

Press release: COP27: Issues, agenda and expectations

20 October 2022, Kathmandu:

South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE) in collaboration with The Asia Foundation (TAF) organized a webinar “COP27: Issues, agenda and expectations” on the eve of the 27th UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) scheduled to be held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt on 6-18 November 2022. Different experts engaged in the areas such as climate change, environmental protection, and environmental economics discussed the issues related to adaptation, climate finance, loss and damage, and the trade-industrial-climate-policy nexus, from the perspective of South Asia, and the way forward.

Chairing the session, Ajaya Dixit, Founder, Institute for Social and Environmental Transition – Nepal (ISET-N), pointed out that this year’s COP27 will have to address the changing global context with the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the resulting energy crisis in Europe.

At the same time, South Asia is facing scorching heat in some places while Pakistan faced devastating floods, making the need to collectively address climate change mitigation and adaptation a pressing issue for our part of the world, he added.

Dr. Paras Kharel, Executive Director, SAWTEE, pointed out that devastating floods in Pakistan, aggravated by climate change, have been a grim reminder of the urgency to resolve outstanding issues of adaptation, climate finance, and loss and damage, besides increased ambition on mitigation.

Mr. Manjeet Dhakal, Head of the LDC Support Team and Director, Climate Analytics South Asia Office pointed out that despite the world is heading to a warming of 2.4°C with 2030 targets and even higher, 2.7°C, with current policies, global advancement in renewable energy and shifting investments, technology breakthroughs coming in, business and market preferences changing towards renewables give hope.

COP27 is the last opportunity for countries to close the 2030 ambition gap in line with the Paris pledge and COP27 must send a clear signal by mobilizing climate finance for adaptation, resilience and low carbon by making a concrete decision on funding arrangements for loss and damage, he added.

He cautioned that countries at COP27 need to realize that any would mean compromising future generations, the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable communities, and going against the findings of the latest science.

Another presenter, Dr. Nitya Nanda, Director, Council for Social Development, India, called attention to the dilemma faced by the countries in South Asia as the countries still need to ensure economic development and provide adequate clean energy to all while reigning the emissions.

But doing nothing to prevent climate change from worsening is not an option, he added, to meet adaptation requirements, South Asian countries need huge finance for building resilience and will also require access to clean technologies.

His arguments were seconded by Prof Kasturi Das, Chairperson, Sustainability & Social Responsibility, Institute of Management Technology. She pointed out that in today’s hyper-connected world of global

value chains, it is difficult to think about the climate agenda delinked from the trade and industry agenda.

Dr. Fahmida Khatun, Executive Director, the Centre for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh, pointed out that climate finance and agreements regarding compensation for loss and damage caused by climate change impact need to be settled in COP27. These issues are more important for the countries in South Asia which are experiencing extreme and unpredictable weather events while contributing hardly many emissions.

Dr. Erandathie Pathiraja, Research Fellow, Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka, Colombo, called attention to the close nexus of climate change and food security citing the example of Sri Lanka which is facing multiple crisis compounding into a humanitarian crisis.

Dr. Vaqar Ahmed, Joint Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Pakistan also cited the recent devastating floods in Pakistan that caused damages worth US\$40 billion that threat to lives and livelihoods is eminent making climate finance for adaptation and mitigation an important agenda.

This webinar is the second of the Civil Society Forum—an initiative between TAF and SAWTEE to discuss and raise awareness on issues of regional interest among civil society organizations working in diverse areas.

The video of the webinar can be found here <<Youtube link>>.