

India shines at COP28: Green initiatives, climate justice and human rights in focus

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Opinion

Prime Minister Modi urged developed countries to completely reduce carbon footprint intensity by 2050 and urged that developing countries must get appropriate access to the remaining global carbon budget

Abhinav Mehrotra and Biswanath Gupta December 21, 2023 17:29:30 IST



(File) Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks at the ceremonial opening of high-level segment for Heads of States at COP28 in Dubai. Image courtesy BJP4India/X

As COP28 comes to an end, several discussions took place regarding the steps that need to be taken to overcome the effects of climate change. It was decided that efforts should be made to transition away from fossil fuels in the near future for which all member countries need to cooperate and the developed countries must assume their responsibilities towards the developing countries regarding the same. Amidst all these deliberations the role of India has been significantly highlighted whether it was the Green Credit initiative that it initiated or not signing the Green Pledge and Climate Health pledge as it prioritised climate justice as

being a more important principle. The Green pledge relates to the Global Renewable and Energy Efficiency Pledge that aims to triple renewable energy generation capacity by 2030 and calls for an end to new investments in coal. On the other hand, the health pledge focuses on endorsing the severe health implications of climate change.

This COP meeting was the 28th annual United Nations (UN) climate meeting where governments discuss how to limit and prepare for future climate change. The summit took place in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) which is one of the world's top ten oil producing nations, from 30 November to 12 December 2023. The term COP stands for "Conference of the Parties", where the "parties" are the countries that signed up to the original UN climate agreement in 1992. The UAE is one of the world's top 10 oil-producing nations.

It is hoped COP28 will help keep alive the goal of limiting long-term global temperature rises to 1.5°C which was agreed in 2015. The 1.5°C target is crucial to avoid the most damaging impacts of climate change, according to the UN's climate body, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Coming back to India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched LeadIT 2.0, with a focus on inclusive and just industry transition with a focus on co-development and transfer of low-carbon technology and financial assistance to emerging economies. In this context, Prime Minister Modi urged developed countries to completely reduce carbon footprint intensity by 2050 and urged that developing countries must get appropriate access to the remaining global carbon budget.

He also highlighted the fact that India recently launched Green Credits Initiative which was launched by the Environment Ministry as a way of incentivising environmental actions by offering green credits for projects that help the environment in any way which also helps in the protection of human rights. In simple terms, the close connection between human rights and climate change can be understood from the dependence of individual rights like life, health, food, water and housing on the existence of a safe and healthy environment.

Going forward, the need of the hour is to clearly stipulate the human rights obligations under the UNFCCC to use human rights law and its related mechanisms to influence and improve international climate change policy as governed by the UNFCCC to make that policy fairer and more effective. It is important to note that the losses arising from climate change are expected to rise in the future, hence the impacted nations may be required to disproportionately share this burden in the absence of a comprehensive policy framework. The questions that must be clarified include but are not limited to how can human rights obligations and principles be best applied to national climate change policy across both mitigation and adaptation, the precise nature of extraterritorial human rights obligations as they relate to climate change, and how can the international community, through the international human rights mechanisms, best draw attention to and enforce those obligations

in a manner that complements and supports the UNFCCC process. Amongst all these developments, India will have to play its role as it has also suggested its willingness to host the COP33.

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