

## **CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE IMPERATIVE OF COOPERATION IN SOUTH ASIA**

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My presentation aimed to identify the principal challenges of climate change for society and state in Pakistan in the context of South Asia. The evidence is unmistakable: climate change is already occurring. South Asia with its delicately balanced ecology, its heavy reliance on monsoons, the critical dependence of the majority of its population on agriculture and persistent mass poverty make it one of the most vulnerable regions in the world to climate change. Increased variability in the magnitude and timing of rainfall during the monsoons could increase the instability of agriculture production and add to the burden of the poor. The long and densely populated coastline with low lying islands such as the Maldives, make the region vulnerable to sea level rise associated with global warming. The Himalayas containing the region's glaciers, source of its rivers and the key to the region's climate and economy are melting faster than the global average. (Srivastava 2014). This could periodically cause devastating floods during the monsoons and reduced river flows in the rest of the year. The decrease in fresh water supplies is expected to adversely affect 500 million people in South Asia (Pachauri 2014).

South Asia has a highly integrated ecology that would tend to extend the adverse impact of climate change across national boundaries. This creates an imperative for co-operation between the countries of the region. Yet given the persistent adversarial relationship between its two largest and nuclear armed states, India and Pakistan, there is also a danger of the region being plunged into a catastrophic conflict following the tensions that could be sparked by such climate change related phenomena as water scarcity, food shortages and mass migrations.