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# Pakistan, land of glaciers, faces the brunt of climate crisis

Kiran Shehzadi Yesterday

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The world is currently passing through a critical phase of climate change. Rising global temperatures, increasing sea levels, unseasonal rainfall, intense heatwaves, and extreme weather events are no longer rare occurrences. Recent UN reports confirm that if carbon emissions continue at the current rate, human survival — as well as agriculture, water resources, and economies — will face severe threats in the coming decades.

Pakistan, despite being among the lowest contributors to global greenhouse gas emissions, is unfortunately bearing the brunt of climate change. The country is home to the largest number of glaciers outside the polar regions. According to recent research by EvK2CNR, Pakistan has over 13,000 glaciers and 2,772 supraglacial lakes. These glaciers are not only a vital natural resource but also pose a growing risk.

Due to global warming, glaciers are melting rapidly, disrupting traditional water sources and increasing incidents of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs). In recent years, areas in Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have experienced devastating floods and landslides, largely attributed to these climate shifts.

In response, EvK2CNR, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Italy, is establishing advanced laboratories in Pakistan for scientific research on glaciers and ecosystems. These labs—covering water quality, zoology, glaciology, and plant pathology—are being set up at Karakoram International University and the University of Baltistan. They aim to collect local data for use in environmental policymaking.

Additionally, modern governance and management plans have been developed for ecologically sensitive areas like the Central Karakoram National Park (CKNP) and Deosai National Park (DNP) to preserve biodiversity and maintain environmental balance.

## Climate Change Impacts on Pakistan

Decrease in agricultural productivity and crop damage; imbalanced water availability; rise in heatwaves and extreme temperatures; increasing number of climate migrants in both rural and urban areas; mounting pressure on the economy, especially rural livelihoods

## Solutions and Recommendations

Effective implementation of the National Climate Policy, including research, capacity building, and international collaboration; protection of natural ecosystems, particularly forests and glacier-adjacent environments; prioritise clean energy initiatives—solar, hydropower, wind—to reduce reliance on fossil fuels; promote education and awareness on climate change through schools, colleges, and media engage local communities, especially in northern regions, by providing training and resources to adapt to climate impacts.

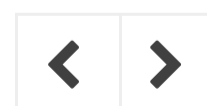
Pakistan’s natural beauty and resources are a national trust, but if climate change is not taken seriously, these blessings may turn into burdens. The rapid melting of glaciers is a clear warning: it is time to move beyond rhetoric and take tangible action.

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