

# LEAD UPDATE

## Environment, Development and Security: The Case of Climate Change

A lecture by Dr. Adil Najam, Islamabad-March 31, 2008

Climate change (CC) is a catastrophic issue not only for us but for our future generations as well. Rising global temperatures lead to drastic changes in weather patterns, raise sea levels and increase frequency of extreme weather events, in turn escalating natural disasters like floods, droughts, hurricanes, hence affecting livelihoods. Climate change is not just an environmental issue. It rather affects all segments of society.

Developing countries, including Pakistan are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Despite this, CC has not picked up an adequate momentum for its understanding, adaptation and mitigation, particularly in developing countries. According to UNDP's Human Development Report of 2008, "Climate change will undermine international efforts to combat poverty". The crux of the matter is whatever actions are taken now (or not taken) to combat CC will leave tremendous impacts in the coming centuries. The world needs to act now. The majority of population worldwide does not understand the severity and adverse consequences of climate change. It is crucial to address this potentially grave challenge by capacity building of stakeholders.



Chairperson and speaker, during the session

### Background

Recognizing the need for creating awareness about CC in Pakistan, as well as to benefit from the knowledge of a learned scholar on CC issues, LEAD Pakistan invited Dr. Adil Najam, to deliver a lecture on "Environment, Development and Security: The Case of Climate Change."

Dr. Adil Najam is a Professor at the Boston University, USA. He significantly contributed on the science and policy issues of global climate change. He was one of the Convening Lead Authors for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) team that shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Al Gore in 2007. He is the only Pakistani to achieve this distinction.

### Objectives

- To create awareness and interest on CC related issues.
- To explore the link of CC with development



and security.

### Lecture Highlights

Dr. Najam's illustrative and inspiring lecture focused on CC with respect to the environment, security and sustainable development. He elaborated his points by presenting three short stories titled: Planetary Designs, Stumbling Forward and Road Blocks. In the first scenario, he presented a hypothetical situation: to assume the world was one country. If this was the case, the world would be poor, divided, insecure, unsafe, and a very degraded and poorly governed country. In short, the country would be a third world country. He described CC as a

### LIST OF PARTICIPANT ORGANIZATIONS

- All Pakistan Women Association
- DFID Pakistan
- Eco-Conservation Initiatives
- Engineering Development Board
- Food and Agriculture Organization
- Global Change Impact Study Center
- Health Services Academy, Ministry of Health
- Higher Education Commission
- Hydro Carbon Development Institute of Pakistan
- Indus Earth
- International Islamic University
- Institute of Environmental Science and Engineering
- Islamabad College for Girls
- KSB Pumps Ltd.
- Lakson Tobacco
- Ministry of Environment
- Ministry of Water and Power
- NUST
- NWFP Wildlife Department
- Oxfam GB
- Pakistan Agricultural Research Council
- Pakistan Institute of Development Economics
- Pakistan Wetland Program
- Planning Commission
- PPAF Water Management Center
- NWFP Wildlife Department
- Quaid-i-Azam University
- Royal Netherlands Embassy
- SAARC Energy Center
- Sungi
- Telenor Pakistan
- Water and Power Development Authority



Participants attending lecture

April 1, 2008

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“unique global issue”. This means that unlike other issues such as poverty, which only certain countries of the world are facing, CC is an issue which affects every person and every country in the world, regardless of their location, wealth, status etc. While describing CC as a global issue, he suggested that it should be tackled through global cooperation.

Elaborating his second story of stumbling forward, Dr. Najam explained how the world slowly understood the link between development and environment. He stated that most people have an understanding of how CC happens, what happens because of it. They know that CC is happening, by observing the situation around them. However, many may not understand the significant link between environment and development. He stressed that development cannot take place without effective climate stabilization. Although climate stabilization may be possible without effective sustainable development, the costs incurred (procedural costs, political costs, effectiveness costs and foregone synergies) for this would be extremely high for this to be feasible. Hence, environment and development are interrelated.

Article 2 & Article 3 of the United Nations' Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Article 2 & Article 3 of the Kyoto Protocol and the IPCC's SRES Report have all developed a mandate to link CC with sustainable development.

Dr. Najam explained that the concept of CC began as an “emissions” problem. However, it gradually became an efficiency problem, because in order to reduce emissions, one had to become efficient. Soon after, it evolved into an equity (dollar) problem, because it affected livelihoods and technology. Now CC is considered a development problem, because it is no more just an environmental or efficiency issue but one that incorporates all these issues.

The assessment reports of the IPCC depict the evolution of ideas about CC, whereby the first assessment report talks about CC and its impacts. The second assessment report talks about that plus efficiency. The third report talks about CC, its impacts, efficiency and equity. The fourth assessment report has now included

a new focus on development. A component of sustainable development is expected in the next report.

Dr. Najam explained that sustainable development has three key components: Economic, Environmental and Social. Energy is also a key factor for sustainable development; the Millennium Development Goals directly link energy to poverty eradication. The rising demand for energy depicts a growing economy, but at the same time has significantly affected the environment due to increased carbon emissions. Since 1970s, the world gradually stumbled forward in linking energy with sustainable development. The main focus of the Stockholm Summit (1972) was on 'environmental effects' of energy. In the UN Conference on Environment and Development (1992), the main focus was on balancing the “environmental-economic” aspects of energy supply and use. However, the Johannesburg Summit (2002) expanded its focus to include all the three dimensions: environment, social and economic.

Talking about insecurity, Dr. Najam stated four main divisions of insecurity: interstate war, institutional failure, civil strife and human insecurity. Linking climate change with insecurity, he said that the world is already facing human insecurity because of CC. In fact, all those who depend on natural resources and ecosystem services are sensitive to CC due to floods, hurricanes, droughts etc. He also said that CC may soon lead to institutional failure. We can expect in the future that climate change will lead to civil violence, because conflicts over scarce resources will quickly become the dominant form of political violence.

#### Propositions

Concluding the lecture with his third story, Dr. Najam presented the following five propositions to counter road blocks relevant to CC. These define future climate for development.

- The climate problem simply cannot be tackled by

#### LIST OF SPEAKERS

- Dr. Adil Najam, Professor at Boston University, USA
- Dr. Amir Mohammad, Rector of the Fast National University
- Ali Tauqeer Sheikh, CEO, NPD, LEAD Pakistan

environment policy alone, but through looking beyond that. This is because environment is where development takes place. Thus environment constrains the development process. The IPCC in general and its SRES report in particular, have demonstrated the necessity of looking beyond climate policy alone.

- There is a new energy economy in the making and it will not be stopped. Renewable energy and clean energy production (from wind, solar and water) will make a viable economic case, because of exorbitant increases in fossil fuel prices. Thus, the change in the energy economy is demand driven. Climate will be an increasingly important driver of this change.

- Climate change will hit the poorest first, will hit the poorest most, and will hit the poorest disproportionately. The poor are the most vulnerable and least resilient to climate change. In fact, for many poor communities, CC is no longer a future issue, but something they are presently facing. Adaptation is how the poor must deal with CC.

- Climate change presents an opportunity for a governance shift. Considering the threat CC is presenting, institutions are trying to figure out what role they will need to have in climate governance. Moreover, the issue of CC should be built into trade agreements, rather than solely be a part of the environment agenda.

- A much better policy of coherence between all sectors will be needed.

This is because environment is too important as an issue to be left to the environmentalists alone.

Dr. Amir Mohammad, Rector of the FAST National University, stressed the need for further research on climate change, especially among local communities. He said that Pakistan has faced water crisis and food crisis, among many things. These are problems related to CC. It is essential to monitor climate data and carry-out more research for action.