



COP 27 - Its Failures

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The 27th UN climate change, conference of parties 27 (COP 27) also termed as 'Africa's Cop' took place in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt. Generally, the main purpose of COP was to consult and share the ideas to counter global warming by taking necessary actions.

After the Paris Peace Climate Accord, held in COP21, the importance and concerns regarding climate change took an important turn. In addition to this, COP26 was mainly concerned about the actions, written in the Paris Peace Accord, that should be taken to counter the global warming and carbon emissions. Whereas COP27 was focused to promote climate justice as many countries are least responsible for climate crisis but are facing the major loss and damage.

COP27 gave hope to the developing countries to counter loss and damage by receiving climate financing and achieving global decarbonization. Most importantly, the developed states recognized the responsibility to pay for loss and damage to poor and developing countries especially those states who are struggling because of climate disasters.

On the other hand, it has been observed that COP27 did not achieve what was expected. Various reasons contributed to the failures that can be broadly divided into three categories. Firstly, the global politics that encapsulates US-China conflict escalation and Russia Ukraine war. Secondly, the issues of developing and developed states; lack of

responsibility, lack of interest and reducing the fossil fuels. Thirdly, the absence of strategies including location and time in which COP27 was being held.

GLOBAL POLITICS

Russia Ukraine War

Developing states did not expect a drastic change in the policies under COP27. Such low expectations were due to the Russia Ukraine war. Now, Ukraine marks almost eleven months since Russia has launched a full-scale invasion and it has literally wreaked havoc in the market of global energy. Especially the prices of crude oil and natural gas has soared to an extent that even developed states are being affected. Hence, it has become a major challenge for states to completely abandon the use of fossil fuels. The results are completely other-worldly, as European states are drastically relying on the coal burnt energy as it is relatively cheaper as compared to the soared crude oil and gas prices.

Let us not forget that states have agreed to limit global temperatures and take steps for different measures and contributions to achieve net carbon zero until 2050, or climate disasters would become irreversible.

US-China Conflict Escalation

United States and China have one of the most complex bilateral relations that has a noticeable impact on the international environment. Conflict escalation is observed between both countries since the US House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi, visited Taiwan to mark a significant show of support for Taiwan against China's threat. China's foreign ministry has declared this visit as severe impact on the political foundation of China-US relations. This has further exacerbated the situation against the climate policies to achieve goals that counters global warming, especially carbon emissions.

The United States and China together contribute 40% of the world's carbon emissions. Most importantly, last year in COP26, United States and China, surprisingly, reached a

deal in which they agreed to collaborate by taking collective measures to reverse global warming. Hence, COP26 had its own importance as the deal between United States and China was a very positive development.

No matter how unfortunate it may seem, the US-China conflict drastically affected the outcomes of COP27. The Foreign Minister of Egypt, after COP27, explained how the delegates did not make a clear commitment to further proceed to eliminate the use of fossil fuels. The agreements were very vague to show concerns regarding the loss and damage occurred by the climate disasters. However, the absence of collaboration between both the states will result in a failure of any meaningful outcome in future COPs.

ISSUES OF DEVELOPING AND DEVELOPED STATES

The 'Phase Out' or 'Phase Down' of Fossil Fuels

The Glasgow Climate Pact focuses on subsidies for fossil fuels and to reduce the usage of unabated coal. India's climate minister Bhupender Yadav argued that the developing nations still have to deal with their development ambitions and poverty eradication and questioned how they could commit to ending subsidies for coal and fossil fuels. Moreover, India is demanding to phase down every fossil fuel not only coal.

The debate regarding 'Phaseout' and 'Phase down' remained under war of words and no serious outcome was observed in this COP. Hence, just like COP 26 some states were dissatisfied with the outcome, but in the end, the countries must agree to phase out coal rather than step down, considering the situation and occurrence of climate disasters.

The most recent major report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change made it abundantly clear that in order to maintain hope of limiting global warming to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels, the world must halve emissions by 2030. This change would require urgently reducing fossil fuel use across the board. After that point, climate disasters will be far more devastating.

India has been a leading voice in favor of the shift, which goes against the conventional wisdom and climate policies. The experts have predicted that India's carbon emissions would increase by 6 percent by the end of 2022.

Lack of Interest of Developed States

As we know, every state has some internal affairs and policies especially related to domestic issues. Many developments and economic issues may affect their pledges made at the climate change conference, considering an example of the UK, since Rishi Sunak came to power.

Compared to other COPs, this one is more difficult to assess because there was no decisive moment. The world is obviously not on track to achieve the Paris Agreement's aims at this time. This shifts the burden of proof to developed countries to show that they are making genuine efforts to deal with climate disasters and reduce carbon emissions. Apart from this, every developing state is supposed to keep an eye out for unambiguous signs that a country is making rapid and fruitful improvement. During this global turmoil, developing states also need to witness concrete examples of real political will. The need to keep the clean energy transition should be kept firmly in mind if states want to ensure their survival in the current climate conditions.

China's collaboration is very significant to understand how much it is prepared to provide and how it will demonstrate its commitment to take required steps to meet the 1.5°C objective is a significant question mark hovering over the COP.

Many nations require more strict emission reduction targets. During the conference, Alok Sharma MP, President of COP26 in Glasgow, highlighted worries about COP27. In addition, he stated, "Emission reductions before 2025 are important, but they are not in the language, nor are strong promises to phase out fossil fuels, and the energy wording was reduced at the last minute."

Developed states are the sovereign states and their contribution towards decision making is extremely important. Hence states must focus on increasing bilateral and multi-lateral relations to maximize collaboration.

TIME, PLACE AND STRATEGIES

Location and Time of COP-27

Last year, COP26 was being criticized that it was too much focused on the north and is marginalizing the voices of other regions. In context to this, Egypt was nominated as a host for COP27, so that the marginalized voices of other continents must be heard. As many countries in the Global south are far more prone to the climate disasters and have experienced droughts, flooding and extreme weather conditions.

Egypt is currently under military rule, having General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi as president. The current political system has a strong control on the civilians as it has taken a shift from monarchy towards the military rule. With having already restricted attention of media and being controlled by Egyptian security forces, only limited presence of civil society was allowed.

While the summit was being held, residents were restricted and there were various checkpoints to restrict and limit local attendance. Many delegates were concerned regarding the Egyptian dictatorship as the tightly controlled security may hinder the effective negotiations. Additionally, the civil society organizations were not able to effectively contribute towards the discussion regarding the climate issues due to the authoritarian rule in Egypt.

Cop 27 was about to start in few days followed by the G20 summit. Country heads were busy in debating that which conference they should attend. Due to geo-political tensions like Russia Ukraine war and China Taiwan crisis world had already entered in the 'catastrophic stage' in terms of the economy and climate. Climate change is putting risks to national economies hence, the significance of the simultaneous occurrence of

these two gatherings cannot be overstated as Cop27 and G20 were a necessity. However, their simultaneous occurrence has also affected outcomes of the conference.

Absence of Strategies

It should not be taken for granted that, for the very first time, developed states have at least agreed to provide climate assistance to the poor and developing countries. Mostly, the rich countries are those that are known for creating most of the carbon emissions that are drastic for humanity. However, the COP27 has left a major vacuum in the discussions when no clear strategies were made regarding the financial aid. Clear strategies would allow every state to understand how much each country that is being affected by carbon emissions is going to receive aid, and how much each country is supposed to donate. Such strategies would lead to such policies which will hold those developed states responsible and at least they are contributing for the damages that developing states are facing with already soared economic conditions.

Recommendations

- COP27 has been hailed as the world's last chance to prevent global warming of more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. According to a recent analysis, countries' new plans are inadequate, therefore world is on pace for between 2.4C and 2.8C warming. Hence COP28 must bring results instead of discussions.
- Since major economies like India and China are not in favor of being required contributors to the fund, next year's, COP28, meeting must focus on clarifying the donor base and beneficiaries' points on the loss and damage fund agreement at COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh.
- At COP27, countries also agreed to form a "transitional committee" to advise on how to put the new financial arrangements and the fund into action at the following year's COP28. Therefore, the loss and damage fund must focus on the

proper strategies regarding fund distribution by institutional arrangements and governance for developing or vulnerable countries.

- The transitional committee must also focus on the deserving states and the amount of fund being distributed is not unjust.
- China and India demanded “phase out” to be shifted to “phase down”. Which clearly shows that getting rid of fossil fuels is not easy as the issue has become a major point of contention. The alternative ideas must be given to the states which are dependent on coal otherwise this issue will stay the same in COP28.
- Climate experts have raised the issue regarding FIFA world cup, criticizing that the money is already there but is not being used to stop and control the carbon emissions. Hence, states are capable enough to provide funds to vulnerable states. The money is there but sense of responsibility is not.
- Climate change is a global issue, instead of dividing, US and China must focus on uniting in terms of climate as COP27 was considered as a last chance.
- European Union must reconsider and look at carbon-intensive coal as an alternative energy source which will ultimately reduce its emissions by nearly 0.8%.

There is an urgent need for healing. However, doing so would be similar to treating symptoms rather than causes. Not focusing on the more pressing aim of speeding up a low-carbon and climate-resilient transition and rapidly scaling solutions because of the need to get the loss and damage fund specifics correct is a serious mistake.

Conclusion

The climate summit concluded with a breakthrough agreement for developing nations. It was disappointing that there were no agreements to reduce greenhouse gas emissions further. Although in COP 27, states agreed to establish funds to assist developing nations in recovering from climate-related disasters such as flooding. United Nations

Secretary General Antonio Guterres viewed it as an important step towards justice as it would help poor nations that face climate disasters and are more vulnerable. It has been criticized that there was no new carbon reduction pledge, and these negotiations were scheduled and rescheduled until the 'loss and damage' agreement was finalized. Obviously, this will not be sufficient, as proper strategies are needed to distribute funds through under proper governance to restore lost trust of Climate vulnerable states.