



POLICY BRIEF

By: The Human Security Institute (THSI)

Embedding Climate Action into Governance: The Case for Constitutional and Policy Integration in Pakistan

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Introduction:

This policy brief examines the critical need for integrating climate change and environmental security into Pakistan's constitutional and foreign policy frameworks. As the impacts of climate change become increasingly severe, with recent disasters highlighting the urgent need for action, it is crucial for Pakistan to follow the example set by other nations that have successfully incorporated environmental protections into their highest legal and policy documents. This brief will explore the benefits of such integration, analyze current gaps in Pakistan's approach, and propose actionable steps to enhance national resilience through constitutional amendments and comprehensive climate policies.

Climate change is the pressing global challenge of our time. It directly affects the lives and wellbeing of peoples across the globe. If it is unaddressed, climate change will deepen existing inequalities within and between states. Increased severity of natural disasters will challenge the capacity of governments and threaten human security. For some, climate change is an existential threat, leading to the displacement of peoples and even the loss of territory of nation-states. At the local, national, regional and international levels, governments are called upon to urgently address the severe and worsening consequences of climate change and to mitigate future harm.

Countries included Climate Provision into their Constitution:

Country	Year	Article
Philippines	1987	2, Section 16
Colombia	1991	79
Norway	1992 (amendment to the 1814 Constitution)	112
Argentina	1994	41
Costa Rica	1994 (amendment to the 1949 Constitution)	50
Ethiopia	1995	44
Uganda	1995	39
South Africa	1996	Section 24

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Country	Year	Article
Mexico	1999 (amendment to the 1917 Constitution)	4
Venezuela	1999	127
France	2005 (amendment to the 1958 Constitution)	1 (Charter for the Environment)
Portugal	2005 (amendment to the 1976 Constitution)	66
Ecuador	2008	71-74
Bolivia	2009	33-34
Kenya	2010	42&69
Dominican Republic	2010	67
Malawi	2012 (amendment to the 1994 Constitution)	13
Fiji	2013	40
Vietnam	2013	63
Tunisia	2014	45
Nepal	2015	30& 51
Zambia	2016	255
Côte d'Ivoire	2016	27
Thailand	2017	57
Cuba	2019	75
Algeria	2020	21

These countries have embedded climate change or environmental protection within their constitutions, reflecting the growing recognition of these issues at the highest legal level. Moreover, Nepal is the only country in south Asian countries who have incorporated environmental protection into its constitution since 2015. The inclusion varies from recognizing the rights of nature to ensuring the protection of the environment and addressing climate change as a fundamental aspect of governance.

Countries Integrating Climate Change into Their Foreign Policy Frameworks:

Country	Year	Article
Norway	2007	Norwegian Climate and Forest Initiative
France	2017	French Foreign Policy on Climate
Sweden	2018	Swedish Foreign Policy on Climate
European Union	2019	European Green Deal
Switzerland	2019	Swiss Foreign Policy Strategy
New Zealand	2019	European Green Deal
Germany	2020	Federal Foreign Office Climate Foreign Policy Strategy
Japan	2020	Japan's Foreign Policy in the Era of Climate Change
Spain	2020	Spanish Climate Action Plan
Denmark	2020	Danish Climate Action Plan
Argentina	2020	Argentine Foreign Policy and Climate Change
United Kingdom	2021	Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy
United States	2021	Interim National Security Strategic Guidance

Country	Year	Article
Canada	2021	Climate Action and International Engagement
Finland	2021	Finnish Climate Policy and Foreign Affairs
Brazil	2021	Brazilian Foreign Policy and Environmental Diplomacy
Mexico	2021	Mexican Climate Action Strategy
Italy	2021	Italian Foreign Policy and Climate Action
Australia	2022	Climate Action Strategy 2022
South Africa	2022	South African Climate Diplomacy

This list represents the countries that have integrated climate change into their foreign policy frameworks, leveraging international cooperation, diplomacy, and trade to advance global climate goals.

Environmental security is a crucial aspect of Human Security, with climate change being one of the most critical risks. Despite this, there is currently no single foreign policy document or article in Pakistan exclusively dedicated to climate change. Remarkably, Pakistan contributes less than 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions, yet it remains among the top ten climate stressed countries in the world. The severity of this impact was starkly demonstrated by the 2022 floods, which were a catastrophic disaster affecting 33 million people and representing the worst calamity the country had experienced in a decade.

- **Flood Duration: 15 June to October 2022**
- **Fatalities: 1,730 people**
- **Injuries: 13,000**
- **Total Damage: Rs 3.2 trillion (\$14.9 billion)**
- **Economic Losses: Rs 3.3 trillion (\$15.2 billion)**

Climate change and its impacts are disruptive and affect all aspects of life, necessitating a rethinking of how we approach and utilize constitutions, highlighting both their limitations and their potential. On this Independence Day, the Human Security Institute (THSI) proposes that climate change and environmental security be incorporated into both the Foreign Policy and the Constitution of Pakistan. Additionally, it advocates for the advancement of a green economy and the implementation of a "Plant for Pakistan" initiative to mitigate climate change effects. By promoting vigorous tree-planting activities, we can safeguard our nation's natural beauty and biodiversity.

Conclusion

The pressing global challenge of climate change demands a transformative approach to governance and policy. This policy brief underscores the urgent need for Pakistan to embed climate change and environmental security into both its constitutional framework and foreign policy. By learning from the practices of other nations that have successfully integrated these critical issues into their highest legal and policy documents, Pakistan can enhance its resilience to climate impacts and address the escalating threats to human security. The devastating effects of recent climate-induced disasters, such as the 2022 floods, highlight the imperative for comprehensive action. The proposed integration of climate considerations into Pakistan's constitution and foreign policy, along with initiatives like "Plant for Pakistan," offers a strategic path to safeguard our environment and future. As we mark this Independence Day, let us commit to fostering a green economy and resilient policies that ensure a sustainable and secure future for all.