Conference of the Parties (COP29)

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Objectives of Attending COP29



COP29 was significant for many reasons, with a primary focus on climate finance to secure the lives and livelihoods of marginalized communities worldwide. As a representative of the Indian Youth Climate Network (IYCN) at COP29, my objectives were driven by a commitment to advancing equity, inclusivity, and meaningful youth engagement in global climate governance. These core principles shaped my involvement throughout the conference, from participating in negotiations to attending side events and engaging in bilateral meetings. My primary goals were to ensure that youth voices, especially those from marginalized communities, were adequately represented in climate discussions and decision-making processes. Additionally, I aimed to push for more ambitious climate finance and loss and damage fund commitments that prioritize vulnerable populations and support grassroots solutions. Attending COP29, my objectives were to:

1. **Amplify Grassroots Realities:**
   I aimed to ensure that the lived experiences of communities in the **Global South**, particularly rural youth, were reflected in global climate policies. These communities often face systemic barriers to participation, such as the digital divide and financial constraints, which marginalize their voices in critical discussions.

2. **Strengthen Youth Engagement:**
   Advocating for the inclusion of youth in decision-making processes was a central focus, particularly in governance mechanisms related to Loss and Damage. Youth possess the innovation and energy necessary to drive accountability and transparency in climate action.

3. **Loss and Damage:**
   Supporting the development of accessible, transparent, and accountable mechanisms for Loss and Damage fund to ensure that marginalized communities, who are disproportionately affected by climate impacts, benefit from these resources.

4. **Advance Equity and Justice:**
   I pushed for policies that address the disproportionate impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations. By emphasizing equity, I sought to align climate finance mechanisms with the needs of those most affected by climate crises.

Activities Involved

1. High-Level Dialogue on Loss and Damage





I participated and was selected as a speaker for the Launch of the Annual High-Level Dialogue on Complementarity and Coherence. This event was co-convened by the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage and the United Nations Secretary-General. Key moments included:

- The **UN Secretary-General's remarks** highlighting the inadequacy of the initial $700 million capitalized for the Loss and Damage Fund and calling for innovative financing, such as solidarity levies on aviation, shipping, and fossil fuel extraction.
- Observer interventions, including from **YOUNGO**, which stressed the need for dedicated subgoals for Loss and Damage in the **New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG)** framework. I used this platform to advocate for increasing grassroots access to the Fund and ensuring its equitable distribution.

Some of the key points included during the intervention were as following:

Key Points from My Speech:

1. **Youth's Role in Climate Action:**
    - As youth, we aren't merely inheriting the climate crisis; we are actively working to address it.
    - We need **systemic, ambitious support and accountability** from global leaders through **loss and damage funding arrangements**.
2. **The Scale of Funds and Transparency:**
    - The financial need for Loss and Damage is in the **trillions**, not billions, to meet the scale of impacts on frontline communities, youth, and children.

- **Transparency and accountability mechanisms** are crucial to ensure funds reach the communities and youth that need them most. This includes clear tracking and reporting systems to build trust in global negotiations.

3. **Loss and Damage as a Standalone Pillar:**

    - Loss and Damage must be recognized as a **third pillar of climate finance**, alongside mitigation and adaptation.
    - A dedicated sub-goal for Loss and Damage is necessary to ensure it receives the urgency and attention it demands.

4. **Justice-Oriented Finance:**

    - Climate finance for Loss and Damage must be **grant-based**, not loan-based, to avoid imposing further financial burdens on vulnerable nations and communities.
    - It must adhere to principles of equity and justice, respecting the rights of marginalized groups and frontline communities.

5. **Accessible Loss and Damage Fund**

    - Direct access to funds for **local and youth-led initiatives** is essential, as bureaucratic barriers often hinder the flow of critical resources.
    - Funding must be inclusive, responsive, and designed to empower youth and communities on the frontlines.

6. **Commitment to a Rights-Based Approach:**

    - Loss and Damage funds must prioritize **marginalized groups** and empower youth as **agents of change**, not just passive beneficiaries.
    - This requires a **rights-based, inclusive, and community-sensitive approach** to fund coordination and implementation.

7. **Bold, Transformative Action:**

    - Youth demand **clear, strong commitments** from leaders—addressing Loss and Damage with bold, transformative measures rather than cautious, incremental steps.
    - This is an opportunity to make Loss and Damage finance a **pathway for justice, resilience, and hope** for all.

2. Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) Negotiations

I actively engaged in discussions related to the **Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (WIM)**. My contributions focused on:

- Aligning the WIM with the Loss and Damage Fund to streamline support for vulnerable communities.
- Advocating for technical and financial assistance to grassroots stakeholders.

- Highlighting the urgency of completing the 2024 review of the WIM, which was unfortunately deferred to COP30.
- While these discussions showcased the WIM's critical role, the lack of consensus was a missed opportunity to strengthen its capacity at a pivotal moment.

3. Side Events and Panels

I had the privilege of contributing as a panelist to several impactful side events, where I shared insights on youth-led climate action and advocated for equitable climate finance. These engagements highlighted the transformative role of youth in addressing critical intersections of climate, governance, and public health:

Key Contributions:

1. **Youth Partnership for Integrity in Climate Action**
   (Co-organized by Green Climate Fund and Independent Integrity Unit)

    - I emphasized the importance of **youth engagement** in combating corruption and fostering transparency in climate finance projects.
    - My input focused on creating **integrity mechanisms** that not only prevent mismanagement of funds but also empower youth to hold decision-makers accountable.



Participation as a panelist for Side event on Youth partnership for integrity in climate action

2. **Maximizing the Health Co-Benefits of Clean Energy Policies**
   (Co-organized by International Energy Agency and Wellcome Trust)

   - As a panelist, I explored the synergies between clean energy transitions, climate action, and public health.
   - I highlighted the **dual benefits** of clean energy policies in addressing climate challenges while reducing health inequities, especially for vulnerable and underserved populations.
   - I stressed the need for **youth-inclusive policies** to ensure a just and equitable transition toward renewable energy.



Side event on maximizing the health co-benefits on clean energy policies

Broader Impact:

These events highlighted the deep interconnections between climate action, governance, and public health, illustrating how each of these domains is essential for addressing the complex challenges posed by climate change. The urgency of tackling climate change is not only about reducing emissions and mitigating environmental damage, but also about ensuring that the policies and actions we take are just, equitable, and conducive to improving the health and well-being of all communities. The impacts of climate change, from extreme weather events to deteriorating air quality, disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, making it clear that climate action must be approached through a lens of equity and justice.

In this context, the events also showcased the transformative potential of youth-driven initiatives, which have increasingly become powerful forces for change. Young people bring fresh perspectives, innovative solutions, and a sense of urgency that is often needed to catalyze action. Their involvement in climate governance not only ensures that future generations are part of the decision-making process, but also empowers them to take leadership roles in creating a sustainable, healthy, and inclusive future.

3. Bilateral Discussions



Bilateral with EU delegation

I participated in bilateral meetings with delegations from **Germany**, the **European Union**, and **Bangladesh**, focusing on Loss and Damage. These discussions provided an opportunity to:

- Advocate for equitable Loss and Damage Fund mechanisms that prioritize the most vulnerable communities.
- Address challenges faced by grassroots organizations in accessing loss and damage fund and propose actionable solutions.
- Strengthen international collaborations to support marginalized groups in regions severely affected by climate change.

5. Advocacy for Rural Youth and Marginalized Voices

Throughout COP29, I worked to amplify the voices of rural youth and marginalized communities, who are often excluded from global dialogues due to systemic barriers. My advocacy efforts included:

- Promoting digital and financial inclusion to bridge the gap between global policies and local realities.

- Calling for targeted support to enable underrepresented groups to participate in climate governance.
- Highlighting the specific vulnerabilities of rural populations to climate-induced losses and damages and advocating for localized interventions.

Outcomes Related to Loss and Damage

1. Progress on the Loss and Damage Fund

The signing of three key documents—the **Secretariat Hosting Agreement**, **Trustee Agreement**, and **Host Country Agreement**—marked significant progress in operationalizing the Loss and Damage Fund. However:

- The total pledges of $731.15 million fell drastically short of the estimated $724.43 billion needed annually.
- Limited contributions from developed countries highlighted the persistent gap in global solidarity and commitment.

2. Review of the Warsaw International Mechanism

The deferral of the 2024 WIM review to COP30 was a disappointment. Key demands, such as scaling up finance and enhancing technical support, remain unresolved, underscoring the need for continued advocacy.

3. Advocacy for NCQG Inclusion

Youth constituencies, including **YOUNGO**, successfully advocated for the inclusion of Loss and Damage within the NCQG framework. However, the final target of $300 billion annually by 2035 is grossly inadequate, failing to address the scale of the crisis faced by developing countries.

Future Pathways After Attending COP29

1. Advocacy for Enhanced Finance Commitments

- Push for the resource mobilization strategy for the Loss and Damage Fund to ensure its full operationalization by 2025.
- Collaborate with global youth networks to campaign for innovative financing mechanisms

2. Strengthening Grassroots Participation

- Develop frameworks to enhance direct access modalities for grassroots communities, ensuring they can benefit from the Fund.
- Advocate for digital and financial inclusion initiatives to bridge the gap between global policies and grassroots realities.

3. Advancing the WIM and Santiago Network

- Engage in the 2025 review of the WIM to emphasize coherence between its functions and the Loss and Damage Fund.
- Support the operationalization of regional hubs under the Santiago Network to provide timely technical assistance to vulnerable countries.

4. Building Youth Capacity

- Organize training programs to equip youth with skills to monitor climate finance and loss and damage projects and advocate for transparency.
- Strengthen partnerships with institutions to institutionalize youth participation in climate governance.

Conclusion

Representing the International Youth Climate Network (IYCN) at COP29 was a truly transformative experience, one that not only deepened my understanding of global climate governance but also reaffirmed the critical role that youth-led advocacy plays in shaping a just and sustainable future. As a representative of a youth organization committed to climate justice, I had the opportunity to engage directly with policymakers, activists, and experts from around the world, exchanging ideas, sharing insights, and collectively pushing for stronger, more inclusive climate action.

A significant highlight of COP29 was the progress made in operationalizing the Loss and Damage Fund, a historic achievement that aims to provide financial support to countries and communities hardest hit by the effects of climate change. This fund is a crucial step forward, acknowledging the disproportionate impacts that climate change has on vulnerable populations, including those in the Global South. However, despite this progress, there are still significant gaps in how this fund will be implemented and the scale of support it will actually provide. The challenges of climate change are vast and complex, and much more needs to be done to ensure that the Loss and Damage Fund reaches those who need it most, particularly marginalized and frontline communities that have contributed least to the climate crisis but are suffering the greatest consequences.COP29 also underscored the urgent need to amplify the voices of those who are often left out of decision-making processes—especially Indigenous communities, young people, and those from the Global South. For me, it was a powerful reminder of the importance of grassroots movements in driving meaningful change. These communities, who have long been at the forefront of climate action, possess invaluable knowledge and solutions that must be integrated into global climate strategies. Throughout the conference, I was inspired by the resilience and creativity of these groups, and it reinforced my belief that true climate justice can only be achieved when we listen to and prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable.

As I reflect on the experience, my focus moving forward will continue to be on fostering greater collaboration across sectors, amplifying the perspectives of grassroots movements especially in India, and holding governments and corporations accountable for their climate commitments. I remain committed to advocating for equitable climate finance and fund for responding to loss and damage and ensuring that it is distributed in ways that truly address the root causes and impacts of climate injustice. A just and sustainable future for all will only be possible when we work together, with urgency and solidarity, to tackle the climate crisis in a way that leaves no one behind.