



India's Global Climate Strategy and COP28

Event Summary

Tuesday, November 21, 2023

- The Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP) hosted a webinar to **discuss India's priorities and interests at the COP28 Summit**, which is being held in The United Arab Emirates from 30 November to 12 December 2023.
- The discussion focused on how India will engage at the COP Summit around the key policies areas that are significant to India. The webinar also highlighted the findings of CSEP's new report [Tracks to Transition: India's Global Climate Strategy](#), edited by **Constantino Xavier**, Fellow, CSEP and **Karthik Nachiappan**, Non-Resident Fellow, CSEP.
- The webinar included a panel discussion with **Axel Nordenstam**, doctoral student, International Relations, Department of Economic History and International Relations, Stockholm University, **Pooja Ramamurthi**, Associate Fellow, CSEP, and **Vyoma Jha**, Senior Advocate, Natural Resources Defence Council (NRDC). The discussion was moderated by **Anindita Sinh**, Research Analyst, CSEP.

India's global climate strategy

The discussion highlighted CSEP's report on India's Global Climate Strategy which includes seven case studies on India's engagement with climate diplomacy. The report highlights research-based and actionable foreign policy opportunities which can help India accelerate its green transition and reach its renewable energy targets in 2030 and net zero emissions targets in 2070. The moderator provided context of the report by examining how India's climate diplomacy has evolved since the formulation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Rio in 1992. Since 1992, India has played a key role as establishing development as one of the main pillars of climate change negotiations.

However, recent geopolitical fragmentation in climate governance has led to the creation of a multitude of avenues to engage with climate diplomacy. The report addresses the four main tracks of climate diplomacy and negotiations: multilateral, unilateral, triangular, and bilateral. India has also been at the forefront of climate innovation by spearheading frameworks such as the

International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

The report offered actionable policy options which can promote a more nuanced climate strategy for India. These policy options include reinstating the PM Special Envoy for climate cooperation, setting up a climate cooperation division at the Ministry of External Affairs, and establishing a climate wing at India's diplomatic missions abroad. The discussion also emphasised learnings the urgency to enhance climate finance through multilateral development banks and the private sector, increasing priorities of countries from the Global South, and the need to improve policy coordination and institutional capacity to enable efficient implementation of India's climate strategy.

The webinar included remarks from each speaker on their chapter briefs in CSEP's report on Tracks to Transition: India's Global Climate Strategy. This was followed by moderated questions on India's engagement at the COP28 Summit.

Different tracks of India's climate strategy

The discussion stressed the significance of the Paris COP21 Summit in 2015 where India and France launched the International Solar Alliance (ISA) to bolster solar energy in developing countries. Vyoma Jha highlighted how the ISA was an interesting shift in India's foreign policy where climate change became a focal point in how India was expanding its strategic interests. Jha stated that India took "ownership of the space" through the ISA which focuses on the deployment of solar energy from countries with the maximum potential but least access. Therefore, the ISA has the capacity to bring together countries from the Global South to expand the flow of finance and technology to enable energy transitions. Jha emphasised that the ISA deploys a combined top-down and bottom-up approach towards climate action which has the scope to engage a wide spectrum of non-state entities which have the potential to drive "implementation forward and make it an action-oriented organisation".

The discussion emphasised that countries need three instruments to meet their climate goals: finance, technology, and capacity building institutions. The assumption is that the Global North will provide the Global South these instruments to achieve climate goals. However, with the change in international global governance, a shift has emerged in the North-South paradigm. Therefore, triangular cooperation is paving the way for the Global North to work together with the Global South by roping emerging countries as 'pivotal partners' to facilitate climate action. India has been playing a proactive role in triangular cooperation by working with countries like the US, UK, and Japan while also engaging with organisations such as the UNDP South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund. Additionally, PM Modi has inaugurated the Development and Knowledge Sharing Initiative (DAKSHIN) as a collaborative effort to bolster South-South cooperation.

Axel Nordenstam highlighted how India and the EU have overcome their historical differences in climate negotiations and found ways to collaborate. Nordenstam stated that India is playing a "balancing act" between two levels: firstly, the EU level where India collaborates with the European Commission and other EU institutions;

and secondly, India's bilateral collaborations between EU member states such as Germany, France, Denmark, and Sweden. On the EU level, the India-EU Clean Energy and Climate Partnership in 2016 laid the foundation of India and EU collaboration. On the bilateral level, India and EU member states have seen a surge of climate partnerships. The discussion stressed that India should evaluate the balance between these levels and assess the resources allocated to implement the existing partnerships effectively while avoiding redundancies.

India at COP28

The moderator posed questions about the COP28 Summit and India's key policy priorities and challenges at the Summit. Nordenstam highlighted that India will promote renewable energy and climate finance at the Summit. Additionally, India will also support the Loss and Damage Fund. It was highlighted that operationalisation and funding of the Loss and Damage Fund would become a key issue around climate adaptation. Furthermore, Jha stressed that the multilateral finance space has performed poorly when it comes to climate adaptation. However, since the CDRI is an 'adaptation focused initiative', that makes it a unique initiative that specifically targets mobilising finance.

Ramamurthi stated that "India will present itself as a part of the solution" at the COP28 Summit. Additionally, India is expected to encourage the phasing out of not only coal but also natural gas which is extensively used by the Western countries. Additionally, India's Global Stocktake submission urges developed countries to work harder towards achieving their climate goals. Jha highlighted that India is expected to promote the global renewable energy targets and the energy efficiency targets which India worked hard to achieve for the Delhi Declaration earlier this year.

Additionally, India will also endorse a human-centric approach towards addressing climate change which aligns with the COP's focus on nature-based solutions. India will promote behavioural and consumer-level change towards a low carbon future. Lastly, India is expected to push the developed countries to fulfil their promises of technology transfers and climate finance, under the UNFCCC, to enable an equitable way of strengthening climate action with common solutions.

All content reflects the individual views of the participants. The Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP) does not hold an institutional view on any subject.

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