

POLICY BRIEF

CLIMATE CHANGE: THREATS, RISKS AND VULNERABILITIES

Ecologies at the Margins

The Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) and the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) Pakistan at the IBA Karachi organized a two-day conference titled “Climate Change - Threats, Risks and Vulnerabilities” on 8th-9th October 2021. The aim of the conference was to create a conversation around climate change as a non-traditional security challenge as the changing climate and environmental degradation is increasingly and adversely affecting migration, deterioration of environmental conditions and resource constraints. Researchers from all parts of the world have projected an increase in frequency and severity of catastrophic environmental events, causing food and water scarcity, health and socio-economic

issues in coming decades, hence making this discourse a highly important conversation. The program included six panel discussions and four dairas (informal circles) on topics including ecology and the state, infrastructure, speciesism in intersectionality, scorching Cities, political ecologies of Sindh’s coastal areas’ water, displacement, multispecies collaborative survival, entrepreneurship, fair trade, ethical practices and more. Several policy makers, academics, development practitioners and students participated in this conference physically and virtually. The key policy takeaways from the conference are discussed below.

PANEL 1

Ecology and the State

Speakers: Dr Nausheen Anwar, Dr. Erum Sattar and Ms. Fatima Yameen

Moderator: Ali Samo

The panel extensively discussed the relationship between state and ecologies for a better climate future. The following points were made by the panel that need to be addressed for a sustainable future

- State laws fail to account for climate change when pursuing aestheticized infrastructural development through urbanization for higher socio-economic groups
- Greening initiatives remain uncommon in working class communities.
- There is an Infrastructural deficit that remains unacknowledged with water and

ecology alongside distorted population statistics.

- The environmental impact is causing severe loss for rural workers on whom we rely on for resources, and who are migrating to cities in large numbers generating a further load on urban resources.
- With anti encroachment laws, climate disasters, the scarcity of water, deforestation and much more; risk assessment skills in insurance markets are critical to acquire. Pricing risk is ultimately vital for transparency in urban planning and forming collectives to ensure state and corporate accountability.

Disclaimer: This Policy Brief is a result of a conference conducted by SESS IBA and supported by the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) Pakistan. The opinions expressed within are those of the authors and do not reflect the position of SESS IBA or HSF.

“
There is free movement of capital but no free movement of person - Dr. Erum Sattar
”

PANEL 2

Ecology and Infrastructure

Speakers: Shahana Rajani and Saba Khan

Moderator: Dr. Shehram Mokhtar

The following points while debating Ecology and Infrastructure

- The politics of mapping and visualizing are vital for landscapes viewed as "empty." They are advertised as being in development while organized destruction and displacement of the land's citizens and ecosystems lead to their erasure.
- Language is used to legitimize destruction by organizations like Bahria Town. The usage of temporal terms like "progress" for

urbanization, present these development industries as transnational allies.

- The media plays an important role in representation and erasure; a fact that real estate developers have exploited in Gadap and Murree. The local community is frequently dismissed and considered expendable. Infrastructure is emphasized over ecology and ultimately, a balance needs to be achieved through sustainable development, cultural preservation, and inclusion of the local citizenry.

“
For a better imagining of a future, people need to be heard and their stories need to be understood - Shahana Rajani
”

CONVERSATION



Speaker: Maneesha Deckha

Moderator: Sameen Ahmed

The speaker identified how the commodification of animals has led to issues with species identification. This has led to animals being brought into the market with limited restrictions through legalities and protection for animals unless they are endangered. The speaker suggested to ensure animal rights, we must first reconstruct discourse on species identification, and forgo the paternalistic treatment of animals.

PANEL 3

Scorching Cities – Living with heat in the Global South – with Katachi Urban Lab (KUL)

Speakers: Aqdas Fatima, Atoofa Samo, Soha Macktoom, Mohammad Toheed and Adam Abdullah

Moderator: Adam Abdullah

The panel discussed how heat is a multidisciplinary issue that incorporates geography, biology, public administration etc. The panelist further discussed the following points while debating on heat and scorching cities

- There are multiple stakeholders on federal and local levels with split responsibilities, due to which there is a lack of accurate data to rely on. Heatwave classification and definitions

frequently vary.

- There is now an infrastructural reliance on concrete and air conditioners that further segregates city spaces and citizens by class, gender, ability etc. These further impact one's physical and mental health.

- What is ultimately needed is a holistic approach to studying heat that incorporates marginalized voices, personal experiences, transparency and cooperation with state planning and accurate data statistics.

DAIRA 1

Political ecologies of Sindh's Coastal areas' water

Speakers: Saeed Baloch, Fatima Majeed and Dr. Abdul Haque Chang

Saeed Baloch and Fatima Majeed discussed the administrative mazes to navigate as citizens when dealing with dispossession of resources due to industry scale fishing. The panelist emphasized that the construction of dams has wreaked havoc with the Indus Delta as the release of fresh water into the sea is

essential for mangroves that serve as nursery for fish, shrimp, prawns and several other species. But with the construction of dams and barrages, the flow of water has greatly reduced, causing the disappearance of mangroves.

DAIRA 2

Displaced

Speakers: Abira Ashfaq, Sonia Kauser

A lawyer, an activist from Karachi Bachao Tehreek, and a resident of Gujjar Nala, discussed the impact of climate change on small informal settlements. These spaces are always in danger of Infrastructural failure due

to vulnerability of climate disasters and insecure legalities behind land ownership. The panel and audience extensively discussed that development needs to be human driven.

PANEL 4

The Feminist Movement and Climate Justice

Speakers: Atiya Abbas, Aiman Rizvi, Fizza Qureshi

Moderator: Safina Azeem

The experts discussed that since urbanization exacerbates precarity and accelerated climate change, its impact largely falls on marginalized bodies, especially working class women to take on the added labour of running a house on limited resources.

■ Climate centered activism frequently focuses on informal settlements, to which the state often reacts with violence and police

brutality; issues that are often absent from discourse on climate change.

■ To engage in sustainable development, we must center these marginalized experiences and search for long term solutions. This means holding industries and the state accountable while recentring communal activism and practices of care.

PANEL 5

Multispecies collaborative survival

Speakers: Humera Ayesha, Dr Naseem saludin, Riaz Ahmed Wagan

Moderator: Zofeen Ibrahim and Anas Khan

The panel discussed that climate change has brought a huge loss in biodiversity which directly impacts us since species are dependent on each other for survival. Microbial societies are also interlinked and zoonotic diseases like Ebola and COVID-19 have become more common due to climate change and migration of all species. Similarly,

extreme weather is further caused by deforestation which destroys an entire ecosystem, generating a chain reaction across other forests and water bodies. The panel emphasized that sustainable development is ultimately necessary in that it sustains not just us, but every species from entire forests to the smallest fungi.

CONVERSATION



Subaltern Animism

Dr. Yamini Narayanan

Moderator- Sameen Ahmed

Dr Yamini highlighted that cities as urban spaces are considered "human" spaces exclusive of animals but no species can be eradicated without severe consequences for us. She further emphasized that rather than seeking to exclude animals and local species, coexistence is

necessary to engage in sustainable development. That begins by encouraging relationships of care with animals and our surrounding ecology that houses these species.

PANEL 6

Entrepreneurship, Fair Trade, and Ethical practice

Speakers: Tahir Rashid, Maleeha Habib, Aunsha Fatima, Salman Tariq

Moderator: Dr. Aqdas Afzal

For this panel, businesses engaged in green practices were invited to talk about their motivation to sustain a green business and share their green practices. The following points were discussed in the session

- For ensuring sustainable development, there needs to be partnerships between stakeholders for green businesses.
- Entrepreneurship or Ecopreneurship, that is cruelty free, uses clean energy, and uses

organic products, still needs bankability and that requires testing incubators like WWF allowing market testing to scale ideas. This requires resources to be invested in research while being conscious of the environment and labour practices the business employs.

- Climate change is complex and it can be managed well when the different sectors come together to work on raising awareness and finding efficient ways of being sustainable.

DAIRA 4

Youth activism challenges and wins

Speakers: The Earthlings and Noor ul huda

The Last Earthlings and Noor ul Huda engaged in a discussion about personalized experiences with being climate conscious. This includes battling social stigmas and engaging

in practices of sharing, seeking alternatives and building communities that help with sustainability.

