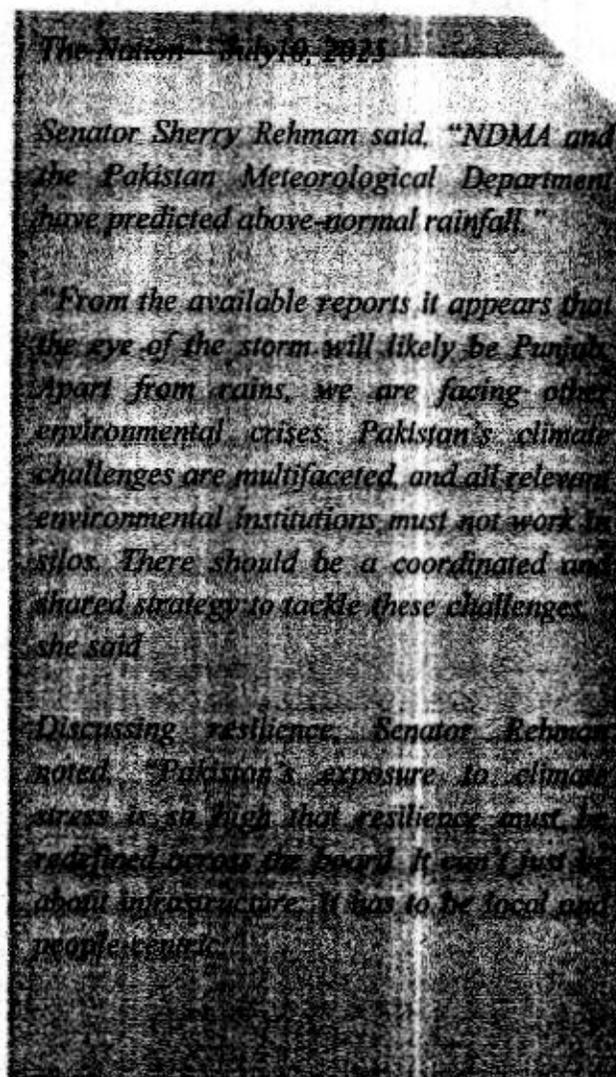
Through legislative follow-up, public hearings, and cross-sectoral consultations, the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change has maintained its commitment to environmental accountability and policy advancement. It continues to play a vital role in promoting sustainable development, strengthening Pakistan's voice on international platforms, and ensuring that climate action remains a central pillar of the country's policy and governance landscape.

## Committee Insights: Policy Deliberations and Achievements

### 1) Monsoon Preparedness and Risk Reduction Strategies

In its meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2025, the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change held an important discussion with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Pakistan's preparedness for the upcoming monsoon season. The Chairman of NDMA provided a detailed briefing, emphasizing the heightened risk of extreme weather events due to the anticipated La Niña phenomenon. He presented NDMA's comprehensive timeline of activities undertaken from January to June 2024, which included climate data analysis, coordination with provincial authorities and stakeholders, infrastructure audits, and simulation exercises to test emergency response mechanisms.

The Committee acknowledged and appreciated NDMA's proactive approach, particularly through the operational readiness of the National Emergencies Operation Center (NEOC). Emphasizing the urgency of enhancing climate resilience, the Committee stressed the importance of broadening the definition of resilience beyond physical infrastructure to include institutional preparedness and human capacity—especially in high-risk and resource-



constrained regions such as Gilgit-Baltistan. This discussion underscored the Committee's commitment to integrating disaster risk reduction into the national climate agenda and ensuring that vulnerable communities are not left behind in preparedness planning.

## **2) Margalla Hills Fires**

The Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change devoted focused attention to the recurring forest fires in the Margalla Hills National Park (MHNP). The Capital Development Authority (CDA) informed the Committee that 22 fire incidents had occurred in the park, resulting in damage to approximately 250 acres of forested land. The Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) attributed many of the fires to intentional acts of arson, reportedly committed by local individuals disgruntled over not being employed during the fire control season. The Committee expressed serious concern over this and emphasized the need for stronger community engagement and preventive measures. In response, the Committee recommended that the CDA and IWMB develop a coordinated, joint action plan to prevent and manage forest fires. The Committee later reviewed the compliance report submitted by the Ministry, including the initial outlines of collaborative strategies between the CDA and IWMB. This issue remains a high priority, reflecting the Committee's ongoing commitment to safeguarding protected natural areas and strengthening institutional coordination for climate resilience.



*SENATOR SHERRY REHMAN, CHAIRPERSON SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE PRESIDING OVER A MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE ISLAMABAD ON JULY 02, 2024.*

### 3) Governance and Coordination Challenges in Climate Change Policy Implementation

During the meetings, the Chairperson expressed serious concern over the lack of progress updates on major climate initiatives, particularly given the increasing climate-related challenges facing Pakistan. She noted the lack of progress updates on key initiatives over the past two years. The Committee underlined that post-18th Amendment governance structure, key environmental responsibilities have been devolved provinces that necessitates inter-agency coordination and collaborative efforts across all tiers of government. Currently the Ministry's governance framework, is coordination-focused role, particularly in relation to its four attached departments and the recently established Pakistan Climate Change Authority, created under the directive of the Supreme Court. The Committee further identified several systemic challenges hindering progress, including institutional fragmentation, limited technical and human resource capacity, and inadequate access to international climate finance.

### 4) National Climate Finance Strategy

The Committee reviewed the Ministry's progress on climate finance and strategic planning. It was reported that 49 climate finance projects valued at approximately \$1.99 billion have been developed, with \$441 million already approved. Flagship initiatives under this portfolio include the GLOF Phase II project, which is scheduled to conclude in December 2024, with Phase III currently under development; the ongoing Green Pakistan Programme;

*Business Recorder — February 21, 2023*

*Senator Rehman underscored the pressing need for structured financial solutions to bridge the estimated \$348 billion funding gap necessary for sustainability.*

*She emphasised that Pakistan's financial capacity remains significantly lower than that of Bangladesh, a critical disparity that requires immediate intervention.*

*Minister for Finance, Senator Awangzeb also acknowledged the significant challenges in climate adaptation and financing, emphasising the need for a structured approach that incorporates key enablers such as the National Adaptation Plan and National Climate Finance Strategy.*

the Living Indus Initiative, covering 25 thematic areas; and the Recharge Pakistan Project. A central point of discussion was the formulation of the National Climate Finance Strategy, which is being developed with technical support from the World Bank and an international consultant, with the initial draft expected by September 2024. The Committee strongly criticized the outsourcing of this critical national framework, expressing disappointment that the Ministry lacked the internal capacity to draft the strategy. The Committee emphasized the need for a framework grounded in national priorities and developed through inclusive consultation with the provinces, rather than relying on external expertise.

Senator Sherry Rehman highlighted the urgent need for structured financial mechanisms to address the estimated \$348 billion funding gap required for sustainability efforts. She noted that Pakistan's financial capacity is significantly lower than Bangladesh's, underscoring the critical need for immediate reforms and resource mobilization. The Finance Minister acknowledged the considerable challenges in climate adaptation and financing. He emphasized the importance of a coherent national approach incorporating instruments such as the National Adaptation Plan and the forthcoming National Climate Finance Strategy. He stressed that while green technology is essential for sustainability, it must be accompanied by clear definitions, monitoring, and reporting standards. He also noted that the World Bank's Country Partnership Framework prioritizes climate financing, and discussions with the IMF under the Extended Fund Facility are underway, with about \$1 billion expected. However, bureaucratic obstacles continue to hinder access to climate funds, highlighting the urgent need for streamlined, efficient processes.

It was mutually agreed by Senator Rehman and the Finance Minister that climate financing must be creatively programmed to ensure effective resource mobilization, efficient fund disbursement, and successful project execution. The Committee emphasized the need for strong coordination among ministries and international partners, including UNDP, to advance climate resilience and sustainability in Pakistan.

### **5) National Carbon Policy**

The Committee was briefed on the status of the National Carbon Policy, which remains under review due to unresolved provincial objections. The policy has undergone several rounds of deliberation through the Climate Change Council and the Special Investment Facilitation

Council, but has faced persistent opposition from the Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governments. Chairperson, Senator Sherry Rehman stressed the growing importance of integrating climate concerns into national policymaking, noting that in other countries, environmental sustainability is now central to economic planning and trade strategies. She warned that Pakistan risks falling behind if such policies are not treated as national priorities.

A major concern raised was the potential impact of the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which places stricter carbon-related conditions on exports entering the EU market. Senator Rehman highlighted this as a pressing issue for Pakistan, warning that non-compliance with CBAM regulations could threaten the country's market access and competitiveness, particularly in industrial supply chains. She urged stronger provincial coordination and alignment to ensure that Pakistan is well-positioned to meet emerging international standards and avoid trade disruptions linked to carbon footprint and emissions.

The Committee emphasized that finalizing the Carbon Policy with full provincial consensus is not only essential for domestic climate governance but also critical to safeguarding Pakistan's export markets and economic stability in light of evolving global climate regulations.

#### **6) H-9 Sunday Bazaar Fire Incident**

The Committee was briefed by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) regarding the fire incident on July 10, which was reportedly caused by battery explosions linked to solar energy storage systems. The Committee emphasized the urgent need for the enforcement of strict safety protocols. And directed the CDA to ensure the mandatory installation of fire extinguishers, fire alarms, and safety signage across all market areas. Additionally, the Committee stressed the importance of vendor training on basic fire safety. To prevent future incidents, the CDA was instructed to enforce a strict stall closure policy at the designated bazaar closing hours and recommended that the CDA adopt best practices from successful safety models implemented in other cities.

### **7) Implementation of Plastic Regulations**

The Committee discussed the implementation and compliance of the Single Use Plastics (SUP) Regulations 2023. The DG Pak-EPA informed the Committee that most SUP items were banned effective 1st August 2023, while drinking straws would be phased out within two years and PET bottles by 2028. For enforcement, six teams were formed with the district administration under the supervision of Magistrates and Assistant Commissioners, resulting in the confiscation of 33,000 kg of banned substances from various markets, malls, and vendors. The Chair expressed concern over the Ministry's lack of ownership despite its role in international negotiations on the Paris Plastic Treaty and directed that Pak-EPA and the Deputy Commissioner Islamabad present a detailed compliance tracking report. The Committee also instructed the Secretary to coordinate with Pak-EPA, district administration, and industry representatives to establish a comprehensive mechanism for improved enforcement of SUP regulations.

### **8) Just Energy Transition and Renewable Projects**

The Committee addressed the lack of a comprehensive strategy and briefing on Pakistan's Just Energy Transition, expressing concern over the Ministry of Power's limited capacity. The Chairperson expressed dissatisfaction, noting that the absence of concrete, location-based data hampers strategic planning and weakens Pakistan's position in key international forums, such as the Conference of the Parties (COP). As part of the review, the Power Division reported that 5,000 MW of renewable energy projects are currently under development, with an additional 15,000–19,000 MW of hydropower capacity planned. However, the Committee found the information insufficient and decided that Just Energy Transition will remain a standing agenda item until a detailed and collaborative briefing is provided, in coordination with the Ministry of Climate Change.

Drawing comparisons with global examples, Senator Sherry Rehman cited Indonesia's receipt of USD 20 million under the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP), calling on the international community to extend similar support to Pakistan as it advances its renewable

energy goals. She commended the country's independent progress in solar energy adoption, particularly under the net metering policy, which now accounts for approximately one-third of Pakistan's current energy capacity. Despite this progress, she emphasized that scaling up solar energy infrastructure, such as the development of solar parks, requires financial and technical assistance. The Committee agreed on the need for a structured and well-supported energy transition framework, aligned with both national development goals and international climate commitments.



**SENATOR SHERRY REHMAN, CHAIRPERSON SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATION PRESIDING OVER A MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE ISLAMABAD ON AUGUST 21, 2024.**

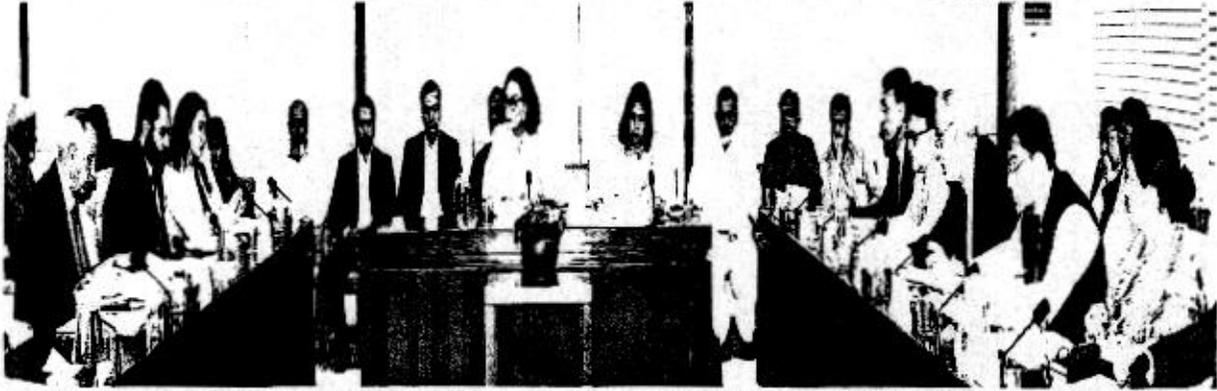
### **9) Electric Vehicle Policy Update**

The Committee was briefed on the ongoing development of a financial model for Pakistan's Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy, which is being formulated in coordination with banking institutions. Senator Sherry Rehman emphasized the urgency of accelerating EV adoption in Pakistan, stating that the EV Policy must move beyond paper commitments and be actively implemented with a focus on incentives and regulatory support. She highlighted the environmental stakes, particularly in Punjab, where air pollution and smog remain severe. The Finance Minister endorsed this position, stressing the need to integrate EV policy objectives into the national budgetary framework to align them with broader economic

planning. He announced the formation of an advisory board to oversee interlinked policy matters, including the EV sector. Both he and other stakeholders agreed that taxation anomalies and regulatory barriers must be addressed to enable effective policy rollout. Chairperson further emphasized that removing fiscal and procedural barriers is critical to incentivize both importers and domestic manufacturers. Committee noted that international experience has shown such measures to be essential in encouraging a transition toward electric mobility.

#### **10) Pakistan Trade Control of Wild Fauna and Flora (Amendment) Bill, 2024**

The Committee held an in-depth discussion on the *Pakistan Trade Control of Wild Fauna and Flora (Amendment) Bill, 2024*, moved by Senator Shahadat Awan. Senator Sherry Rehman and other members raised critical concerns about the bill's effectiveness in addressing invasive alien species and the inadequate enforcement capacity of the Wildlife Department. The Committee emphasized the importance of regulating the import of potentially invasive species over export and identified several gaps in the bill. After a consultative process involving the Ministry of Law, Ministry of Climate Change, key amendments were unanimously adopted. These included omitting the term "pathogens," replacing "human health" with "biological life," and changing "export" to "import," while introducing "invasive" as a sub-clause. Though the Ministry of Climate Change raised objections regarding potential conflicts with international conventions like CITES and its implications on Pakistan's GSP+ status, the Committee maintained that the amendments remained within the scope of international obligations and reflected national legislative needs. The bill, with the incorporated amendments, was approved by the Committee for submission to the House.



SENATOR SHERRY REHMAN, CHAIRPERSON SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATION PRESIDING OVER A MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE ISLAMABAD ON OCTOBER 09, 2024.

### 11) Islamabad Nature Conservation and Wildlife Management Bill, 2024

The Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change, following extensive deliberations and stakeholder engagement, has formally passed the *Islamabad Nature Conservation and Wildlife Management Act, 2024*, which was subsequently signed into law by the President of Pakistan. This landmark legislation marks a significant step forward in environmental protection and biodiversity conservation within the Islamabad Capital Territory. It empowers the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) with enhanced legal authority and operational autonomy to manage and conserve the region's unique ecosystems more effectively. The Act introduces internal revenue generation mechanisms for the sustainable management of Margalla Hills National Park and enforces realistic fines and penalties to ensure environmental accountability. It reflects a shift toward a holistic approach to nature conservation, aligning with international best practices. The Committee acknowledged the instrumental contributions of Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Qazi Faez Isa, for his landmark ruling; Senator Sherry Rehman, for tabling the bill in Parliament; and the Government of Pakistan, for ensuring its passage and enactment. The IWMB has expressed its commitment to implementing the Act in both spirit and practice, reaffirming its dedication to preserving Islamabad's natural heritage for future generations.



## 12) COP-29 preparations

The Committee was briefed by the Ministry of Climate Change on Pakistan's preparations for the 29<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP-29) held from November 11–22, 2025, in Baku, Azerbaijan. Pakistan is signatory to both the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement. The Chairperson emphasized Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change and called for more impactful participation, expressing concern over the lack of tangible results in securing emissions reductions and climate finance pledges from developed nations. The Committee was informed that the Prime Minister had constituted a dedicated COP-29 Committee, subdivided into negotiations and logistics subcommittees.

### **Article 6 and Pakistan's Carbon Market Strategy**

One of the central agenda items at COP-29 was Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, which concerns the development of international carbon markets and the trade of carbon credits. It was highlighted that Pakistan possesses significant potential to participate in international carbon trading, especially through transformative projects in the energy and waste

management sectors. By successfully executing such initiatives, Pakistan can generate verified emission reductions and sell corresponding carbon credits in international markets.

The Committee was informed that the Prime Minister of Pakistan has formally approved the National Carbon Market Guidelines. These guidelines were developed following extensive consultations with all provincial governments, ensuring a unified national approach. In tandem, regulatory mechanisms are currently being formulated, and a National Carbon Emissions Registry is under development. This registry will serve as the official database for tracking emissions and facilitating transparent Carbon Credit Agreements with other countries. The Chairperson emphasized that Article 6 provides the regulatory foundation for global carbon markets, which remain in the process of being fully developed and standardized. She stressed the importance of Pakistan's proactive engagement to ensure the country's early positioning within this emerging global framework.

#### **Climate Finance and the Loss and Damage Fund**

The Committee was briefed that the principal theme of COP-29 was Climate Finance, with a central focus on the urgent need for adequate and predictable financial support for climate-vulnerable countries. Despite long-standing commitments by developed nations to mobilize \$100 billion annually, the actual disbursements have remained significantly below target. The Committee expressed deep concern over the emerging trend of excluding the Loss and Damage Fund from the scope of the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG)—a move viewed as a deviation from the spirit of climate justice. It was strongly emphasized that the Loss and Damage Fund must be recognized as an integral component of future climate finance commitments, particularly to address the irreversible impacts of climate change in developing countries. The Ministry informed the Committee that while an initial pledge of \$700 million was announced for the Loss and Damage Fund, only \$70 million was deposited when the fund was operationalized—highlighting a stark gap between commitments and actual financial flows.

#### **Green Innovation and Pakistan's National Pavilion**

At COP-29, a 150-square-meter national pavilion was established featuring key projects and hosted daily side events. Furthermore a “Green Tech Hub” was launched in collaboration with NUST and IGNITE, with selected startups that represented Pakistan at the conference. Scheduled launches at the pavilion included the Climate Finance Strategy, Carbon Credit Policy Guidelines, and the Accumen Fund. The Committee commended these initiatives but underscored the need for strategic follow-through and global visibility.

**Internationally Determined Contributions (IDCs)**

The Chairperson underlined the global and transboundary nature of climate change, using regional smog as an example of how emissions in one area can affect another. She stressed that disengaging from COP processes would jeopardize Pakistan’s access to green finance, technology transfer, and capacity-building opportunities. The Committee echoed this concern, warning that climate denialism by developed nations continues to undermine progress. They urged the Ministry to champion the inclusion of Internationally Determined Contributions (IDCs) in negotiations and press for measurable accountability mechanisms for financial pledges. Concerns were also raised about the lack of accessible and simplified financing mechanisms for the most climate-affected nations like Pakistan.

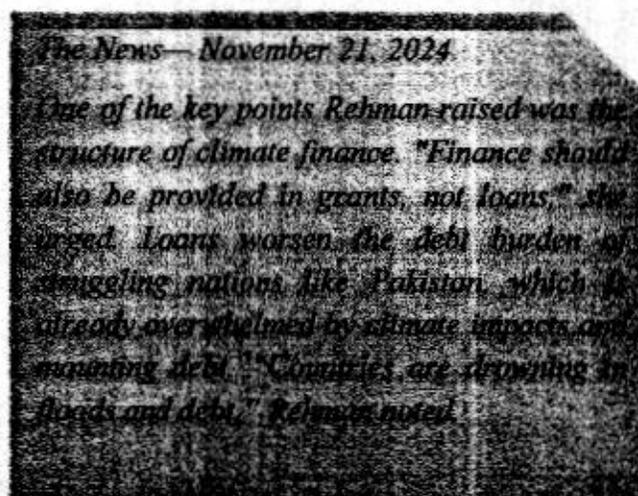


## Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination

The Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman, presides over the meeting at Parliament House on November 6, 2024.

### Pre-COP-29 Dialogue in Islamabad

Chairperson attended the Pre-COP29 Dialogue: National and Subnational Perspectives organized by Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC), in cooperation with the Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC) and with support from UNDP Pakistan. She emphasized that Pakistan needs a focused, goal-oriented agenda for COP29. "We cannot afford to approach COP29 with 'business as usual.' Instead, Pakistan should build alliances with like-minded partners such as the G77+China to hold developed countries accountable for their emissions and to secure the financing commitments that developing countries need," she urged.



### 13) Interactions at COP-29

At COP-29 in Baku, Senator Sherry Rehman, Chairperson of Pakistan's Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change, participated in a high-level panel discussion titled "Judicial

Pathways Towards Climate Justice” at the Pakistan Pavilion. She highlighted Pakistan’s extreme vulnerability to climate change despite contributing less than 1% to global carbon emissions, citing the 2022 floods as a devastating example.

Senator Rehman underscored that climate justice must be rooted in equity, and emphasized that climate finance is the key instrument to unlock justice for the Global South. She expressed disappointment over the widening climate finance gap, noting that while promises have been made by developed nations, the actual flow of resources remains insufficient, leaving vulnerable countries without the means to adapt or build resilience. Chairperson supported the idea of stronger international judicial engagement and cooperation, highlighting the need for legal systems to hold states and corporations accountable, and for climate finance mechanisms to be framed within a rights-based approach. Senator Rehman’s contribution echoed Pakistan’s broader stance that **climate finance is not charity but a climate debt owed by the Global North**, and called for an inclusive, enforceable global framework that ensures the fair distribution of climate resources.

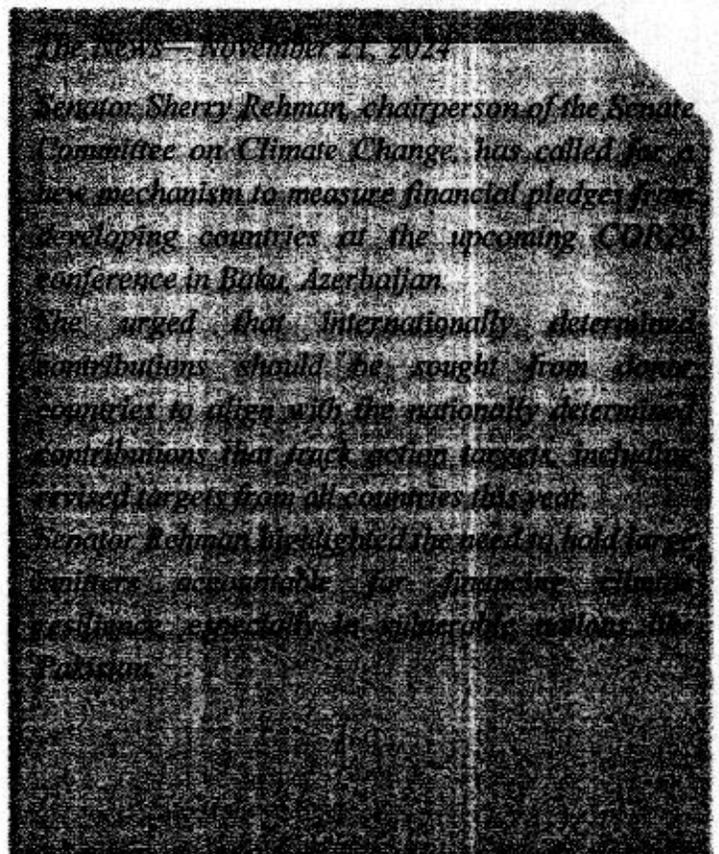


#### 14) Post COP-29 deliberations

The Chairperson raised the issue of the Ministry's failure to send an accreditation letter to the Committee for COP-29 participation. This was termed an "egregious lapse," especially considering that previous COPs had included four members each from the National Assembly and Senate. The Committee conveyed its strong reservations and directed the Secretary to ensure that this oversight is not repeated for COP-30. The Committee also expressed serious concerns over the participation and performance of hundreds of officials accredited by the Ministry for COP-29. It sought a comprehensive report detailing the roles, responsibilities, and contributions of each delegate, emphasizing the need for measurable outputs and transparent evaluation of public expenditure.

### **Inclusion of Internationally Determined Contributions (IDCs)**

A significant point of contention was the absence of the term "Internationally Determined Contributions (IDCs)" from outcome documents, despite its inclusion in the Prime Minister's COP-29 speech. The Chairperson remarked this as a missed opportunity and criticized what she termed "systemic resistance" to innovation within the Ministry. The Committee was informed that it had generated interest among smaller negotiating blocs and was included in the Ministry's negotiation notes. The Committee demanded these notes be shared and directed the Ministry to formally adopt and advocate for the IDC framework as a Pakistani initiative.



### **New Climate Finance Goal**

The Committee deliberated on the new climate finance goal, requiring developed countries to mobilize at least \$300 billion annually by 2035 to support developing countries. A major achievement for developing countries,

including Pakistan to prevent climate change from becoming a catalyst for further debt and socio-economic instability. In this context, multilateral development banks and international financial institutions—such as the IMF and the World Bank—have been urged to ensure that climate-related grants and funding mechanisms are structured in ways that do not exacerbate debt burdens for recipient countries. The Committee deemed this grossly insufficient when measured against the global climate finance needs. Members termed it “a drop in the ocean,” especially in light of UN estimates that place the actual needs-based requirement between \$6 to \$7 trillion annually.

#### **Accountability Deficit and Compliance Mechanisms**

The Committee also raised serious concerns about the absence of a compliance and enforcement mechanism within the Conference of the Parties (COP) structure. As the existing process is voluntary, countries that make financial pledges face no binding obligation to honor their commitments. This lack of enforceability severely undermines the credibility and impact of international climate finance pledges. In light of these concerns, the Committee called for significantly scaling up climate finance targets and emphasized the urgent need for enforceable accountability mechanisms to ensure that financial commitments are met and transparently tracked.

#### **Disengagement with G77 and Diplomatic Strategy**

The Committee expressed serious concern over what it viewed as a weakening of Pakistan’s engagement with the G77 group of developing countries, whose collective diplomacy was instrumental in establishing the Loss and Damage Fund during COP-27. Members emphasized the importance of reinvigorating this alliance and restoring Pakistan’s visibility and leadership within the “blue zone” of climate diplomacy.

#### **Climate Adaptation and Global Stocktake**

On the issue of adaptation, the Secretary informed the Committee of divergent views at COP-29. Developed countries advocated for “transformational” adaptation strategies, while Pakistan and other developing nations called for incremental, context-sensitive measures aligned with national realities. The Committee strongly endorsed the latter, insisting that climate finance must prioritize adaptation in vulnerable nations. Regarding the global

stocktake, it was noted that while it aims to keep global temperature rise below 1.5°C, COP-29 failed to achieve meaningful outcomes due to political disagreements—particularly around the phasing out of fossil fuels.

### **Fossil Fuel Phase-Out and COP-30 Outlook**

The Committee expressed alarm over the stalled negotiations on fossil fuel reduction. The Committee was informed that opposition from “like-minded” countries had blocked progress, particularly on setting new restrictions for coal. A final decision on these matters has now been deferred to COP-30, where the forthcoming IPCC report is expected to influence discussions.

### **Follow-Up and Future Actions**

The Ministry of Climate Change briefed the Committee that negotiations under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement have concluded, and Pakistan is in the process of establishing a national carbon registry, which is expected to be operational by the first quarter of 2025. The first two transactions under this framework are anticipated by June 2025. The Committee underscored the necessity of an early development of carbon market regulation to prioritize adaptation efforts, for Pakistan.

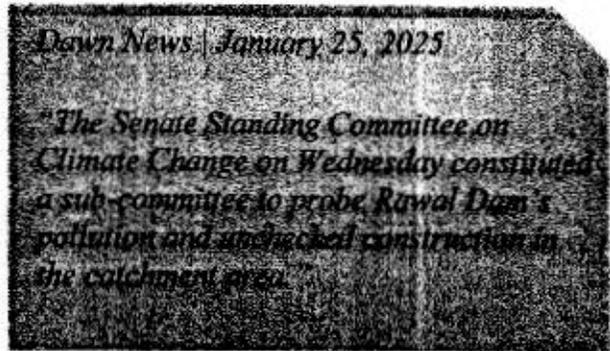
The Committee discussed the critical role of green skills in ensuring a just and sustainable transition to a low-carbon economy. A national green skills strategy is currently being formulated, and several international partners have expressed interest in supporting this initiative. Training programs will focus on renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, waste management, and green infrastructure. This initiative is expected to generate employment, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and promote sustainable development.

The Committee was informed that Pakistan has set an ambitious net-zero emissions target for its industrial sector by 2050. While achieving broad political consensus on this goal remains a

challenge, encouraging progress is already visible as industries begin adopting cleaner and more sustainable technologies.

The Committee deliberated on the crucial role of the private sector and international donors in supporting this transition. Furthermore, it was noted that the State Bank of Pakistan is actively engaged in developing a Green Taxonomy, which aims to guide financial institutions in identifying and financing environmentally sustainable industrial activities.

As part of its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), Pakistan has committed to ensuring that 30% of new car sales are electric by 2030. The Ministry of Industries is finalizing a comprehensive EV policy, and 41 companies have already been issued licenses for EV manufacturing. The Committee emphasized the need for, public awareness, and infrastructure development—such as charging stations—to support the widespread adoption of EVs nationwide.



SENATOR SHERRY REHMAN, CHAIRPERSON SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATION PRESIDING OVER A MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE ISLAMABAD ON JANUARY 09, 2025.

### 15) Glacier Protection and “Third Pole” Concerns

The Committee deliberated on the critical challenge of glacier melting in Pakistan, noting that over 13,000 glaciers have been identified through a recent national survey. Given Pakistan’s

position as home to the largest number of glaciers outside the polar regions the Committee stressed the urgent need for a coordinated glacier protection strategy. The Ministry of Climate Change briefed the Committee on its ongoing collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to develop a Glacier Protection Strategy and introduce innovative climate resilience techniques. It was highlighted that waste accumulation and unsustainable tourism practices are increasingly threatening these fragile ecosystems.

To address this, a Glacier Protection Bill is currently being drafted for incorporation into the Climate Change Act, aiming to establish legal safeguards for glacier ecosystems. Furthermore, the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan has been directed to align its environmental laws with the national framework to ensure localized implementation.

#### **16) Rawal Dam sewage inflow and Pollution**

The Senate Committee was briefed on the critical issues surrounding the Rawal Dam, particularly the sewage inflow and water quality deterioration since its construction in 1962. The Capital Development Authority (CDA) reported that around 9 million gallons of untreated sewage flows into the dam daily, primarily through septic tanks, with pollution stemming from both Islamabad (64%) and Murree (36%). The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) noted that run-up heavy rainfall further depletes dissolved oxygen levels, harming marine life. To address this, CDA plans to construct three sewage treatment plants (STP-I, II, III) in key areas, with tenders opening in November 2024 and completion expected within 12 months under an Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) model. The Committee expressed concern over reliance on international firms, citing cost escalation (from Rs. 3 to Rs. 6 billion) and long-term sustainability issues, and insisted on mandatory joint ventures with local companies to build national capacity. The feasibility study, originally conducted in 2019 and revised in 2023, outlines the use of advanced MBBR and SBR technologies. The Committee demanded project documents and stressed the need for timely execution, cost control, and avoidance of foreign funding.

### **17) Critical Water Quality Concerns and Public Health Emergency in Islamabad**

The Committee expressed grave concern over Islamabad's worsening water quality and the resulting public health crisis, emphasizing findings from the National Institute of Health (NIH) which revealed that waterborne diseases are the predominant source of illness in both the capital and across Pakistan. A detailed briefing from NIH and CDC officials uncovered that 106 out of 299 water samples collected across Islamabad failed safety standards. Bore water exhibited the highest contamination rate at 41%, followed by supply water at 33% and filtered water at 27%, with Sectors G, F, and Tarlai among the worst affected. The situation has led to a surge in disease cases, including over 17,000 acute diarrhea cases reported through the Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response System (IDSR) between January and December, 158 suspected typhoid cases, and confirmed laboratory diagnoses of Hepatitis A and E. The Committee criticized the outdated data provided by agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), and directed immediate submission of revised, accurate reports. Furthermore, it instructed the Ministry of Climate Change to constitute an oversight body involving all stakeholders to develop a coordinated action plan to tackle water contamination and its health implications on an urgent, war-footing basis.

### **18) Delayed Sewage Treatment Plants and Dysfunctional Inter-Governmental Coordination**

A major concern raised by the Committee centered around the chronic delay in establishing sewage treatment infrastructure in Islamabad, particularly the stalled project for three treatment plants in Bari Imam, Simly Road, and Bani Gala. Initiated in 2011 under Supreme Court directives, the project has been hampered by bureaucratic delays, funding shortages, and a lack of political prioritization. Despite an alarming daily discharge of 9 million gallons of untreated sewage into Rawal Dam—Islamabad's critical water source—the federal government allocated only Rs. 60 million against a requirement of Rs. 6.071 billion. The Committee strongly opposed the Planning Division's decision to seek foreign financing through Panda Bonds and labeled the handling of the situation as gross mismanagement, particularly considering the availability of ample public funds under the PSDP. The

Committee took note of the jurisdictional overlaps between the Islamabad Capital Territory and the Punjab Government, which have further complicated the implementation of the Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) initiative. It was noted that, under the constitutional framework, Punjab is obligated to contribute 36% to the project. To resolve the matter expeditiously, the Committee directed formal engagement with the Punjab Government and assigned Senator Bushra Anjum Butt to pursue the issue with the Punjab Cabinet. The Senator was tasked with providing an update to the Committee within 30 days.

The Committee directed that a comprehensive cleaning operation must be carried out across Islamabad's sectors within the next 60 days, ensuring the removal of all bushes, grass, garbage, and other debris from the nullahs. Furthermore, the Committee instructed the formulation of by-laws and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to institutionalize an annual cleaning schedule, with distinct plans for peak and off-peak seasons to ensure consistent maintenance. Additionally, the Chairman CDA was asked to present a detailed feasibility paper outlining total water demand, current deficits, and proposals for additional allocations from Rawal Dam's underutilized capacity.

### **19) Governance Failures and Infrastructure Gaps in Water and Sanitation Management**

The Committee identified systemic governance failures and infrastructure deficiencies within Islamabad's water and sanitation framework. It was revealed that Islamabad operated without a dedicated Water and Sanitation Agency until recently, leaving key responsibilities fragmented and unregulated. The oversight of 97 filtration plants was found to be inconsistent, with their maintenance outsourced to corporate entities under a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) model—a move the Committee rejected as unacceptable. The CDA acknowledged its responsibility and committed to reclaiming full control through the development of a new operational policy. Furthermore, the Committee mandated a full reorganization of the Water Directorate and the creation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) to guide the newly established Islamabad Water agency. To address long-standing jurisdictional confusion, an Inter-Ministerial Committee headed by the Secretary of the Ministry of Climate Change was formed, bringing together federal and provincial representatives from CDA, EPA, Punjab Planning, Rawalpindi Development Authority, and

local administration. The Committee called for urgent replacement of outdated sewage and water lines, particularly in CDA sectors where infrastructure has aged over decades, and recommended the inclusion of dedicated funds in the upcoming federal budget. It also emphasized the need for operationalizing the three existing sewage plants, and conducting comprehensive testing of all water outlets to assess health risks.

## 20) Electric Vehicle Transition and Emission Reduction Strategy

The Committee undertook an in-depth review of Pakistan's Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy and energy transition roadmap, stressing the need for urgent climate action, domestic industrial strengthening, and improved inter-ministerial coordination. The Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC), in collaboration with the Ministries of Industries, Power, and Petroleum, presented their respective plans, although the Chairperson expressed dissatisfaction over the lack of comprehensive data and technical insights, especially on emission impacts and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The Committee emphasized that 48% of air pollution in Pakistan comes from vehicles, highlighting the urgent need for a

robust EV transition, particularly for two- and three-wheelers that dominate oil consumption and emissions in urban centers like Lahore. The Ministry of Industries and Production shared updates on the revised EV Policy, which includes proposed subsidies for all vehicle categories and encourages local manufacturing. However, the Committee raised concerns about skewed incentives favoring importers over local producers, tariff imbalances, and insufficient data preparedness. There are currently 52 licensed and 25 operational EV bike manufacturers in Pakistan, with plans to establish 3,000 charging stations nationwide. NEECA informed the Committee about regulatory frameworks for EV charging infrastructure and identified strategic charging locations with the help of NHA and CDA. The Chairperson directed that future presentations must prioritize climate impact metrics and

*Business Recorder | 29 January, 2025*

*Climate change: Senate committee pushes for 'stronger' renewable energy, EV initiatives*

*During the meeting, Senator Rehman criticised Pakistan's lagging EV production, noting that only 60,000 EVs have been produced against a 600,000 target, the statement read.*

reflect Pakistan's international commitments, while promoting public-private synergy and local capacity-building. The Ministry was also instructed to address stakeholder concerns, especially around tariffs and import-export disparities.



SENATOR SHERRY REHMAN, CHAIRPERSON SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATION PRESIDING OVER A MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE ISLAMABAD ON JANUARY 29, 2025.

### 21) Clean Energy Transition and Renewable Integration

The Committee reviewed the national roadmap for transitioning to clean energy, with the Power Division reporting progress in retiring outdated gas-based thermal power plants and expanding renewable energy sources through competitive bidding for solar and wind projects. The Minister for Power acknowledged a consumer-based electricity surplus and highlighted the Power Division's efforts to reduce inefficiencies and promote renewable energy. It was noted that per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have doubled over the past two decades, presenting a challenge of balancing rising electricity demand with emissions reduction. The Committee was informed about the possible retirement of older thermal plants, five of which—producing around 2500 MW—have already been retired without burdening the national exchequer. The Power Division also highlighted plans to open a competitive wholesale electricity market to boost clean energy adoption.

During the deliberations, the Committee was briefed on major urban emissions caused by 2- and 3-wheeler vehicles, particularly in Lahore. The Committee inquired about policies to replace combustion engines with electric motors. The Ministry confirmed work on an EV transition program with an initial subsidy of Rs 4 billion for 42,000 electric two-wheelers, with further provincial support expected. The Minister for Power stressed the need to reduce electricity tariffs to enable cost-effective EV charging and requested the Committee's assistance in mobilizing bank loans for EV purchases. Additionally, the Committee was

informed about the approval of the Energy Conservation Building Code and its proposed adoption across all provinces. The Chairperson supported the initiative and requested that the related proposal and correspondence be shared with the Committee.

## **22) Concern over Solar Tariff Policy and Investor Confidence**

The Chairperson raised concerns regarding the potential impact of changing tariffs on investor confidence, noting that Pakistan has imported one-third of its solar capacity in a single year and possesses vast potential in solar, wind, and biomass energy. She emphasized that citizens are increasingly adopting solar energy, with some supplying electricity back to the national grid via net metering. In response, the Minister for Power assured the Committee that there is no government policy to discourage solar or wind energy by imposing tariffs. He explained that current net metering allows users to recover their investment within 18 months by selling electricity at Rs 27 per unit, compared to the government's cost of Rs 9. To align prices with fuel costs, the Ministry aims to balance tariffs without burdening consumers. The Minister also stated that existing contracts would remain unaffected until expiration and emphasized that the government is promoting transparency and investor confidence by transitioning to an open bidding system. Additionally, to support industrial growth, electricity is being provided at a competitive regional rate of Rs 26 per unit.

## **23) Water Resource Management and Climate-Resilient Practices**

The Committee expressed strong concern over the unregulated solarization of agricultural tube wells and its potential impact on groundwater resources. The Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (CC&EC) was instructed to develop national regulations for sustainable groundwater usage, particularly for agricultural purposes. The Chairperson emphasized that the issue of groundwater depletion is severe and cannot be resolved through small-scale aquifer recharge projects alone. She stressed that all provinces must engage in coordinated efforts to manage and conserve water resources effectively.

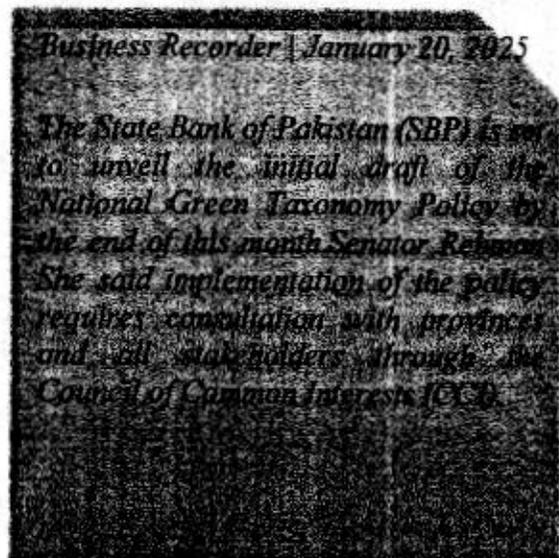
In addition, the Committee discussed the broader implications of water scarcity, particularly in light of Pakistan's reliance on agriculture. It was agreed that climate-smart water use and

regulation are essential. The Ministry of CC&EC, in coordination with the Ministries of Water Resources and Power, was directed to present a detailed joint briefing.

#### **24) Development and Implementation of Pakistan's National Green Taxonomy**

The Committee reviewed the draft of Pakistan's National Green Taxonomy, presented by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The taxonomy, developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Climate Change and the World Bank, aims to classify economic activities based on their environmental impact, supporting sustainable financing and aligning Pakistan with global climate standards. It adopts a three-tiered classification of projects—Green, Amber, and Red—based on their alignment with climate goals. Emphasis was placed on the taxonomy's potential to attract climate finance, support carbon reduction commitments, and improve resilience to extreme weather events. The framework includes detailed benchmarks for sectors such as agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and transport. Stakeholder consultations yielded extensive feedback, which is being integrated into the final draft expected by April 2025. The Committee appreciated these efforts but sought clarity on enforcement mechanisms, integration across Provincial domains, and alignment with climate finance mechanisms such as the IMF's RSF and the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM). The Committee recommended placing the taxonomy before the Council of Common Interests (CCI) to ensure Provincial buy-in and ownership.

The Committee raised concerns regarding governance and the implementation structure necessary for enforcing the taxonomy across sectors and Provinces. Challenges such as data collection, voluntary versus mandatory reporting, and capacity constraints in environmental regulatory bodies were highlighted. The Committee urged for legislative backing and stricter compliance mechanisms, including potential penalties for non-compliance. It emphasized the strengthening of Environmental Protection Agencies (EPAs), especially in ICT, and proposed the formation of a dedicated enforcement force under EPA, similar to the Anti-Narcotics



Force. Furthermore, discussions stressed the need for clear disclosure policies, enforcement tools such as an Environmental Credit Information Bureau (ECIB), and harmonization of definitions across federal and provincial regulations.

### **Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement and Support for SMEs and Farmers**

The Committee focused on the inclusion of diverse stakeholders, including the private sector, SMEs, and the agricultural community, in the green transition. Representatives from OICCI, Pakistan Business Council, and Bank Alfalah highlighted the need for transitional flexibility, technical assistance, and incentivization of SMEs. The Committee emphasized targeted capacity-building programs, especially for rural populations, and proposed the development of native-language mobile apps for farmers to support climate-resilient agricultural practices. It recommended that these apps be customized by Province and promoted through digital influencers. The Committee also urged converting the SBP's taxonomy report into a searchable online portal to make it accessible for public and institutional use. Recognizing the reluctance of firms to voluntarily disclose emissions and environmental data, the Committee stressed the need for awareness and incentive-based engagement.



**SENATOR SHERRY REHMAN, CHAIRPERSON SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATION PRESIDING OVER THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE AT STATE BANK OF PAKISTAN, KARACHI ON 19TH MARCH, 2025.**



The Chairperson Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Senator Sherry Rehman briefing the media on details of the committee meeting at State Bank of Pakistan to review draft Green Taxonomy.

### **25) Sub-Committee on Rawal Dam Pollution**

In terms of Rule 183(1) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Senate, 2012, the Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination in its meeting dated 6th November, 2024, constituted a Sub-Committee comprising three members. The composition and terms of reference (ToRs) of the Sub-Committee are as under:

#### **Composition of the Sub-Committee**

- |      |                          |          |
|------|--------------------------|----------|
| i.   | Senator Shahzaib Durrani | Convener |
| ii.  | Senator Naseema Ehsan    | Member   |
| iii. | Senator Manzoor Ahmed    | Member   |

#### **Terms of Reference**

- a. To visit the Rawal Dam site physically to ascertain the factual on ground position of pollution and sewage being thrown into the Dam and submit a report suggesting mitigation measures to address the issue.
- b. To visit the site of unauthorized construction project undertaken by the Punjab Irrigation Department and submit findings to the Committee as reported by DG (EPA).

The Sub-Committee was apprised that Rawal Dam, a critical reservoir for Rawalpindi and Islamabad, faces severe environmental degradation due to untreated sewage discharge.. There are four major streams and 43 small streams contributing to the storage. Korang River, which originates in the Murree Hills area, is the major feeding channel of Rawal Lake. Water, during its passage through the river, streams and surface carries various dissolved and suspended impurities into the Rawal Lake. Apart from these factors, increasing population, industrial growth and agricultural practices are the other major causes that result in the deterioration of the water quality of this lake.

The untreated release of sewage has multiple devastating effects on the water quality of Rawal Dam. Elevated levels of Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD), Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) and presence of harmful pathogens, coliform bacteria and nitrogenous compounds make the water unfit for human consumption and agriculture use. Likewise, due to contamination, aquatic life, which also includes different kind of fish, has severely been disrupted. The pollutants in untreated sewage reduce dissolved oxygen levels, leading to biodiversity loss and collapse of aquatic ecosystems. Finally, due to the contamination of water, the residents of Rawalpindi and Islamabad face severe health risks including spread of waterborne diseases such as Diarrhoea, Hepatitis, Cholera, Typhoid etc.

The Sub-Committee's visit to the upper catchment areas of Rawal Dam, particularly Barakahu, highlighted severe environmental and administrative negligence. With a population of approximately 450,000 residing in unplanned settlements, the lack of waste management and unchecked encroachments have led to alarming pollution levels. The area generates an estimated 6 to 8 tons of solid waste daily, yet lacks a coordinated waste collection system between Union Councils and CDA. As a result, residents resort to open

dumping or burning waste, severely polluting natural water bodies such as Korang and Shahdara nullahs.



The Committee was also briefed regarding the measures Pak-EPA has suggested for mitigating contamination and pollution of the lake. These measures include constructing Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTPs) at specific locations such as Bani Gala, Bara Kahu, Korang River and Murree Hills. The concept behind developing these plants is to manage maximally the solid waste and seasonal influx into the dam. Additionally, regular inspections are carried out to make sure the compliance with National Environmental Quality Standards. Community awareness campaigns were also run to educate the local communities regarding the adverse impacts of pollution.

The Sub-Committee also noted that the Punjab Irrigation Department and the Capital Development Authority (CDA), which share jurisdiction in Zone III, have exhibited a negligent approach to maintaining and protecting the reservoir and its surroundings.

The Sub-Committee visited the Rawal Dam Water Treatment and Filtration Plant, managed by WASA under RDA, and directed the collection of pre-treatment and post-treatment water samples for testing from two different labs. The analysis by WASA, PCSIR, and PCRWR

confirmed that the post-treatment water meets NSDWQ standards, making it safe for drinking within the tested parameters. However, pre-treated water samples from feeding nullahs, spillways, and streams contained pollutants exceeding NEQS limits for wastewater/effluents, posing a threat to aquatic life. While the treated water is safe for consumption, the contamination in raw water sources highlights the need for improved pollution control measures.

The Health Departments of Punjab and Islamabad, on 14th January, 2025, furnished data of waterborne diseases caused due to the contamination of Rawal Dam. According to the data, 147,989 persons were affected by Diarrhoea/Gastroenteritis, 57,968 by Hepatitis and around 15,000 by Cholera, Dysentery and Typhoid during the year 2024 in various parts of Rawalpindi District. While data received through Islamabad Health Department and National Institute of Health (NIH) also revealed alarming position, From Jan-Dec 2024, more than 17,000 cases of Acute Watery Diarrhoea, 158 suspected Typhoid fever and 18 confirmed cases of Hepatitis A and 5 of Hepatitis were detected. These figures, are based on government sources alone, likely underrepresent the true scale of the crisis. Including private hospitals, actual cases may raise to three times higher, emphasizing the urgent need for immediate intervention.



## Major Policy Directions and Outcomes

- The Committee recommended that CDA and IWMB develop a joint action plan to prevent and manage forest fires.
- The Committee stressed the need to enhance coordination, capacity, and transparency in climate initiatives, with regular performance reviews for accountability.
- The Committee called for a national climate finance framework aligned with domestic priorities and developed through inclusive provincial consultation, avoiding overreliance on external experts.
- The Committee urged stronger coordination among ministries and international partners, including UNDP, to support climate resilience and sustainability.
- The Committee highlighted the urgency of finalizing the Carbon Policy with full provincial consensus to strengthen domestic governance and protect export markets amid shifting global climate regulations.
- The Committee directed the Secretary to work with Pak-EPA, district administration, and industry to establish a robust enforcement mechanism for SUP regulations.
- The Committee called for strict enforcement of safety protocols at bazaars, including installation of fire extinguishers, alarms, and vendor training. CDA was directed to ensure timely stall closures and adopt best practices from other models.
- The Committee supported the development of a structured, well-resourced energy transition framework aligned with national goals and international climate commitments.
- The Committee urged immediate implementation of the Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy, with clear incentives and regulatory support. It also called for removal of fiscal and procedural barriers to boost participation from importers and local manufacturers.

- The Chairperson noted the omission of "Internationally Determined Contributions" from the Vision Statement and Ministry reports. The Committee requested clarification from the Ministry and stressed that this concept should be fully owned, regardless of its formal status in UN terminology.
- The Committee opposed linking the Loss and Damage Fund to bankable projects, stating such conditions are unsuitable for climate-vulnerable countries like Pakistan.
- It emphasized restoring ties with the G77, recognizing its key role in establishing the Loss and Damage Fund during COP-27, and called for active high-level diplomacy within the COP "blue zone."
- The Committee endorsed the Ministry's position that the Loss and Damage Fund should be a central pillar of global climate finance, not a conditional or peripheral facility.
- It called for robust accountability mechanisms to ensure delivery on climate finance pledges, particularly for vulnerable countries like Pakistan.
- The Committee urged the Ministry to advocate for the inclusion of Internationally Determined Contributions (IDCs) in negotiations and push for enforceable financial commitments, while highlighting the lack of simplified access to climate finance for highly affected nations.
- Serious concern was raised over the absence of a compliance and enforcement mechanism in the COP structure, noting that the voluntary nature of pledges undermines their credibility and impact.
- The Committee reiterated its opposition to conditioning climate finance on bankable projects, warning against debt-inducing models for countries at high risk.

## Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination

- Concern was expressed over CDA's reliance on international firms for sewage treatment plants, citing cost overruns and sustainability concerns. The Committee directed that future projects must involve joint ventures with local firms to build national capacity.
- The Ministry of Climate Change was instructed to form a multi-stakeholder oversight body to urgently develop a coordinated response to water contamination in Islamabad, given its serious health impacts.
- On jurisdictional overlaps affecting the sewage treatment plant project, the Committee directed formal engagement with the Punjab Government and tasked Senator Bushra Anjum Butt with liaising with the Punjab Cabinet.
- The Committee directed a 60-day citywide cleaning operation across Islamabad to clear bushes, garbage, and debris from all nullahs.
- It instructed the development of by-laws and SOPs to institutionalize an annual cleaning schedule, with separate plans for peak and off-peak seasons.
- The Committee mandated a full reorganization of CDA's Water Directorate and SOPs for the new Islamabad Water Agency. An Inter-Ministerial Committee, led by the Climate Change Secretary, was formed to resolve jurisdictional overlaps with representation from CDA, EPA, Punjab Planning, RDA, and local authorities.
- It called for urgent replacement of aging sewage and water pipelines in CDA sectors and recommended allocation of dedicated funds in the upcoming federal budget.
- The Committee emphasized immediate operationalization of the three existing sewage treatment plants and comprehensive testing of all water sources for health risks.
- It highlighted that 48% of Pakistan's air pollution stems from vehicles, urging a rapid EV transition, especially for two- and three-wheelers in cities like Lahore.

- The Committee flagged tariff imbalances and biased incentives favoring importers, directing the Ministry of Industries and Production to resolve stakeholder concerns, particularly around local manufacturing support.
- It sought clarity on enforcement mechanisms, inter-provincial coordination, and alignment with climate finance tools such as the IMF's RSF and the EU's CBAM. It recommended presenting the taxonomy to the Council of Common Interests (CCI) to ensure provincial ownership.
- The Committee urged converting the SBP's taxonomy report into a searchable online portal for public and institutional access. It also stressed the need for awareness and incentive-driven strategies to encourage voluntary environmental data disclosure by firms.

**Recommendations of the Sub-Committee:**

- The Sub-Committee recommends that CDA should take the lead and coordinate a waste management strategy with all other concerned departments. The strategy should include:
  - **Establish a Unified Waste Management Committee** – A joint waste management committee should be formed with representation from ICT, RDA, CDA, and Murree District to oversee waste collection, disposal, and recycling efforts in Barakahu.
  - **Implement a Structured Waste Collection System** – A coordinated mechanism should be introduced for regular waste collection, ensuring proper disposal and discouraging open dumping and burning.
  - **Develop a Sustainable Waste Disposal Site** – A dedicated landfill or waste processing facility should be established within a feasible distance to prevent pollution of water bodies.
  - **Enforcement of Environmental Regulations** – Strict penalties should be imposed on illegal dumping, and environmental protection laws should be effectively enforced.

## Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination

- The Sub-Committee recommended that RDA and CDA jointly develop a comprehensive piped sewerage plan for areas near feeding nullahs and around Rawal Lake/Dam.
- It advised CDA to better utilize its sanitation workforce to improve waste management and prevent contamination of streams feeding into Rawal Dam.
- The Sub-Committee called for strict action by CDA, ICT Administration, RDA, and Murree authorities against illegal housing schemes, encroachments, and unauthorized construction near feeding streams and Rawal Dam.
- It urged the federal government and relevant agencies to fast-track the establishment of Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) at key locations under the PSDP to combat water pollution in Rawal Lake.
- The Sub-Committee directed CDA, RDA, ICT Administration, and Punjab Irrigation Department to conduct regular monitoring and tree plantation along streambanks and Rawal Dam. It also recommended fencing Korang Nullah to prevent waste and sewage dumping.
- It recommended that the Ministry of Climate Change, along with CDA, RDA, and Pak-EPA, launch public awareness campaigns through workshops and digital outreach to promote community engagement.

## **Future Course of Action: Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change (2025–2026)**

Recognizing the growing severity of climate risks facing Pakistan, the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change will adopt a proactive and structured approach over the coming year to steer national climate resilience and governance. The Committee will prioritize implementation of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and aligning it with provincial disaster strategies, alongside conducting nationwide climate risk mapping to identify vulnerabilities to floods, heatwaves, droughts, and glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs). Efforts will also address climate-induced migration and its urban impacts.

In water governance, the Committee will advocate for sustainable management, inter-provincial coordination, and assess climate risks in water basins, particularly the Indus. Urban resilience will be strengthened through climate-responsive master planning, green building codes, and improved drainage and sanitation systems.

To combat air pollution, the Committee will push for revised vehicle emissions policies, public transport electrification, and expanded air quality monitoring. A just energy transition will be promoted by phasing out imported coal, scaling up renewables, and operationalizing the Green Taxonomy. Additionally, the Committee will develop a Climate-Smart Agriculture Strategy, advocate for grant-based climate finance, and resist debt-inducing models, particularly for Loss and Damage.

Public engagement will be enhanced through awareness campaigns and youth-led initiatives, while oversight will extend to carbon markets, green tech innovation, and a Climate and Public Health Action Plan to address heat stress and disease risks. Through this future course of action, Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination aims to advance Pakistan's climate agenda in a manner that is evidence-based, people-centered, and globally credible.

**Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination**



**(MUGHEES AHMAD SHAIKH)**  
JS/Secretary (Committee)



**(SENATOR SIERRY REHMAN)**  
Chairperson (Committee)