

The Significance of International Cooperation on Climate Change Mitigation in Afghanistan

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ABSTRACT

Afghanistan confronts significant issues as a result of climate change, as the nation is susceptible to landslides, floods, droughts, and rising temperatures. Studying how international cooperation influences Afghanistan's attempts to mitigate climate change becomes crucial in light of these challenges. This study delves into the significance of such cooperation and its influence on Afghanistan's climate change policies and governance. To explore this topic, we employed a qualitative research approach along with content analysis, framed within a neoliberal framework. By adopting this approach, we aim to identify and analyze international cooperation on climate change in Afghanistan. The study reveals that international cooperation significantly impacts Afghanistan's climate change policy and governance, aligning with neoliberal institutionalism theory's emphasis on global challenges. Important conclusions from our research can help development partners, policymakers, and groups addressing climate change in Afghanistan. The results highlight the necessity of funding, technical support, and capacity building for the creation of successful policies and initiatives. Afghanistan can improve its resilience to climate change and sustainable development by placing a high priority on international cooperation. Financing, technical support, and opportunities for knowledge sharing would all be necessary for this. In addition to investments in sustainable agriculture, disaster risk reduction, facility training, foreign aid, and renewable energy, Afghanistan needs international funding currently. This article emphasizes the need for international cooperation in Afghanistan's struggle against climate change and the possibility for sustainable development through the exchange of information, operational help, and funding.

Keywords: Climate change, International Organization, Cooperation, Natural Disaster, Development

INTRODUCTION

International institutions play a crucial role in promoting cooperation among states by providing rules, norms, and procedures, reducing uncertainty, promoting transparency, and encouraging conflict resolution (Keohane, 1984). A serious environmental and development issue that affects the entire world, climate change results in a high death toll, financial losses, and natural disasters. It has an impact on human security, civil society, the economy, and governance (Mehrad, 2020). International cooperation is essential to fighting climate change because no one country can solve the issue on its own. This attempts to integrate practice and theory in the area of climate change cooperation (Cui, 2023). Afghanistan, despite low emissions, is among the six most climate change-vulnerable nations due to frequent droughts, floods, and hunger, necessitating urgent adaptation measures (Zaki, 2023). To tackle climate change, a comprehensive strategy involving legislation, institutional development, capacity building, and physical infrastructure investment is needed across various sectors (Ahmadzai & McKinna, 2018). Afghanistan signed the 1992 UNFCCC agreement, and in 2002, it joined the organization as a member (Cui, 2023). Afghanistan passed its first set of environmental legislation in 2007, formed the Department of Climate Change in 2010, and established the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) in 2005 (Zaki, 2023). With assistance from UNEP agencies and the Green Environment Fund, Afghanistan filed a report to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2013. A Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan was created by the NEPA in 2016 (Khakimov, 2019). The Ministry of Agriculture, with the support of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, has developed a strategy for managing drought vulnerability (Mehrad, 2020). Afghanistan has been working to secure international funds to mitigate the effects of climate change but has not been allocated a climate change response budget (Zafarullah & Huque, 2018). By 2030, Afghanistan intends to utilize \$10.7 billion of its budget for climate change adaptation for aquaculture and water management, with an extra 6.6 billion required to mitigate (Zaki, 2023). The Green Climate Fund (GCF) was established in 2011 to assist nations struggling with climate change in creating climate-resilient mitigation

(Alam, 2021). International organizations including the World Bank, UNESCO, UNEP, UNDP, Asian Development Bank, and WFP facilitate funds for energy conservation programs; Afghanistan receives no funding directly from any of these organizations (Cui, 2023). In August 2020, Afghanistan received 17.2 million dollars in co-financing from the GCF and 4.2 million dollars from the UNDP, but the project was halted after the Taliban regained power (Alam, 2021). Afghanistan ranks fourth in the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' list of countries facing severe climate and natural disasters due to climate change, primarily affecting agriculture, and ranks eleventh in earthquakes (Zaki, 2023). Afghanistan, a struggling nation, can benefit from international cooperation in environmental protection and natural resource management, involving law editing, global interactions, and enhancing institutional capacity (Haxthausen & Williams, 2003).

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN AFGHANISTAN

Climate change, primarily caused by global warming, refers to the long-term alteration of Earth's climate (Alam, 2021). Understanding climate change cooperation requires a comprehensive understanding of political economy, institutional, and liberal theories, focusing on institutional efficacy, state willingness, and economic interest's alignment (Milner, 1992). Neoliberal institutionalism theory emphasizes the significance of international institutions in promoting international cooperation and convergence of interests, particularly in the context of climate change (Ahmadzai & McKinna, 2018). Since 2013, Afghanistan has been identified as one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change impacts (Khakimov, 2019). International cooperation is a key factor in Afghanistan's climate change mitigation process, involving input, collaboration, and implementation from various actors (Bauck & Strand, 2009). UNEP and NEPA are influenced by international environmental norms and standards, such as the United Nations, which serve as guiding principles for their cooperative efforts in Afghanistan, establishing a common framework for environmental protection and management (Zaki, 2023). The climate change programs of the Afghan government, projected to have an annual cost of \$1078.5 million, were \$100 million underfunded between 2013 and 2015. As a result, more funding from multilateral contributors and other assistance institutions became necessary (Alam, 2021). The 2015 Paris Agreement seeks to cut polluting emissions and provide nations with \$100 billion a year to fight climate change. Despite Afghanistan's participation in the meeting and providing suggestions, the agreement has not yet been finalized (Cui, 2023). In cooperation with foreign organizations, Afghanistan aims to combat climate change and promote sustainable development by lowering greenhouse gas emissions until 2030; however, after August 2021, 32 projects totaling 826 million dollars came to a standstill (Zaki, 2023). Prior to August 2021, Afghanistan was awarded \$34 million by the Green Climate Change Fund (GCF) for climate action, and the Adaptation Fund has approved a \$10 million project for irrigation systems and water management. However, no international cooperation has been provided since (Nori, 2020). Afghanistan, initially funding-focused, ratified the UNFCCC in 2002 and established environmental institutions like NEPA. In 2010, it ratified the Kyoto Protocol, and in 2016, it completed climate change analysis (Khakimov, 2019). Afghanistan's economic growth relies heavily on development aid from donor countries, but political instability and climate change's agriculture impacts threaten it. Multilateral donor mechanisms should be utilized (Ershad, 2017). The Paris Agreement, signed by most countries, aims to support developing countries, including Afghanistan, in achieving climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals (Mehrad, 2020). The \$100 billion annual agreement aims to enhance Afghanistan's development by providing financial support, technical expertise, and capacity building. Afghanistan's limited financial support, primarily from the Green Climate Fund and the Paris Agreement, could be utilized for improved development (Zafarullah & Huque, 2018). Afghanistan faces challenges in implementing climate change policies due to limited resources, weak institutional capacity, and political instability, necessitating a balance between international cooperation and local priorities and realities (Zaki, 2023). Afghanistan's climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts require international cooperation, technical assistance, financial resources, and knowledge-sharing platforms, as well as training programs and renewable energy projects (Mohammadinia, 2023). The UNFCCC collaborates with international organizations and donors to boost climate awareness, provide financial and technical aid, and promote climate-friendly policies. This benefits Afghanistan through capacity-building programs, conferences, and partnerships, ensuring effective climate change policy and governance (Quraishi, 2021). External financial and technical support from multilateral institutions significantly influences Afghanistan's policy development, but challenges like time pressures, coordination issues, donor funding, turnovers, and institutional knowledge complicate cooperation (Cui, 2023). Bilateral donors in Afghanistan are integrating climate change into their projects, but they need to



avoid relying solely on international cooperation without considering local community involvement (Mohammadinia, 2023). Afghanistan must overcome capacity gaps related to climate change, including the development of human resource skills, at all levels and for all stakeholders (Zaki, 2023). Countries must adapt to or mitigate climate change's effects at national, regional, and local levels. Adaptation involves adjusting to the expected climate, while mitigation involves human intervention. Both strategies aim to minimize harm, seize opportunities, and maintain vulnerability and resilience (Quraishi, 2021). The Islamic Emirate faces delays in climate action due to a lack of international cooperation, a suspension of major climate crisis programs, and a ban on Afghanistan's National Environmental Agency (NEPA) submitting climate change reports (Zaki, 2023). The Paris Agreement and treaties like the Montreal Protocol aim to limit global warming, but international cooperation is crucial to address the disproportionate impacts of climate change (Chan et al., 2018). Implementing international policies and institutions is crucial for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting de-carbonization, and supporting low-carbon development, considering factors like institutional capacity, equity, cost, benefits, and climate targets (Nori, 2020). International cooperation needs to prioritize climate technologies like renewable energy, carbon capture, and green construction, with developed countries leading in developing and financing these technologies for shared goals (Milner, 1992). Afghanistan needs to improve its institutional capacity, data collection, awareness, and stakeholder coordination to tackle climate change challenges, with international partners providing support and learning from other countries' experiences (Mohammadinia, 2023). Afghanistan requires international cooperation to effectively manage climate change adaptation, de-carbonization, and mitigation to achieve its goals by 2030 (Zaki, 2023). However, the situation has stalled, and by 2030, the world will implement its plan in other places, leaving Afghanistan to suffer the damages of climate change without receiving any international funds (Mohammadinia, 2023). Afghanistan's resilient population requires urgent support to cope with climate change-related shocks, reinforcing adaptive and livelihood capacities, and coping with shrinking productive capacity (Cui, 2023).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study uses qualitative research to examine the impact of international cooperation on climate change in Afghanistan, utilizing reliable data sources, an analytical discussion framework, and content analysis. It provides valuable insights into Afghanistan's climate change situation and highlights critical aspects requiring attention.

RESULTS

International cooperation for climate change benefits backward countries more, but Afghanistan has not received any aid since August 2021. Afghanistan is entitled to a lot of aid due to the SDGs and climate change international agreements. The Afghan government needs financial assistance for mitigation and adaptation efforts. Until 2030, the international community will implement its plan in other countries, but Afghanistan will only suffer from climate change. In addition to financial assistance, Afghanistan needs technical support, tools, and knowledge sharing to combat climate change.

DISCUSSION

The international community's financial aid to Afghanistan, aimed at mitigating climate change damage, is hindered by complex mechanisms, preventing progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Addressing the issue of climate change damages and addressing the international community's failure to achieve its goals is crucial. This lack of recognition has adversely affected Afghanistan, causing further damage without proper compensation. The Paris Agreement consents to compensation, but it's not completely applied in this case. Afghanistan already faces the devastating effects of climate change, and the lack of international support improves mitigation. Afghanistan, despite needing millions of dollars in annual investments, struggles to effectively address climate change due to its heavy reliance on foreign assistance and inadequate capacity building. The Islamic Emirate's leadership should invest in infrastructure for better mitigation planning. The international community must instantly identify the need for expanded support in Afghanistan's fight against climate change. By providing satisfactory funding and resources, we can create a sustainable future and significantly mitigate the devastating effects of climate change. The Afghan government

should ask the international community for its financial contribution in the field of climate change and make convincing proposals.

CONCLUSION

Afghanistan's climate change policies and governance require international cooperation due to its vulnerability and limited resources. Financial assistance, technical expertise, and knowledge-sharing can help implement climate change policies, benefiting citizens and the environment. Support for renewable energy projects and training can ensure food security and diminish the impact of climate change on farming communities. International cooperation can develop governance structures by providing funding, training, and capacity-building programs for government officials and civil society organizations. Facilitating knowledge exchange and best practices enhances Afghanistan's ability to tackle climate change, protect its environment, and promote coordination, collaboration, transparency, and accountability.

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