



Global Climate Change: Challenges, Opportunities, and Multilateral Strategies for Sustainable Development

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Abstract

Background: Climate change is one of the most pressing global challenges, demanding collaborative action from both developed and developing countries. Despite numerous international agreements like the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, political will and leadership commitment have been inconsistent, hindering effective global climate action. Private actors and global partnerships have emerged as critical players in addressing climate risks, but geopolitical and economic tensions continue to impede progress. **Objectives:** This research explores the key challenges and opportunities in combating climate change, emphasizing the role of international cooperation, the involvement of private and public sectors, and the need for innovative solutions. It also seeks to examine the responsibilities of developed and developing countries in contributing to global climate goals. **Methods:** A qualitative analysis was conducted by reviewing relevant literature, international agreements, and case studies. Data from climate summits, reports, and expert opinions were integrated to understand the political, economic, and environmental dimensions of climate change. **Findings:** The study identifies several challenges, including a lack of political will among major powers, economic competition, and inconsistent global leadership. It also highlights opportunities, such as the potential for technological innovation, investment in renewable energy, and the strategic role of private actors in promoting sustainable development. The findings underscore the importance of global partnerships and multilateral platforms like the United Nations in fostering cooperation among nations. **Conclusion:** Addressing climate change requires a holistic approach involving state and non-state actors, strong political leadership, and global partnerships. The transition to a low-carbon economy will require significant economic restructuring, but it presents opportunities for innovation and sustainable



development. The study emphasizes the need for developed countries to fulfill their financial commitments to support adaptation in developing nations. **Novelty:** This research contributes to the existing literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of both the challenges and opportunities in combating climate change. It highlights the critical role of private actors and international cooperation, offering a framework for future global actions.

Keywords: Climate change, global partnerships, sustainable development, international cooperation, carbon emissions

Introduction

The word "climate change" in the context of globalization refers to a far broader set of risk characteristics that include social, economic, political, and global environmental elements outside the purview or control of any one nation or group (UN, Global Environment; Kavalski, 2023). It is simply a more extensive exterior link between men and the environment, one that is typically out of reach physically at this time.

"Environment" has been described as "a term that everyone understands and no one is able to define" (Nanda, & Pring, 2013). The issues of climate change are highly politicized. It is true and clear that climate change is real and that human activity is the cause of environmental degradation, especially in industrialized countries. Climate change is a global issue that is the defining issue of our time, and we are at a decisive moment (Climate Change-UNBiru & Amentie, 2024).

Climate change has been identified as a worldwide problem as part of the "Sustainable Development" concept that brought together leaders from 193 nations to create the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UNDP Sustainable Development Goals, 2015). Addressing climate change has been seen as essential to achieving all of the SDGs. The fact that climate change is one of the main worldwide concerns may be what causes all of the global crises and SDGs identified by the UN. The safety of people and their environments is therefore a major concern of climate change, in addition to the environment. The threat of climate change has transcended national borders, and the United Nations has joined together as a united front to coordinate the international response to the issue. As a result, globalization is one of the key contexts for the globe and has the potential to be a beneficial force for all people. This has been referred to as both a challenge and an opportunity in the current global government to address the problem (Bruhl & Rittberger, 2001; Sigdel et al., 2023). State and non-state actors, as well as economic and development actors, can actively participate in global networks as a non-hierarchical idealistic multipolar network of international and transnational institutions to address the climate crisis.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to have an analytical observation of the issue of climate change in global context. The following two specific objectives have been outlined for



systematic study to deal the globalization and its role to combat the issue of climate change in line with related sustainable development agendas.

- To evaluate the problem of climate change and its effects on the world.
- To consider the function of international cooperation and domination in addressing the problem of climate change.

Methodology

The study based on secondary sources came from contemporary, comprehensive journals and papers. The United Nations' (UN) publications and reports on climate change, as well as a number of papers connected to the topic, as well as a few additional books and periodicals, have all been analyzed and arranged analytically. As one of the primary theoretical foundations of global domination, the article also explored ideological and realist theoretical theories regarding globalization and climate change.

Discussions

Climate Change: Circumstances and Causes

The issue of climate change is a significant problem for the whole world. The desire for unsustainable human progress, wealth, luxurious consumption, and living standards can be indicated as major causes of the problem. In September 2019, a wildfire in eastern Australia raged for almost seven months, consuming nearly 75,000 square miles. Tens of thousands of people were displaced, almost 3,000 homes were destroyed, air quality worsened by 30% in Melbourne, more than one billion animals died, and economic damages were expected to reach \$4.4 billion (Podesta & Stern, 2020). In 2019, the Amazon rainforest wildfire was another major event attributed to climate change. Between 2010 and 2019, natural disasters cost the world approximately \$2.98 trillion, and in the first half of 2019, seven million people were displaced by extreme weather (Podesta & Stern, 2020).

Adow (2020) provides a disastrous picture of Kenya, with frequent and severe droughts causing the death of animals and starvation, forcing hundreds of thousands of herders to give up their traditional lifestyles and move to cities, all due to climate change. Some prophecies have been claimed regarding climate change, predicting shortages of food and water, uninhabitable coastlines, a surge of refugees, climate-related migration, insecurity, and injustice (Podesta & Stern, 2020; Adow, 2020; Baker, George, Sultz, & Halstead, 2020).

Regarding the responsibility for these damages, human actions in general, and developed and highly industrialized countries in particular, are especially accountable. Comparing the impacts of population growth and social beliefs related to material possessions in developing nations, highly modern and developed countries contribute significantly to the damage to the natural ecosystem by burning coal and producing oil and gas. The National Academy of Sciences (2008) calculated that more greenhouse gas emissions from the developed world have harmed the developing world.



Thus, harm manifests as floods, storms, wildfires, and other catastrophic events associated with climate change. Scientist James Hansen estimated that developed countries were responsible for 77% of all carbon emissions between 1751 and 2006, with the U.S. alone producing 28% of carbon dioxide emissions during that period (Adow, 2020). As the UN reported in 2017, China is currently the biggest emitter, releasing over 10 billion metric tons, followed by the U.S. with 5.3 billion, the EU with 3.6 billion, and India with 3.2 billion (Adow, 2020; Baker, George, Sultz, & Halstead, 2020).

Impacts of Climate Change

Climate change has already caused significant damage to the earth and humanity in various ways. Over five million pastoralists in northern Kenya face an increasingly desperate situation due to drought. Herders in Kenya, farmers in Bangladesh, and fishermen in the Mekong River basin are highly impacted by climate change, despite not being responsible for this crisis (Adow, 2020). Furthermore, 581 Burundians and 51 Mozambicans who were buffeted by typhoons a few years ago, along with 35 Bangladeshis threatened by both rising sea levels and increasingly erratic rainfall, have been adversely affected by American carbon dioxide emissions (ibid.). The impacts of climate change are multifaceted and intricately linked to human life and habitats, as highlighted by the UN global issues and SDGs.

Poverty, Food, and Health; 821 million people are undernourished partly due to drought. Rising temperatures, droughts and floods, threaten food production and supply chain, Quality of the air breathe is declining, Infectious and mosquito-borne diseases are spreading faster, industrial production, smoke-filled cities full of people with a chronic health problem (Adow, 2020; Climate Change-UN).

Refugee and Migration; Above 2 million people are displaced by the weather and climate-related disasters. Tens of thousands of people flee from the natural disaster, the migration crisis in Europe is rising, and severe climate change is displacing more and more people. In Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asian alone could generate an additional 51 million to 118 million internal 'climate migrants' by 2050 (Baker, George, Sultz, & Halstead, 2020).

Peace, Security, and Justice; Above 35 million people are affected by floods; out of 883,000 internal displacements, 32% is related to floods and 29% is linked with drought. Earthquake, hurricane, massive fire hazards, swarms of locusts, and massive floods as well as food water insecurity are threatening people to live in peace and assurance of justice and security (McLeod, 2020; Adow, 2020; Podesta, & Stern, 2020; Baker, George, Sultz, & Halstead, 2020). Developed countries not only emit more carbon but also the consumption of fossil fuels is the fundamental root of injustice for the people in the developing world (Adow, 2020).

Environment and Climate Change; Greenhouse gas emissions, increasing of temperature, decrease global ocean oxygen continually threatens to the peat-land ecosystem, Ocean acidification is going on, the rise of the sea level and risk of catastrophic flooding; West



Antarctic Ice Sheet, intense heat waves, floods, storm activity, and other events associated with climate change threatening the entire world (McLeod, 2020; Adow, 2020; Climate Change- UN).

Socio-Economic; uneven population and economic development impacted environmental degradation; drought and other environmental hazards have destroyed livestock population and agricultural production forcing farmers and herders to migrate and poor living condition, unsustainable population changes and settlement characterized rapid urbanization (UN Economic and Social Affairs, 2001; Adow, 2020). Between 1961 and 2000, emissions from poorer countries caused \$740 billion worth of economic damage, whereas emissions from richer countries caused \$2.3 trillion worth of economic damage to the poorer countries (Adow, 2020).

Climate Change: Challenges and Opportunities

Population growth, economic development and environmental change are three unprecedented development eras of the twenty-first century (UN Economic and Social Affairs, 2001). These three major uneven growth and development created several challenges in the concert of global governance to tackle the issue of climate change. Because, human being are the center; people who demand progress, development, wealth, achievement, technology has been caused climate change as well as the people who are responsible to *'meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability to future generations to meet their own needs'* along with the progress and advancement (UN Economic and Social Affairs, 2001; UN World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

Challenges to combat the issue of Climate Change

One of the most triggering challenges of climate change is the ultimate foreign policy because any viable solution requires all major countries to act in the concert (Baker, George, Sultz, & Halstead, 2020). Several summits and agreements have been achieved in the name of climate change. The 1987 *Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer* considered as a most successful global environment treaty to phase out the production of chemicals (ibid.). Rio de Janeiro in 1992 – was one more initiation to negotiate to reduce the global greenhouse gas emission by formulating the concept of sustainable development but diplomatic challenge of convincing the leading economies of the world, and geopolitical and economic consequences became a hurdle. (Baker III, Shultz, & Halstead, 2020; UN Economic and Social Affairs, 2001).

Later, Kyoto Protocol- 1997, and the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change was the crucial efforts have been accomplished (Baker, George, Sultz, & Halstead, 2020; Adow, 2020). But, later President George W. Bush refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol and President Donald Trump announced withdrawal from the Paris agreement (Podesta, & Stern, 2020). Not just the US, EU is happily standing shoulder to shoulder with Trump including UK President Morrison, Brazilian President Bolsonaro, Russian President Putin, and other leaders also failed



to turn into serious action (Henderson, 2020). So that lacking of the political will and their realist nature in the global arena of the rich industrialized nations becoming a great challenge. There are various summits including Rio de Janeiro in 1992, UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen- 2009, and Climate Summit in Durban- 2011, has been concluded with meaningful decisions and agreements of providing subsidies to the developing countries, minimizing carbon emissions to 'net zero' by 2050, avoid significant risk to planetary health and human well-being, decarbonize energy, transportation, and manufacturing system in the next 30 years, etc., but none of these decisions and agreements have been translated into meaningful change because of unreliable nature of the developed countries (Podesta, & Stern, 2020; McLeod, 2020; Henderson, 2020).

Competition in today's multipolar world which has been characterized less by direct military confrontation among the great powers and more by economic and diplomatic rivalry also has been considered as challenge in the global action (Baker, George, Sultz, & Halstead, 2020). Tension between the US and China over trade, regional security and human rights including other bilateral and regional relationship over trade and ideological tussles are the challenge for the global power (Podesta, & Stern, 2020). Coalition among the global/regional allies including IMF, WB, Asian Development Bank are also the challenging factor on the global platform to work and agreed together. Major Powers and carbon emitter countries like the US, China, India and Europe can play a vital role for the coalition of G-20 where Argentina, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey should be invited to join in order to provide additional representation for important reasons (ibid.). But, who will be a global leader? Can UN as a multilateral body perform effectively on the global forum? Answers of these questions ultimately depends on the nature of leadership and governments predominantly the developed countries.

Opportunities to Combat the issue of Climate Change

Besides the numerous challenges opportunities also exists at the same coin to tackle and overcome. Opportunities not only for the Government Organizations (GOs) and Inter-government Organizations (IGOs) but private sectors, Research & Developments (R & D) including science and technology and individual members also can be participated and benefitted (Henderson, 2020; Podesta, & Stern, 2020). There are several areas where GOs and IGOs can take initiations to develop public and foreign policy to confront environmental injustice, structural changes via bilateral and multilateral relationship, international forum and financial institutions to accelerate to combat the climate change. Globalization and idealistic platform of global power can serve the head of the states and governments as well as political leaders including private actors to galvanize the political will and global uniformity to tackle the issue by adopting appropriate climate policy.

Tackling the issue of climate change is to greenback for the green earth. So that it is really a great challenge to move back the entire economy, infrastructure and investment in the risky business. Thus, there is a reason climate change has been described as a 'wicked problem' where fully decarbonizing the economy will require not only completely transforming the global energy infrastructure, at a cost of many trillions of dollars (Henderson, 2020). But



remaking the green planets by combating the challenge of climate change via revolutionizing the contemporary practices might be alternative opportunities for the state and non-state actors. As Larry Fink, the CEO of BlackRock has declared "*climate risk is investment risk*" but the risk may create an opportunity for creative innovation and investment in the alternative energies and sustainable development.

Importance of Global Partnership

The issue of environment has been tenured on the global floor since the starting phase of the UN. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); '*Ensure Environmental Sustainability*' reflected it's continues importance and now, SDGs is one more reason to all the global partners to come together on the global floor to achieve the goals. The UN Secretary-General has proposed six climate-positive action for governments to build back their economies and societies; cooperation because no country can succeed alone and partnership for the goals (SDGs 17) is a strategic model to address the climate emergency (Climate Change- UN; UNDP Sustainable Development Goals, 2015).

Climate change is global in nature and scope that needs a large-scale movement of people and expertise to tackle its challenges though there are equally challenges for compelling economic stability, democratic and geo-politics, national security and internal policy for the developed countries on the global floor (Podesta & Stern, 2020; Bakers III, George, Shultz, & Halstead, 2020; Climate Change- UN). Regime and leadership changes, several withdrawal and unreliable nature of developed countries demanding a new more robust and realistic diplomatic strategy to address climate changes where global organizational mechanism, the United Nations can play a vital role by transcending the national boundaries to collaborate all the global partners for the common issue to combat with diverse responsibilities.

The world is facing of uncertain global challenges though it has potentially enormous consequence within humanity's innovative capability to solve. Thus, human being is obligated and the UN is the platform to exercise all the efforts to protect the whole world. Not a single major power is implementing adequate solutions, because none has found viable political, economic, or international formula to combat the global challenges in isolation. Domestic reduction of the carbon emissions of any country will be of limited value unless major carbon emitter countries, such as China, India, America, Europe, East Asia do their part unitedly (Baker III, Shultz, & Halstead, 2020; Podesta, & Stern, 2020). So that it is not an issue of being a winner or leader by acting alone but the race will determine on the economic and geopolitical balance of power by partnering of major carbon emitter countries with collaborating the developing countries together on the global forum.

Role of Private Actors as Global Actors

Sovereign government action is the ultimate to change stirring in the policy, partnership and cooperation for the global actors mostly the role and influence of powerful leaders from developed countries. Therefore, frequent changes and withdrawal from the global agreements on the issue of climate change is questioning to the powerful countries for their attitude and morality. Private actors in this circumstances can present their influencing voices on the global



mechanism to fulfill the vacuum. Lobbying from the private, non-governmental organizations and independent federal government are playing vital role to push forward to those countries to stand on the global agreements (Podesta, & Stern, 2020; Henderson, 2020). Companies including Apple, Gap, Google, HP, and Levis Strauss jointly published an open letter to Donald Trump to rethink the decision after withdrawal from the Paris agreement (Henderson, 2020). Elon Musk, the CEO of Tesla and Bob Iger, the CEO of Disney resigned from some of the president's advisory council as a protest of the Trump decision and more than 2000 companies have joint a collaborative effort called "*We are Still in*" to pressurize the Trump's administration (Henderson, 2020).

Private actors can convert climate risk as opportunities to move forward every firm to disclose the carbon emission and invest creatively to the alternatives sources of energy. Solar and wind energy are both multibillion-dollar business, plant-based and global recycling could generate close to \$ 400 billion in the next five years and African continents has more wind, sun and geothermal energy than anywhere else in the world to invest (ibid.). China is now the world's top producers, exporters, and users of wind turbines, solar panels, and batteries at the same time it accounted for 60 percent of global electric vehicle sales with a long range plans in place to turn itself into the global leaders in developing the fuels and cars of the future (Bakers III, George, Shultz, & Halstead, 2020). Development of the clean energy not only by the realization of the climate action, not just because of the customers and stakeholders demand but it promises equally far-reaching economic benefits for the private sectors to promote sustainable investment and job creation.

Science and research can be a mediator where GOs/IGOs and private sectors can be benefitted. Local initiation from individual governments and community can work for the long-term project of cutting emission by adopting several local as well as new technology. Every citizen simply can take initiative in their local community by painting rooftop white, managing rooftop gardens which can absorb extreme heat and 75% of the rainfall they receive (McLeod, 2020). And global domination can have access to influence from bottom to top and top to bottom to implement the policies and create ethical circumstances for all the stakeholders.

Developed and Developing Countries in the Climate Change

The concerns and questions of the developing countries must be prioritized and addressed together to meet the global challenges including climate change. SDGs including other global concerns cannot be achieved without addressing the problems of developing countries as a whole. So that the UN, regional alliances can play an important role to collaborate and invite all the global partners in one platform to lobby and negotiate for the developing world for various reasons. United Nation's crucial beginning of the Conference on the Human Environment was in Stockholm in 1972 was the first intergovernmental conference to protect the environment proclaimed 'people first' as well as urged developed countries to adopt appropriate policies on population growth, consumption and investment in several intergovernmental conferences (UN Conference on Human Environment, 1973; UN Economic and Social Affairs, 2001).



People from developing nations who are least responsible for the problems have been suffered and impacted from various consequences of injustice, economic and social inequality should be addressed globally. This great fossil-fuel-powered wealth disparity makes it harder for poorer nations to protect themselves from the consequences of climate changes and developed countries must be obligated to address (Adow, 2020). Adaptation cost has becoming one of the greatest challenges for poorer countries to manage their budget. African countries are spending between two to nine percent of their GDPs dealing with the effects of extreme weather so that South African President Cyril Ramaphosa insisted "Adaptation is a global responsibility" calling for greater financial support from developed countries at an African Union summit in February, 2020 also indicates threat of climate change in developing countries caused by powerful nations (Adow, 2020).

Rio de Janeiro in 1992 was one of the great Earth Summit where wealthier countries themselves realized that they were more liable for the environmental degradation and recognized the concept of "common but differentiated responsibilities" (ibid.). Several international conferences on climate could establish environmental law via multilateral and bilateral treaties for emission reduction, subsidies, adaptation cost, including substantive principles of sustainable development and no harm rule that gave space for developing countries to stand on the global forum (Nanda, & Pring, 2013). The world again came on the global floor in 2015 at Paris where wealthier countries reaffirmed their commitment to provide financial support to poor countries for adaptation and transitioning away from fossils fuels, and as a result developing countries started receiving over \$100 billion a year from 2020 as their modest contribution though changes of regime and leadership is still a challenge for continuity and reliability (Adow, 2020).

After COVID-19

Some level of politicization as well as leadership and ideological tussles are there among developed countries relating with the global concerns but growing level of Carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases are real and it has been impacting the atmosphere every year shows climate change as a serious global phenomenon. And 2019 was the second warmest year and 2010 to 2019 was recorded the warmest decades. But 2020 has projected decreasing greenhouse gas to about 6% due to shut down of economic activities as a result of COVID- 19 pandemic. It will be wrong to say that this percentage of decreasing of greenhouse gas will continue because the pandemic is not going to last forever. This pandemic may be one of the golden opportunity for all the nations to come together with strong political will and leadership in the global setting and convert all the economic activities for the betterment of entire world and humanity. Otherwise, the effects of climate change will continue to impact not only the environment but every sector of human life and livelihoods, which require urgent action.

Growing number of experts including environmentalist, economists, scientists work and estimation of the impact on local economies, infrastructure planning, agricultural productivity, public health, migration are already making a compelling case that climate action



have left too late to prevent environmental degradation on a massive scale. Though climate related problems are not only the case of all those degradations. But human initiations and desire of improvements of economic development in one areas effected new risk of climate change. So that the risk of climate change now impacted on a global scale.

Global level of actions is required to combat the challenge. And global institutions have a common platform of national and regional including state and non-state organizations. So that, global, national, regional, local, private, and public levels are highly responsible and global coordination is required from all the actors to come on a single platform of global network to combat the issue of climate change. Hence, Globalization is a crucial theoretical robust for the sustainable development to act in the global platform to combat the challenge of climate issue focusing on the institutional and legal arrangements to exercise and decision taken to implement at the global to local level.

Conclusion

Climate change challenges traditional notion of national sovereignty, security and industrial activities since the environment does not stop at political territories. The recent experience of the Pandemic of COVID- 19 has already taught us the lesson. Issue of climate change is not only a theoretical but practically it is a matter of food for the hunger, matter of a shelter for the displaced, matter of health who are impacted badly as a consequences of climate change, matter of unpolluted drinking water, matter of living with peace at own home, matter of a life of injustice, and it is a matter of land and its production, consequently it is ultimately a matter of life and death. So that, drastic action today has needed to combat the challenge otherwise future consequences will be more difficult and costly.

The issue of climate change has manifested a common global problem but differentiated responsibilities. Moreover, public and private leaders from developed countries are ideologically obligated but their dualistic nature of motives, interest, morality and ideological performances are the ironic challenges for the sustainable development. Realist public leaders with populism and nationalism propaganda is an ideally challenge in the globalization, though idealistic platform is an opportunity for the modern development to cooperate and partner with state and non-state actors. UN as an international organization is a bit of success to establish 'International Environmental Law' as branch of 'International Law' and develop fundamental substantive principles by multilateral and bilateral agreements to bind and create legal as well as ethical values.

Five Ps strategic model (*planet, people, prosperity, peace, and partnership*) of the SDGs as well as long-term (*intervention from the developed countries, 'net zero' target and technological renovation*) and short-term (*painting rooftop white, rooftop gardening, Coral reef, adaptation, management, tax, subsidies, insurance*) strategic initiations on climate change should be stirred by the global power taking as an opportunity to convert all the global decisions into action for building a serene planet for the humanity. Poverty, hunger, inequality might noticeably the issues of developing countries but as earth is our ultimate common shared



habitats and resources common interest and effort will be inevitable factor that together makes life possible.

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