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CLIMATE DIPLOMACY OF BANGLADESH: LESSONS LEARNED FROM COP27 AND WAY FORWARD

Abstract

This paper seeks to understand Bangladesh's climate diplomacy and identify its strengths and challenges based on its participation in United Nations Climate Change Conferences (COP). The COP27 Summit was a significant turning point for the climate-vulnerable countries like Bangladesh due to its declaration on loss and damage funds. This paper aims to provide insights into Bangladesh's climate diplomacy based on its activities in four pillars: mitigation, adaptation, climate finance, and loss and damage fund. Considering global climate diplomacy, the paper explores the existing strengths of and challenges for Bangladesh. It follows qualitative approach for data collection and analysis. The paper finds some nuance implications for diplomatic efforts in the upcoming COP28 and suggests potential avenues for cooperation in disaster risk reduction, technology transfer, and climate change funding. Overall, this research enhances the scope of the growing literature on climate diplomacy of Bangladesh and sheds new light on an unexplored area of the country's diplomatic engagement in COPs.

Key Words: Climate Diplomacy, Conference of Parties, Locally Led Adaptation, Loss and Damage.

1. Introduction

The 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference, widely known as the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), also abbreviated as COP27, was the 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt in November 2022. It was presided over by the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sameh Shoukry, and was attended by more than 92 heads of state and an estimated 35,000 delegates from 190 countries.¹ It was the 5th African climate summit. Different groups from around the world set up pavilions to highlight and showcase the initiatives regarding

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¹ COP 27, available at: <https://cop27.org/#/presidency#about>, Last accessed 29 April 2023.

the reduction of greenhouse gases (GHGs), curbing global warming, and addressing various challenges of climate adaptation of the world. Showcasing their efforts through those pavilions also had an objective - arranging side events as a way to bring everyone together and put pressure on the formal negotiators to reach the climate goals. Since the first UN climate agreement in 1992, the conference has been being conducted annually (with the exception of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic). In the 27th COP, the world leaders gathered to emphasise and reach a consensus to reduce GHG emissions and ensure climate change funds for vulnerable countries to establish justice. The conference resulted in the establishment of the first loss and damage fund.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) on March 20, 2023, as a leading report for the COP summit's declaration. It concluded an eight-year effort by the world's most authoritative scientific body on climate change. Using the findings of 234 scientists on the physical science of climate change, 270 scientists on the impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability of climate change, and 278 scientists on climate change mitigation, this IPCC synthesis report provides the most comprehensive and accurate scientific assessment of climate change that is currently available. According to the IPCC, global temperature has risen by 1.1°C and is headed towards 1.5°C. Half of the world's population could be exposed to life-threatening heat and humidity if the temperature rise 1.7° to 1.8°C above 1850s levels. The annual United Nations (UN) climate summits serve as a platform for states to collectively establish measures aimed at mitigating the global temperature increase. The parties refer to the participating nations that ratified the initial United Nations climate agreement in 1992.

If COP26 was the conference that 'kept 1.5 alive', then COP27 had the difficult task of refocusing the world's attention on the critical issue of CO₂ emissions and limiting global warming in the face of numerous political and economic distractions. The Russia-Ukraine war was not an official negotiation topic, but it frequently came up in the conversation. According to a Global Climate Change Analysis (Emissions Gap Report 2022) compiled by the UNEP for the conference, there is a high possibility that the increase in temperature will be between 2.5° and 2.8°C. During the first seven months of the conflict, additional GHG emissions amounted to at least 100 million metric tons of CO₂. The authors of the study titled "Climate Damage Caused by Russia's War in Ukraine" estimate that this is equivalent to the Netherlands' emissions during the rapid industrialisation era. This has reshaped the fossil fuel market and introduced structural changes to the entire energy sector

in the short term.² Nonetheless, each passing year brings the world closer to a level of CO₂ in the atmosphere that will drive the post-industrial temperature rise to and beyond 1.5°C, resulting in increasing climate change impacts. Climate diplomacy has become essential for all spheres of government since the Paris Agreement on Climate Change was signed in 2015 at COP21,

At the national level, Bangladesh has made significant progress in integrating all departments and ministries in domestic climate change actions. For example, the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), Eighth Five Year Plan, Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (MCP), Perspective Plan 2041, and Delta Plan 2100 are important policy measures of Bangladesh to address the climate change impacts. In addition, over the last several years, the Ministry of Finance has allocated budget to relevant departments to initiate projects for combating climate change. No nation in the world received considerable funding in the 2022 climate change budget whereas Bangladesh allocated approximately 8 per cent of the overall national budget for climate change.³ This kind of national approach includes combined efforts to prepare for disasters, and to take adaptation measures and assess the losses and damage caused by climate change. At the same time, it also finds ways to help people who are affected by both sudden and slow-onset disasters. According to the NAP, the key climate risks and vulnerabilities for Bangladesh involves water resources, food security, livelihoods, ecosystem, infrastructure, health, and biodiversity. It has been estimated that “the number of internal climate migrants might reach 19.9 million by 2050, comprising half of those in the entire South Asian region. The current rate of annual loss of gross domestic product (GDP) of approximately 1.3 percent due to climate-induced disasters might rise to 2 percent by 2050 and over 9 percent by 2100 under extreme scenarios. Therefore, Bangladesh will spend US\$8.5 billion annually for developing climate resilience which is seven times more than the current spending for adaptation purpose. In this context, Bangladesh has received US\$6 billion from external sources such as development partners, donors, and multinational companies. Only strong diplomatic initiatives of Bangladesh could ensure climate justice and the flow of funds for proper climate actions.

The most successful diplomatic achievement in the COP27 was the commitment to loss and damage funds by the developed countries. Even though the negotiations on how to set up the loss and damage fund will continue until COP28,

² Klaus-Dieter Borchardt, “European climate policy in context of Ukraine war and its impact on COP27,” *Forum*, no. 13, (October 2022).

³ “Synthesis Report of the Sixth Assessment Report,” IPCC, last accessed 19 April 2023, https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6syr/pdf/IPCC_AR6_SYR_LongerReport.pdf

the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and other vulnerable countries have a lot of work to do to prepare their governments and citizens to deal with the negative effects of climate change. Once the global fund is up and running, it will be important for a country to be able to show that it has its processes in place to deal with loss and damage. Against this backdrop, climate diplomacy of Bangladesh needs to be analysed critically for future successful negotiations on issues relevant to adaptation, mitigation, climate fund, and recently committed loss and damage fund. Therefore, the country should focus on understanding the politics around climate negotiations, core elements, and challenges of climate diplomacy ahead of the COP28.

Against this context, the main objective of the paper is to analyse the climate diplomacy of Bangladesh with a special focus on the COP27 and present a way forward for the upcoming COPs. In doing so, the paper will attempt to answer the following questions: i) What were the major diplomatic achievements and expectations of Bangladesh in terms of mitigation, adaptation, climate finance, and loss and damage in the COP27? ii) What are the strengths and challenges of climate diplomacy in Bangladesh? and iii) How Bangladesh can overcome the challenges of climate negotiations in the upcoming COPs? The research is qualitative in nature and collects both primary and secondary data from various sources. The primary data has been collected from in-depth key informant interviews and secondary information has been collected from relevant academic journals, books, newspaper reports, and websites. This article is divided into six sections including introduction and conclusion. Evolution and elements of climate diplomacy have been discussed from conceptual aspects in section two. The third section discusses the major achievements of Bangladesh at national and global level at COP 27. Section four focuses on the weakness of Bangladesh's climate diplomacy. The Fifth section suggests some policy recommendations for overcoming the challenges in the COP28.

2. Climate Diplomacy: Evolution and Elements

Climate diplomacy has no universal definition. This can be defined as the practice and process of creating the international climate change regime and ensuring its effective operation. The European Commission defines four strands of climate diplomacy: a) committing to multilateralism in climate policy, particularly to the implementation of the Paris Agreement; b) addressing implications of climate change on peace and security; c) accelerating domestic action and raising global ambition; d) enhancing international climate cooperation through advocacy and outreach.⁴

⁴ Nick Mabey, Liz Gallagher and Camilla Born, "Understanding Climate Diplomacy: Building Diplomatic capacity and system to avoid dangerous climate change," *Third Generation Environmentalism*, (2023).

The interface between national interest debates and international cooperation is the key feature of climate diplomacy. It assures an accurate assessment of the interests and intentions of nations and identifies potential areas of agreement. Therefore, the evolution of climate diplomacy precedes and influences the development of the climate regime. Climate diplomacy has shifted from a relatively limited focus on the UNFCCC process to a discipline that engages new constituencies and incorporates broader geopolitical discussions.⁵ This is a sign of the regime's increasing effectiveness and relevance to a broad spectrum of actors. To counter this increasing diversity of stakeholders, which tends to complicate the basis of international cooperation, a deeper and more intensive diplomacy at the international level is required. To increase the legitimacy and credibility of the climate threat, it is crucial to empower new actors and advocates.

Climate diplomacy began in 1985 by climate scientist Villach.⁶ This led to two significant climate conferences, the creation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 1988, and the formation of UNFCCC. The Rio Earth Summit opened the UNFCCC for signing after negotiations. The parties were expected to maintain emissions at the level they were at in 1990 by the year 2000. Europe sought required obligations, but the US resisted as the second largest emitter. The G-77 was divided: small islands wanted swift and robust action, oil producers wanted to secure their economic prospects, and giant rising nations, headed by India, did not want growth limits. The UNFCCC's "common but differentiated responsibility" approach underpins China, India, and other developing nations' negotiations. Bangladesh joined the climate negotiation from the very beginning of the formation of the UNFCCC in 1992. The country actively participated from the first COP1 which took place on March 28 to April 07, 1995, in Berlin, Germany, and the subsequent COPs since then. There are evolutions in terms of the formation of groups and sub-groups of climate negotiations in the COPs. Bangladesh is engaged with two groups: G-77 and China group and Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC) under the non-Annex group. Bangladesh joined the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) in 2009 as one of the founding members with other climate-vulnerable countries. Although CVF is not a formal negotiation group, this group has significant influence over formal negotiation through para-diplomatic initiatives. Bangladesh's climate diplomacy is more connected with the activities of LDC and Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) groups.

⁵ Amandine Orsini, "Environmental Diplomacy," in *Global Diplomacy: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*, ed. Thierry Balzacq, Frédéric Charillon, and Frédéric Ramel, (Belgium: Palgrave Macmillan), 239-52.

⁶ Nitin Desai, "Reflections on International Climate Diplomacy," *Indian Society for Ecological Economies* 1, no. 1, (April 2018).

When the objectives of mitigation were not fulfilled, tougher demand led to the Kyoto Protocol, in which industrial nations agreed to enforceable carbon reductions by 2008-2012. The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) indirectly included poorer nations in mitigation. The Kyoto Protocol was a market-based arrangement that distributed mitigation effort between industrial countries, depended on negotiating skills and stressed on independent criteria. In December 2007, Bali hosted a new round of discussions to conclude Kyoto. Climate diplomacy had transformed after that. China, whose fast expansion and coal use have increased emissions, was the focus. Concern about China's emissions increase puts pressure on India. Any acceptable objective for permitted temperature rise is unreachable unless the great developing economies join the mitigation effort.

Each country's GHG emission determines climate diplomacy's 40:40:20 power structure. Because any mitigation pact would be worthless without the two greatest emitters, the US and China, the first 40 per cent has de facto veto power. The second 40 per cent includes the European Union (EU), a 10 per cent power; Russia, Japan, and India, each 5 per cent; and a string of 2 per cent powers like Brazil, South Africa, Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, etc. The Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) and the African Group influence the remaining 20 per cent of the smaller states.⁷ A successful climate change agreement should set a temperature rise limit. The Paris Agreement contains a GHG budget to distribute global emissions amongst nations and a GHG emission time profile that meets the target. It leaves mitigation to each country's voluntary efforts. The agreement no longer contains flexibility mechanisms but rather has a binding clause. However, it addresses forestry and land use changes, supports adaptation, and commits to financial and technological transfer.

As previously discussed, climate diplomacy has both influenced and been influenced by the evolution of the international climate regime. As can be seen from the diagram in Annex II, the regime has expanded far beyond the UNFCCC, although the UNFCCC remains the linchpin institution in terms of establishing objectives, aligning efforts, mobilising assistance, and assessing risk. The diagram provides a functional framework for organising the bewildering array of different alliances, processes, and initiatives that comprise the four main "layers" of the climate regime: formal negotiations, para-negotiations, near negotiations, broader international

⁷ Anna Maria Augustyn, Giulia Sofia Sarno, Marie-Eve Ciparisse, *Boosting international subnational climate diplomacy ahead of COP27 and COP28*, Commissions for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs, (EU: 2022).

climate regime (information, implementation, integration, and representation). All these layers influence diplomacy and are not confined to the COP meetings only (See Annex I and II).

Climate Diplomacy is still a relatively new practice and the climate regime is developing very sharply. It requires ownership across governments and institutional reform and more investment in resources and skills. In short, the practice of climate diplomacy requires three core capabilities such as ‘know yourself’, ‘know the other’, and ‘capacity to influence’. On the contrary, there are various structural challenges as the landscape evolves into a more complex and comprehensive regime both inside the UNFCCC and broader international climate regime, for example, the absence of political conditions for agreement; failure to construct a fair political agreement; failure to capture the highest ambition possible; and failure of implementation. Along with the usual climatic challenges, COP27 was overshadowed by a multitude of global financial and geopolitical crises. Inflation on a global scale, coupled with food and energy crises, has had a devastating impact on all nations, compelling many countries to abandon their previous climate commitments. In addition, the impending risk of a recession has increased governments’ reluctance to increase funding for climate change-related initiatives. Based on the relevant documents, decisions made during COP summits, and the activities taken by the Ministry of Environment, forestry and Climate Change of Bangladesh, the climate diplomacy of Bangladesh can be divided into several elements.⁸ Considering the above-mentioned facts and factors, this paper will analyse the climate diplomacy of Bangladesh based on the four pillars such as adaptation, mitigation, climate finance, and loss and damage.

3. Bangladesh at COP 27: Expectations and Achievements

The Bangladesh delegation for COP27 was led by the minister of the environment, forest, and climate change, and the Bangladesh pavilion hosted sessions throughout the day, every day, in which various ministries and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) shared information about what is occurring in Bangladesh. It demanded that developed nations should double their collective adaptation finance contributions by 2025, as agreed upon at COP26 in Glasgow, and assist vulnerable

⁸ Siblee Nomani and Tofajjel Hossain Tuhin, “Bangladesh in global environmental politics: Focus on climate diplomacy,” *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Science* 11, no. 3, (2022): 415-76; Mohammad Tarikul Islam, “Climate Change Diplomacy- Apparatus for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation: Reflection in the Context of Bangladesh” *British Journal of Environment and Climate Change*, 4(1), (2014): 115-32.

nations in implementing the NAP. The countries most responsible for the GHG emissions should share responsibility for safeguarding those most susceptible to climate change. Bangladesh is an unwitting victim of climate change. Studies indicate that by the end of this century, 12 to 17 per cent of Bangladesh, an area larger than many small island nations, will be submerged due to sea level rise. On October 31, 2023, Bangladesh submitted its NAP to UNFCCC. In the NAP of Bangladesh, 113 actions were identified for eight vulnerable sectors that will require an additional US\$230 billion over the next 27 years.⁹ In the past decade, Bangladesh implemented 850 climate-resilience initiatives using its own resources. Over the past eight years, the country's annual allocation for climate-related work increased from US\$1.4 billion to US\$3.1 billion for climate adaptation and resilience-building through the construction of sea dykes, cyclone shelters, development of stress-tolerant varieties, and coastal afforestation and reforestation.¹⁰

Bangladesh demanded the annual mobilisation of US\$100 billion for the Global Climate Fund (GCF) from 2023 until 2025, as well as finalisation of the financing mechanism for the period after 2025.¹¹ In addition, the country demanded the establishment of a financial mechanism to address climate-related losses and damages as a member of the LDC group. The following are the specific achievements of Bangladesh at COP27.

Bangladesh won Community-Led Adaptation Awards

Bangladesh and four other nations received the Local Adaptation Champions Awards. The Rangamati Hill District Council project, which worked with five villages in Juraichari Upazila to help locals fight escalating droughts, landslides, and flash floods, won the award.¹² The community works for establishing solar-powered safe water supply infrastructure and provision of safe drinking water during emergencies with assistance from the the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). Local efforts that try to adapt to the detrimental consequences of climate change are recognised with prizes

⁹ "COP27: Bangladesh wants climate finance doubled by 2025," *The Daily Star*, November 6, 2022, <https://www.thedailystar.net/environment/climate-crisis/news/cop27-bangladesh-wants-climate-finance-doubled-2025-3170696>

¹⁰ Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, *National Adaptation Plan*, (Bangladesh: 2023).

¹¹ "COP27: Bangladesh wants climate finance".

¹² "Bangladesh wins COP27 award for UNDP-supported community-led initiative," UNDP, last accessed 30 June 2023, <https://www.undp.org/bangladesh/press-releases/bangladesh-wins-cop27-award-undp-supported-community-led-initiative>.

given out by the Global Climate Adaptation Alliance (GCA). These projects are honoured in four categories: inclusive leadership, capacity and knowledge, financial governance, and local innovation. India, Nepal, and Kenya are the other three of the 170 countries that have been also recognised. Each winner received €15,000 to support the work they are undertaking in accordance with the principles of Locally-led adaptation (LLA).

Bangladesh receives Global Shield funding at first round

According to a joint press release from the Vulnerable 20 (V20), the G-7, and the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Bangladesh has been named as one of the first countries to receive financial support from Global Shield to address the country's climate concerns. Around 170 million euros from Germany and more than 40 million euros from other nations make up the initial contributions of the fund. Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Fiji, Ghana, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Senegal are among the first beneficiaries of Global Shield kits. The Finance Ministers of the V20 and the G7 officially inaugurated the Global Shield. The Global Shield uses pre-arranged financing that disburses swiftly and reliably before or shortly after disasters occur to solve present inadequacies in the financial protection mechanism in climate-vulnerable nations. The Global Shield is funded by InsuResilience Solutions Fund, the Global Shield Financing Facility at the World Bank, and the CVF & V20 Joint Multi-Donor Fund.¹³ The achievements depend on the proper utilisation of diplomatic tools and measuring and minimising the flaws within the process.

Receiving the Global Shield funding and the community-led Adaptation Award are two examples of Bangladesh's successful manoeuvre. Climate change implications surpass national-level security concerns, as they have global consequences. In the context of UNFCCC, states engage in negotiations not as individual entities, but rather as coalitions. Bangladesh engages in negotiations with states classified as least developed, small island, and African nations. Bangladeshi negotiators have acquired valuable insights from their participation in international conferences on climate change. Currently, the negotiators representing Bangladesh have assumed the role of leading negotiators within the coalition of least-developed states. Bangladesh's participation in the climate change negotiations as part of a coalition is driven by collective interests rather than just national concerns. In order to

¹³ "The Global Shield Against Climate Risks," UNFCCC, last accessed July 23, 2023, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Presentation_Global_Shield_SJA_TC_Workshop.pdf,

address climate change, Bangladesh favours adaptation over mitigation. Developing nations can benefit from adaptation since they are currently experiencing the effects of climate change. Coalition negotiators from the least developed states concentrate on financing for adaptation. Bangladesh is among the founding members of the CVF, which is comprised of small islands, African republics, and least-developed nations, and they decided to negotiate the Paris Agreement together as a group.

4. Climate Diplomacy of Bangladesh: Strengths and Weaknesses

Bangladesh is one of the countries hardest hit by climate change, although contributing only 0.5 per cent of global emissions. From 2000 to 2019, Bangladesh was the seventh most affected country in the world by climate change, according to the Global Climate Risk Index (GCRI) 2021. The latest IPCC assessment warned that the country could lose 2 to 9 per cent of its annual GDP to climate change between now and the end of the century. The analysis predicted that the country will likely experience extreme weather, which would lead to the displacement of roughly four million people and have a profoundly negative effect on the country's economic growth and development in the near and far future. The analysis also predicted that by the year 2030, climate change will have contributed to a net rise in poverty in Bangladesh of almost 15 per cent. Furthermore, by 2050, an estimated 13.3 million people will become climate migrants. Another issue of concern is the predicted decline in freshwater river area in coastal Bangladesh from 2012 to 2050, the rate of decline ranging from 17.1 to 40.8 per cent depending on the scenario of sea level rise. The water and food security of the country would suffer greatly as a result, and millions of people would be forced to relocate. The following are some key attributes of the climate diplomacy of Bangladesh:

4.1 *Climate Diplomacy of Bangladesh: The Strengths*

Bangladesh has a large number of expertise: The Department of Environment (DoE) retains a number of negotiators with extensive experience and their expertise is often recognised by the LDC group in climate negotiations. Simultaneously, the government benefits from a group of non-government experts who have been following various agendas for many years and provide official delegates with expert advice. As global leaders fail to adequately address the losses and damages caused by human-caused climate change, it is particularly important for the global youth organisations to campaign on this issue. Various youth-led organisations in

Bangladesh, for example, Eco-Network, Youth Net, etc. are aligned with the ‘Fridays for Future movement’ for school children, YOUNG GO, and other youth alliances in climate negotiations. This is the greatest long-term investment for Bangladesh’s future climate diplomacy both domestically and internationally.¹⁴

Knowledge hub for locally led adaptation: The Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA) has its headquarters in the Netherlands and has already grown into a significant platform dedicated to aiding nations in adapting to the negative effects of climate change. It has previously established regional centres in China and Africa, and it is working with the government of Bangladesh and has opened the regional centre for South Asia in Dhaka.

Bangladesh is an example for other countries of how to create a national adaptation plan using a whole-of-society perspective, which is necessary for any plan to be successfully executed. Incorporating preparations for adaptation to climate change into national development initiatives is nothing new for Bangladesh. The MCPP and the NAP are the most recent iterations of this, and both put a strong focus on LLA investment as a means of achieving transformational adaptation over the coming years. Bangladesh is already known as the leader of LLA practices. Different ecosystems can be built using this site-specific Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EBA) in conjunction with LLA, and the lessons learned can be shared with other nations that have comparable ecosystems.¹⁵ Other vulnerable developing nations can benefit from this information. Having knowledge on how to combat climate change is valuable on a global scale, so climate-vulnerable communities may take lessons from Bangladesh.

Paradigm shifts from vulnerable to resilient: Another key strength of the climate diplomacy of Bangladesh is that it gives importance to creating top-down national plans while also making investments to enable bottom-up contributions from the most disadvantaged areas to ensure that the plans are successfully implemented. Therefore, there is a paradigm shift: “Rather viewing the vulnerable communities of Bangladesh as merely targets or recipients of support from above, they are considered as the agents of change who know best what needs to be done, and those who wish to support them must first listen to them.”¹⁶ These concepts are part of the eight principles of LLA, which have been accepted by numerous countries, donor organisations, and non-state actors. These ideas must now be put into practice. Building young girls’ and

¹⁴ Expert interview with the researcher from ICCCAD in December 2022.

¹⁵ Expert interview with the employee of GCA in May 2023.

¹⁶ Expert interview with director of ministry of environment and climate change in May 2023.

boys' capacity and putting women at the centre of LLA are important components of this state of resilience.

Bangladesh may serve as a global hub for climate change research: Bangladesh has earned a reputation as a development success story over the past 50 years for reducing poverty, promoting girls' education and employment, and maximising the potential of the private sector in the fields of banking, industry, and commerce. The human-induced climate change will also put a great strain on our development investments over the course of the next 50 years, creating a new, massive global emergency. Thus, if the country wants to succeed in the ensuing decades, the country must incorporate climate change mitigation strategies into its growth plans. Hence, the government formulated different policies, for example: NAP, MCPP, Delta Plan 2100, Ninth Five Year Plan, etc. to deal with the impacts of climate change.

Special envoy's visit to Bangladesh: Ian Fry, UN Special Rapporteur on Climate Change and Human Rights, visited Bangladesh for two weeks to witness the actual losses and damages endured by residents of the Sylhet and Satkhira regions. Before leaving Bangladesh to deliver his report to the United Nations General Assembly in New York, he made it clear that the suffering of the people of Bangladesh was caused by the polluters, and that the time has come to demand the polluters compensate their victims.¹⁷ Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) also organised an interactive talk session with the UN Commissioner for Human Rights, H E Michelle Bachelet, on climate justice in August 2022. Representatives from various grassroot youth-led organisations shared their experiences of how the impacts of climate change are a human rights issue for a climate-vulnerable country like Bangladesh and urged for establishing climate justice. US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry also visited Bangladesh in 2021. During his visit, a multi-year project of up to 17 million has been allocated for Bangladesh Advancing Development and Growth through Energy (BADGE).¹⁸ He also reiterated US support for the CVF and the V20. Bangladesh has been able to showcase its vulnerabilities and climate actions to the wider audience for better assistance and support. These

¹⁷ Mohammad Golam Sarwar, "Developed countries should accept responsibility to establish a loss and damage fund," *The Daily Star*, September 23, 2022, <https://www.thedailystar.net/law-our-rights/news/either-the-developed-countries-accept-responsibility-establish-loss-and-damage-fund-or-they-must-3126231>.

¹⁸ "Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Jhon Kerry Visit to Bangladesh and Meetings with Prime Minister and Top Officials in the Government of Bangladesh," The US Department of State, last accessed June 23, 2023, <https://www.state.gov/special-presidential-envoy-for-climate-john-kerrys-visit-to-bangladesh-and-meetings-with-prime-minister-and-top-officials-in-the-government-of-bangladesh/#:~:text=U.S.%20Special%20Presidential%20Envoy%20for,and%20representatives%20of%20foreign%20governments>

visits depict that Bangladesh has successfully convinced the global community about the climate vulnerability and resilience capacity of the country. These types of visits are a continuous process and result of Bangladesh's diplomatic initiatives.

4.2 *Climate Diplomacy of Bangladesh: The Challenges*

Climate diplomacy typically proceeds at a snail's pace. It can take years to negotiate, and it can be difficult to reach a consensus among a large number of countries with diverse interests. This sluggishness can impede prompt action on climate change, an urgent global issue. Numerous climate agreements are non-binding, which means that there is no effective mechanism for enforcing conformance. The Paris Agreement, for example, relies on the voluntary commitments of nations for enforcement. Even when countries commit to reducing emissions, they may not face significant repercussions if they fall short of their goals. This dearth of enforcement can result in countries not carrying out their commitments in full. According to the expert's interviews, the following are some of the challenges of climate diplomacy in Bangladesh:

Inadequate historical database: Bangladesh lacks historical scientific and evidence-based data that is needed to showcase Bangladesh's vulnerability and resilience in climate change negotiation platforms.

Not prioritising many commonalities that climate change shares with other major foreign policy issues: Although the foreign policy of Bangladesh pursues a neutral and moderate way, the country heavily relies on multi-national diplomacy or multilateralism i.e. UN or the World Trade Organization (WTO). Climate change affect the people in the Global South without the minimum contribution to GHGs. According to the foreign policy of Bangladesh, the state shall support the oppressed people throughout the world. Bangladesh does not emphasis adequately to the commonalities of climate change policies with foreign policy issues. According to Salemul Huq, "Our diplomats have to do more in this regard. It is not enough to join only in annual conferences. Indeed, every diplomat in Bangladesh embassies across the world now needs to make efforts to tackle climate change as a core issue of bilateral discussion."¹⁹

¹⁹ "Bangladesh needs to make core issue of climate diplomacy: Experts," *The Business Standard*, October 04, 2022, <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/environment/climate-change/bangladesh-needs-make-climate-change-core-issue-diplomacy>

No dedicated ministry for climate change: Bangladesh is a climate-vulnerable country and has produced effective climate change policies in the last couple of years. Unfortunately, there are very few numbers of manpower under the Ministry of Forest, Environment and Climate Change (MoEFCC) that do the major tasks for climate diplomacy. In addition to that, the Multilateral Economic Affairs Wing of MoFA is in charge of working with the MoEFCC for climate diplomacy. Bangladesh needs a separate ministry where people from different and relevant ministries will work together for climate diplomacy. For example: Pakistan was not very vocal in climate diplomacy even a few years back. After the devastating flood in 2022, the country established a climate change ministry and was able to establish its vulnerabilities through strong diplomacy. As a result, Pakistan secured its position in the Loss and Damage Transnational Committee. However, Bangladesh did not secure its position yet, although the country was much more vocal from the very beginning of the generation of loss and damage concept in the process of UNFCCC.

Grassroot NGOs and compatibility for Green Climate Fund (GCF)²⁰: One of the major global climate funds is the GCF, despite being the youngest financial vehicle within the UNFCCC. However, due to the strict accreditation requirements set by the GCF governing board, the extremely high transparency, and the fiduciary standards they uphold only 19 per cent of direct businesses receive this funding. A problem then arises because the organisations that are most adept at securing these resources are frequently not those that are most adept at carrying out project activities at the local level. However, they only receive a small percentage of the money set aside for climate action, which is insufficient for them to perform to their full potential. A trickle-down methodology is used to disperse funding from international and local organisations. A minimal amount is left over after covering overhead expenditures at various levels in order to accomplish the intended aims at the ground level. Due to their lack of funding, grassroot organisations also struggle to attract and retain employees because they cannot match the pay and benefits provided by multinational NGOs.

Why are the donors unable or unwilling to directly sponsor these local organisations? Reasons include: i) they argue that local organisations frequently lack the ability to meet their demands and make wise financial decisions ii) multilateral and bilateral organisations favour routing the money through a selected group of reliable partners since it has fewer risks and is more in line with their own regulations iii) Due to their strong anti-money laundering regulations, it is also challenging for

²⁰ Expert interview with the Environment Specialist in Palli Karma-Shayak Foundation (PKSF) in May 2023.

such organisations to route donations directly to the local NGOs, and these NGOs frequently lack the competence to maintain the kind of openness and accountability that such donors demand iv) Local groups usually may not have the appropriate level of technical know-how in order to properly demonstrate the worth of their work. As a result, their financing requests are frequently rejected in open bidding.

Climate agreements are politically controversial: Climate agreements are politically controversial as they require explicit local government decisions for reforms, often in line with the political economy. The interplay between public opinion and domestic politics has the potential to significantly impact a nation's inclination to participate in climate diplomacy and undertake commitments in this regard. Political leaders may encounter opposition from their voters or interest groups who hold opposing views on specific climate initiatives. A nation's posture on climate issues is frequently influenced by domestic politics and economic factors, which can result in inconsistent policies and delayed action. According to some climate experts, Bangladesh's graduation to LDC would affect negatively to receive an appropriate share of climate funds from the developed countries. They believe that the country could declare their graduation status 5 to 10 years later to curb the benefits in a better way.²¹

Common but differentiated responsibilities of countries and their respective capabilities: There are huge, powerful asymmetries around the negotiation table in terms of geopolitics and resources, hence engender potential problems during the negotiation processes. Developing nations frequently contend that they have contributed less to the problem of climate change and are consequently disproportionately affected by its effects. They may perceive that climate diplomacy is biased in favour of developed nations, which exacerbates tensions and impede cooperation. Divergent priorities and obligations between developing and industrialised nations provide a significant obstacle in achieving mutually satisfactory accords. The priorities and vulnerabilities change over the years. Therefore, static attributions of responsibility are unfair. Moreover, interventions of new technologies during negotiation and uncertainties in estimating future costs of climate actions are major challenges for climate diplomacy.

No social media presence: This is the era of social media. Bangladesh's climate diplomacy has no official social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, or any other social media. Individual climate expert and negotiator of Bangladesh maintains their social media accounts personally. The country needs official social media pages to inform its position, and demands and maintain networks with like-minded groups.

²¹ Expert interview with the employee of GCA in May 2023.

Lack of coordination among ministries: Different ministries of Bangladesh are connected for example the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority, Department of Disaster Management and Relief, Department of Public Health Engineering, Department of Women and Children Affairs, local government and engineering department, etc. have lack of coordination among themselves.

Lack of technical knowledge among diplomats: Climate diplomacy is dominated by politicians. However, the understanding, assessments, forecasting, monitoring mitigation, and adaptation tools for the impacts of climate change need scientific/or technical interventions. This is a huge drawback for climate diplomacy. The scientists rely on scientific facts and are committed to working together but the politicians are not. It can be difficult to formulate effective policies when negotiators lack the requisite knowledge to completely comprehend the scientific and technical details.

Lack of regional cooperation: The impacts of climate change do not follow the national boundaries. South Asia has been identified as a climate hotspot. However, it lacks regional coordinated efforts. National interests get priority in the climate negotiation. They belong to different negotiation blocks like the African Union Group. India belongs to the Brazil, South Africa, India and China (BASIC) group and Like-Minded Developing Countries under the G77 and China group. The emission rate is higher than any other developing country in South Asia. So, any commitment to the reduction of the GHG emissions hinder the country from working jointly with other South Asian countries. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, and Nepal have joined the CVF and do the para diplomacy through this forum where India and Pakistan are absent.

Corruption in climate change fund: One of the main obstacles to Bangladesh's infrastructure development for climate adaptation is corruption. Since 2010, the government and NGOs have implemented over 100 climate projects, and one of the international NGOs monitored these projects' progress and documented corruption in the sector. It estimated that, on average, 35 per cent of funds allocated to climate projects are misused, based on an analysis of 38 projects for which that organisation provided detailed information.²² Examples of misappropriated project funding,

²² Mushtaq Khan, Mitchell Watkinsa, Salahuddin Aminuzzamanb, Sumaiya Khairband Muhammad

breaking procurement laws, subpar buildings, and abandoned projects have been included in the document. These incidents are linked to a lack of openness, community involvement, and oversight. There is concern that the climate fund should not be used to set up mere solar street lamps, for constructing foot over bridge, or even establish a safari park. The standing committee also raised the issue.²³ The mismanagement and corruption in climate change funds diminish the image of Bangladesh.

International politics and loss of momentum: Conflicts between nations can cross over into climate negotiations and impede progress. Climate cooperation can be diverted by disagreements over trade, territorial claims, and other geopolitical issues. Powerful interest groups, such as the fossil fuel industry, can exert considerable influence over climate policies in certain nations. This can hinder the creation of effective climate agreements. When significant parties withdraw or modify their commitments, climate negotiations can lose their momentum. The United States’ withdrawal from the Paris Agreement during the Trump administration is an illustration of how political upheavals can destabilise climate diplomacy.

Despite these limitations, climate diplomacy remains an indispensable instrument for addressing the global problem of climate change. It provides a forum for nations to collaborate, exchange ideas, and seek collective solutions. In the fight against climate change, it is a must to continue the efforts to fix the fault lines and strengthen climate diplomacy. If climate justice and equity do not become fundamental to international climate negotiations, there will be no real progress on climate action. The good news is that parties already know what nations must do to limit the most hazardous climate impacts on all communities. In early June 2023, there was an inter-sessional negotiations in Bonn which was a crucial opportunity for negotiators to set the stage for the COP28.

5. Road to COP28: Some Policy Suggestions

Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of numerous weather-related disasters and reducing the resilience of exposed communities that

ZakirHossain Khan, “Win-win: designing dual-use in climate projects for effective anti-corruption in Bangladesh,” *Climate and Development* 14, no. 10, (2022): 921–34, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17565529.2022.2027741>

²³ Ashrafal Haque, “Our main goal is to protect the lives and livelihoods of climate-vulnerable people,” *The Business Standard*, June 15, 2023, <https://www.tbsnews.net/features/panorama/our-main-goal-protect-lives-and-livelihoods-climate-vulnerable-people-650050>

depend on arable land, water, and stable mean temperatures and rainfall. Climate change may potentially alter weather-related hazard distribution, creating new risk patterns. The impacts of climate are the existential threats to many nations of the world. Four years of extreme inundation have submerged two-thirds of the South Sudan by the end of 2022, causing over 1 million people to face severe food insecurity. In March 2023, Cyclone Freddy brought heavy rains to Malawi, Mozambique, and Madagascar, destroying croplands, overburdening health centers, and impacting the livelihoods of over 2 million people. Vanuatu was struck by two cyclones within three days around the same time in the South Pacific, affecting 80 per cent of the nation's population. Cyclone Mocha in 2023 devastated coastal communities in Myanmar and Bangladesh, marking one of the deadliest cyclones in the past 15 years and killing hundreds. After the Global Stocktake at the COP28 in Dubai, UAE, it will be determined how much progress the international Paris Agreement on climate change has made in the fight against the climate crisis and what additional measures are required to accelerate climate action. The following are some policy guidelines suggested by the various experts in Bangladesh for overcoming challenges on mitigation, adaptation, climate finance, and L&D issues that might be applicable for the upcoming COP28:

5.1 Operationalising Loss and Damage Fund:

Bangladesh can initiate global loss and damage framework: Bangladesh can initiate the other LDCs by establishing a public-private partnership National Mechanism for Loss and Damage (NMLD) under the MoEFCC, DRR, Finance, and Planning. Bangladesh can lead the development of a national climate change loss and damage mechanism involving private sector actors like insurance companies, civic society, and researchers. A national framework might combine catastrophe preparedness and adaptation to reduce climate impacts and resolve losses and damages. The Transitional Committee on L&D Funding met three times before COP28 in 2023 to advise negotiators on how to operationalise the funding structure. In June in Bonn, Germany, the second Glasgow Dialogue on L&D allowed governments and experts to discuss the COP28 topics. The Summit for a New Global Financing Pact in France in June 2023 also committed to make a difference for the planet and against poverty. The issues that need to be discussed include where the funds will come from, how much is needed, who will handle them, who can get them, etc. Thus, UNFCCC must work with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). A loss and damage envoy should link the UNFCCC, UNOCHA, and vulnerable communities/countries.

5.2 *Climate Finance*

Need more knowledge on climate finance: Bangladesh's participation in international climate negotiations, such as the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, has helped it obtain access to bilateral funding sources for climate change mitigation, such as the Department for International Development (DFID), UNDP, the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The country is also supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Collective Investment Fund (CIF), and Green Climate Fund (GCF), among other funding sources. However, Bangladesh still encounters obstacles in gaining access to climate finance due to its limited institutional and financial resources. In addition, Bangladesh has created the Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF) and implemented a NAP in order to raise domestic funds for climate action. The country needs to create investment strategies for adaptation that are intended for the long-term implementation rather than just short-term projects. The financiers must take a longer-term programming strategy in order to finance this. However, even if financing is given to the short-term projects, it is still important to focus on what the projects will leave behind rather than just what is accomplished while they are being implemented. Investments in climate change adaptation should therefore be viewed as investments in long-term capacity building.²⁴

*Grassroot NGOs and compatibility for Green Climate Fund (GCF):*²⁵ The local organisations need to: i) proper documentation of their field knowledge, track their developments, and publish quality news stories in peer-reviewed journals to receive attention from global audiences and donors; ii) institutional capacity-building through creating a national and international network; iii) keeping and maintaining the names of donors which are accessible for Bangladeshi organisations; iv) keep align with the ruling party's development agenda.²⁶

²⁴ Expert interview with an Assistant Secretary of Bangladesh Climate Trust Fund, Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change in October 2022.

²⁵ Expert interview with the Environment Specialist in Palli Karma-Shayak Foundation (PKSF) in May 2023.

²⁶ Recently, even the donors have begun to acknowledge the efficiency of regional organisations and are putting more of an emphasis on "localisation" in the aid industry. Major bilateral donors have mandated that multinational NGOs and other organisations collaborate with local NGOs and contribute 25 per cent of the project budget to them. International organisations are likewise focusing on enhancing the capabilities of their local partners. Potentially, Bangladesh might use this idea to fight climate change.

Scaling up and scaling out the climate change pilot projects: The country may urgently address climate change by scaling up²⁷ and scaling out²⁸ the pilot project lessons. A coordination mechanism is needed among the ministries, departments, NGOs, and corporate sectors similar to the Prime Minister's Office's (PMO) coordination of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) goal number 13. Ministry of Finance (Climate change budget), Ministry of Water Resource and Ministry of Agriculture (Adaptation), Ministry of Education (climate change in national curriculum), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (climate diplomacy), Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) (track local climate efforts), Ministry of Power and Energy and Ministry of Industry (mitigation), Ministry of Disaster Management (L&D), private sector (renewable energy and loss-and-damage insurance), civil society (scale up effective LLA examples) and finally, Ministry of Environment must support all other ministries. Scaling up and scaling out requires more funds from the government's budget and assistance from development partners like the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB). This involves moving away from a project-by-project model with budgets of tens of millions of dollars for each project, which has a higher transaction cost and is too sluggish given climate action urgency. Since Bangladesh will no longer be considered an LDC after 2026, the country will no longer be eligible to receive grant-based bilateral financing from developed nations.²⁹

Initiatives of the Bangladeshi Diaspora: The Bangladeshi diaspora can contribute to the fight against climate change and foster ties with persons and organisations of Bangladesh. The Bangladeshi diaspora in the UK took a great initiative in 2022 to work together to address the global climate catastrophe. Mr. Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London organised an annual week-long London Climate Action Week (LCAW) throughout the summer. The week consists of a series of various activities organised by various organisations and hosted throughout London with an emphasis on addressing climate change. This effort has been a hugely effective means of bringing attention to the diaspora community. Currently, Centre for Climate Change and Environment Research of BRAC University is conducting research with the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) to assess the likely benefit of engaging the diaspora in climate diplomacy.

²⁷ Scaling up means incorporating lessons from successful programs into national planning, such as the Planning Commission's Ninth Five-Year Plan (9FYP)

²⁸ Scaling out entails replicating successful pilot initiatives at numerous new locations nationwide.

²⁹ Expert interview with the Director of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in June 2023.

5.3 *Adaptation*

Bangladesh must negotiate for legal climate-vulnerable migration: Bangladesh is the “epicenter” of climatic calamities. Due to its position, major weather events like high floods and tropical cyclones often displace hundreds and thousands of people. Additionally, the global climatic implications of even a one-meter sea level rise in Bangladesh’s low-lying coastal regions will render the country more vulnerable and bring it to the edge of huge calamities. Finally, millions of people, especially in low-lying coastal areas, may have to move despite attempts to assist them in adapting. Climate change-related human relocation has been neglected. By 2050, the southern delta will be permanently flooded, displacing 20 to 30 million people. Bangladesh can advocate this problem by implementing national and local steps and participating in international talks, notably at the forthcoming COPs.³⁰ This is another UN Security Council-worthy human security issue. Bangladesh can pursue the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration’s (GCM) goals of legalising the international migration³¹ of climate-induced displaced people.

Branding climate diplomacy of Bangladesh through climate action: At COP25 and COP26, branding Bangladesh was facilitated by the Bangladesh pavilion. The pavilion served as a venue for meetings and showcased activities by both government and non-government actors from Bangladesh. It was proved to be quite effective and should be repeated in every future COP. Climate change is a global issue and is no longer limited to once-a-year gathering. Rather, it is an issue that has daily impacts somewhere in the world. Therefore, climate diplomacy must be incorporated into the training of foreign service officers so that they become aware of climate change issues. Indeed, this is an asset for “Branding Bangladesh” in which we should invest as much capital as feasible.³²

³⁰ Expert interview with the Director of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in June 2023.

³¹ Even at the 2015 UN Conference of the Parties (COP21) in Paris, also known as the Paris Agreement, which focused on carbon emission reduction targets and environmental issues, climate-displaced refugees were barely mentioned. COP22 (Marrakesh, Morocco 2016) and COP23 (Bonn, Germany 2017) were similar. However, the 2018 COP24 in Katowice, Poland, recognised “climate-displaced peoples” and promised aid to climate refugees. Delegates from Bangladesh, India, the United States (Alaska, Louisiana, Washington State), Vanuatu, Kiribati, Tuvalu, and other Pacific island nations claimed that rising temperatures, sea levels, and weather disasters threatened their lands, cultures, and livelihoods and demanded recognition of the rights and needs of climate-displaced people. The problem-solving task force’s framework report was adopted at COP24 in Poland. The report advised countries to pass laws and policies to prevent people from leaving their homes due to climate change and to help them relocate and minimise negative effects if they do. The COP24 framework will allow vulnerable communities seek legal and political protection for safer travel and relocation in the absence of a climate refugee treaty. The two new UN Global Compacts signed by 160 nations in September 2018—one on safe, orderly, and regular migration and one on refugees—offer critical opportunities to help and ensure safety, dignity, and lasting solutions for climate-displaced or at-risk people.

³² Expert interview with the Director of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in June 2023.

Cooperation among South Asian countries: It is important to coordinate efforts among South Asian nations. As each nation has expertise that can be shared with the other nations, this may and should also involve sharing knowledge on how to address the various climate issues. Bangladesh, for instance, may impart its knowledge on cyclone preparation and warning, as well as locally driven adaptation in its coastal areas. While Pakistan has experience in managing droughts, Nepal and Bhutan have experience in adapting to mountain ecosystems, and India has knowledge in both urban adaptation and heatwave adaptation.³³ By strengthening knowledge exchange across the region through regional organisations like SAARC and SACEP, much may be accomplished.

Peer-to-peer exchange: Bangladesh can share knowledge with other nations through peer-to-peer exchange visits, conferences, seminars, and workshops on LLA and Resilience. The country can undoubtedly take the lead in LLA globally if all parties involved collaborate efficiently and adopt a whole-of-society perspective.

5.4 Mitigation

Engaging private sector on community resilience: The private sector of Bangladesh must move as early as possible from small-scale to larger-scale investments in mitigation measures, such as use of renewable energy resources. Investments in adaptation are also required so that businesses can profit from helping communities to cope with the negative effects of human-caused climate change. The vibrant private sector in our country has the capacity to lead the globe and sell its expertise outside, but this potential is still untapped. The proportion of renewable energy is below 4 per cent. It is needed to acknowledge that it is a failure. There are complaints that there is not enough land, etc. but advanced technologies might solve this issue. Now, Bangladesh's priority is the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan.³⁴ Using grid resilience and modernisation, the country intends to reach 40 per cent renewable energy by 2040. These objectives must be reflected in the future policies, such as the Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan.

Taxing air travel may help the victims of climate change: To create a framework to operationalise the L&D facility, to be adopted at COP28, COP27 established a 24-member Transitional Committee. The techniques, mechanisms, and funding

³³ Expert interview with the Professor of BRAC University in August 2022.

³⁴ Haque, "Our main goal."

sources for this financing facility are expected to be included in the framework.³⁵ Additionally, the LDCs proposed a small international air passenger adaptation levy (IAPAL) at COP14 back in 2008. Another idea put forth by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) was a multi-window institution specialising in insurance and rehabilitation programs. However, the UNFCCC negotiators rejected both of these proposals. Some developing nations, notably the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), objected, arguing that a tax on air travel would probably have a severe effect on the tourist sector, which is the principal source of foreign income for many of those nations.

The increased demand for travel tax will probably wipe out any potential negative effects on demand. Additionally, the UNFCCC parties' initial objection to this fee may no longer hold true given their shared desire to raise money for an L&D facility. Therefore, in light of the shifting political and economic landscape on a worldwide scale and the growing perception of a climate emergency, the LDCs once again propose to reactivate the IAPAL. The prior proposal estimated that the levies of US\$4 and US\$40 on economy class and business/first class, respectively, would generate a total revenue stream of roughly US\$10 billion. The proposal calls for an in-depth investigation into the most recent advancements in air travel and the possibility of raising additional funding for the L&D center from this particular industry.³⁶

In Bangladesh, the Department of Environment also proposed imposing a tax on vehicles based on their emissions rather than their engine displacement. Polluting vehicles will pay more. The 'polluter pays' principle will be applicable here.³⁷ Public transportation such as metro rail, can be included in this tax imposition for emissions.

Youth should hold an "Accountability COP": Fridays for the Future and many more national, regional, and global youth platforms are examples of the numerous international youth platforms that are already thriving throughout the world. These

³⁵ It should be noted that Article 3.1 of the UNFCCC—the idea of "common but differentiated responsibility based on respective capabilities" (CBDR+RC)—remains the cornerstone for addressing climate impacts. The polluter-pays principle (PPP), which ought to be the fundamental tenet of raising funds to address the effects of climate change, is tacitly implied by this idea. The neoliberal market-based economic system serves as the foundation of the climate regime. However, internalising the emission externalities that contribute to climate change is the most essential remedy within this very system. Many nations, both developed and developing, are implementing this in the form of carbon pricing, either by enacting a tax or emissions trading. There are currently well over 70 of these programs in existence worldwide.

³⁶ Expert Interview with the Directors from ICCCAD in December 2022.

³⁷ Expert interview with the Director of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in June 2023.

young activists need to stop asking for permission to attend the UNFCCC COP and instead of that, they need to hold their own Accountability COP. They need to demand that every national government and any organisation or entity that has publicly committed to taking climate change seriously, should come before the youth and report on their progress toward fulfilling their commitments. Many think tanks will simultaneously present their analyses on how governments and others are performing. The main justification for having the Accountability COP organised by the youth is that they are the ones to whom we are all ultimately responsible. The opportunity for the youth to act as well as meet and converse may also be included in such an event. As a result, the Accountability COP would also serve as an Action COP.³⁸ The bottom line is that all players who have pledged to take action urgently need to examine their progress in a more methodical manner and be held accountable. It could be a good idea to hold an annual Accountability COP before the UNFCCC COP, which would be attended by young people from all around the world.³⁹ Bangladesh should put more emphasis on developing the skills of young people in order to make them climate-literate citizens and even shape them into future climate champions.

6. Conclusion

Bangladesh's climate diplomacy has emerged as a critical and influential aspect of the nation's foreign policy, driven by the urgent need to address the multifaceted challenges posed by climate change. As the COP28 approaches, the debate over what we must do versus what we are prepared to do intensifies. Bangladesh has strategically leveraged its vulnerability to climate change, positioning itself as a global leader in advocating for L&D, adaptation, and mitigation efforts in the previous COPs notably in COP27. Through participation in international forums such as the COPs and the CVF, the country has effectively highlighted the disproportionate burden it faces due to the GHGs emissions, successfully pushing for more significant attention to adaptation measures.

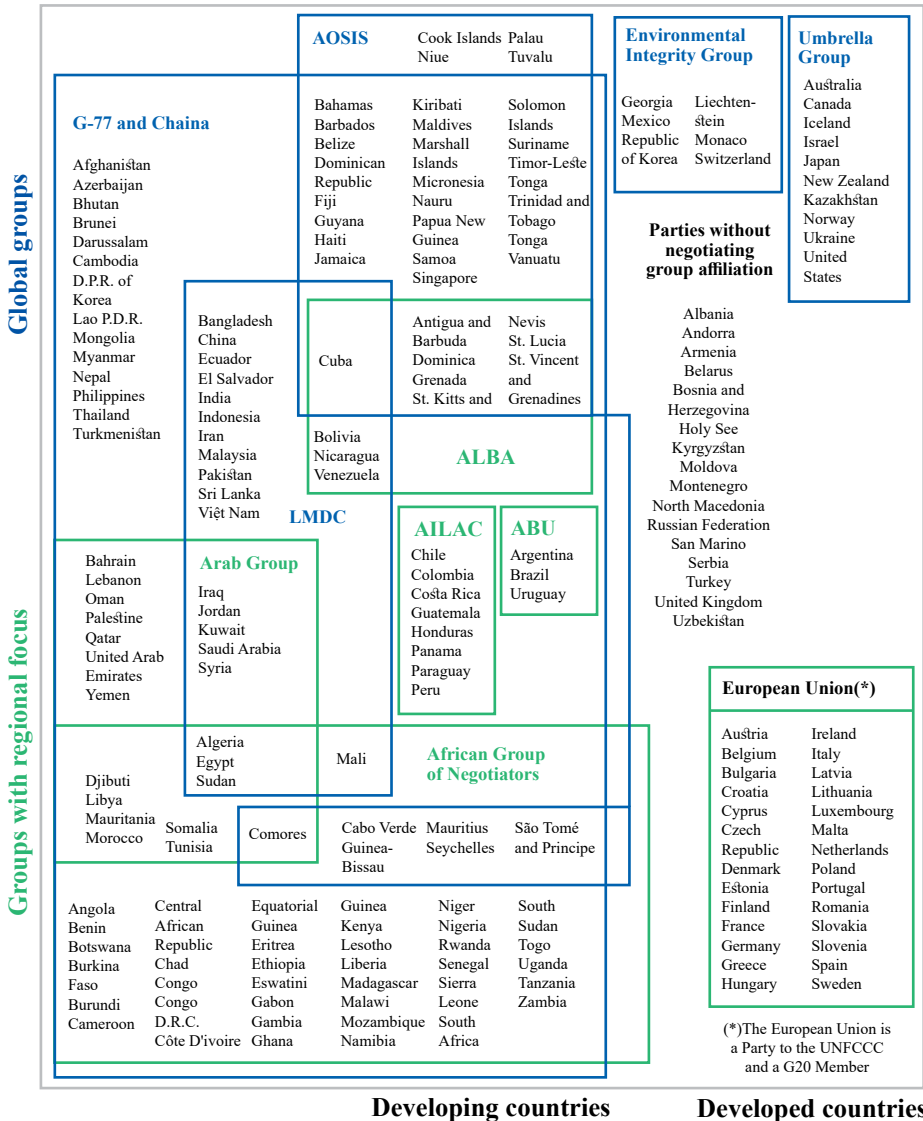
³⁸ The annual Accountability COP should undoubtedly be organised in a low-emission manner. This would entail using a hybrid format, with perhaps a small number of youth leaders from each country meeting in person and the majority participating online from their own locations without having to travel across the globe. Organising such an event shouldn't be difficult given our recent experience working online during the pandemic's peak. In reality, the Global Youth Leadership Center (GYLC) recently hosted the Youth Climate Summit in Khulna, Bangladesh, with the participation of many younger people (like myself) who participated online. The following year, they would have their next summit in Africa. In one of Bangladesh's most vulnerable regions, the initiative involved taking the young people to help local communities that are climate sensitive grow mangrove saplings.

³⁹ Expert interview with the representatives from Eco Network and Youth Net in December 2022.

The nation's commitment to green and sustainable development has also earned its recognition, with investment in climate trust funds, effective policy initiatives, and climate-resilient adaptation. These efforts not only contribute to national climate goals but also serve as an example for other developing countries. However, challenges persist in the realm of climate diplomacy of Bangladesh. The nation still grapples with its climate governance, resource constraints, and technological limitations, which impede its ability to adapt and mitigate effectively. Additionally, there is a need to continue fostering international cooperation, securing continuous financial and technological support, and strengthening diplomatic ties to achieve its climate goals. Finally, Bangladesh's climate diplomacy is a testament to its proactive stance in addressing the pressing global issue of climate action. While facing considerable challenges due to its vulnerability, Bangladesh has emerged as a voice for climate-vulnerable nations and a proactive participant in international efforts to combat climate change. As the world is combating the ever-increasing threat of climate change, Bangladesh's role in climate diplomacy remains crucial in the upcoming COPs, and its efforts to secure a sustainable and climate-resilient future are commendable.

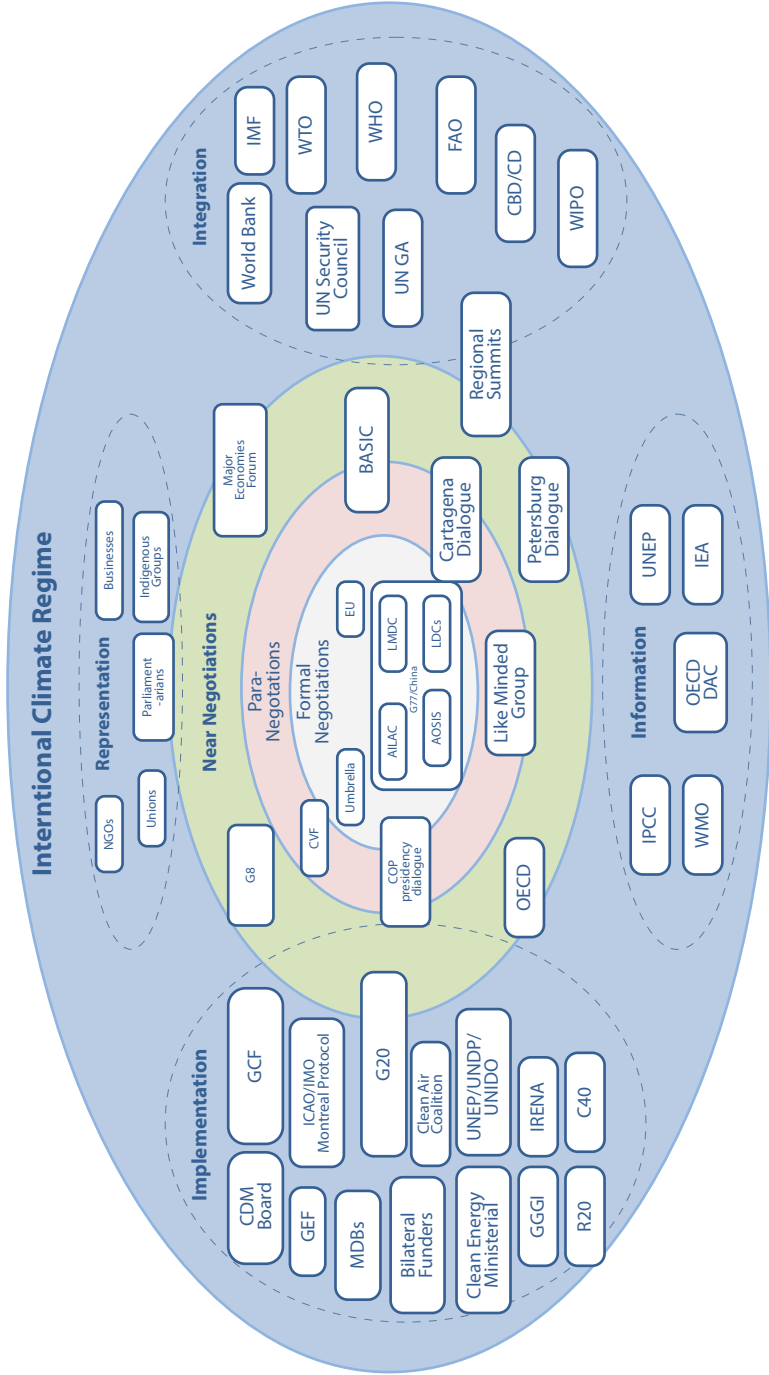
Annex I

Figure 1: Group Affiliation of UNFCC Parties⁴⁰



⁴⁰ Lorenz Moosmann, Cristina Urrutia, Anne Siemons, Martin Cames, Lambert Schneider, "Study "International Climate Negotiations - Issues at Stake in View of the COP25 UN Climate Change Conference in Madrid," European Parliament (Luxembourg: 2019), chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnpbpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2019/642344/IPOL_STU(2019)642344_EN.pdf

Figure 2: The structure of international climate regime⁴¹



⁴¹ Author's recreation from Robert Koehane and David Victor, "The Regime Complex for Climate Change The Harvard Project on International Climate Agreements," *The Harvard Project on International Climate Agreements*, (2010): 5.

Annex III

List of Key Informant Interviewees

1. Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
2. Director (Climate Change and International Convention), Department of Environment
3. Assistant Secretary, Bangladesh Climate Change Trust (BCCT), Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
4. Director, International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD)
5. Deputy Director, International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD)
6. Professor Emeritus, BRAC University
7. Representative from Global Climate Adaptation (GCA), South Asia.
8. Project Manager, Gender Responsive Coastal Adaptation, UNDP
9. Environment Specialist in Palli Karma-Shayak Foundation (PKSF)
10. Eco Network, Bangladesh.
11. Youth Delegate in COP27 and Vice-Chair at Commonwealth YouthClimate Change Network.