

:Ahmed Nawaz, a CPPG Alumni and doctoral fellow at the University of Iceland's Environment and Natural Resource (ENR) Department, was invited by the CPPG to speak on "Changing Discourse of the Protected Areas of Governance in Pakistan: Analysis of the Natural Resources Regimes of Central Karakoram National Park" on Thursday, September 14, 2023.



Nawaz presented his comprehensive analysis pertaining to the regulatory framework governing natural resources regimes within the Central Karakoram National Park. He began by presenting the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) definition of protected areas as geographical spaces recognized, dedicated, and managed through legal or other effective means to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values. Within this paradigm, a series of pivotal questions arise, each encapsulating its own distinct governance concerns. For instance, it is significant to know: who defines these areas? how those decisions are made? are people taken on board when making those decisions? who conducts this process, manages it, and regulates people? and who has the power to enforce these values?

Elaborating on the definition, Nawaz presented the six broad categories of protected areas with particular emphasis on national parks. Notably, Pakistan's approach leans heavily towards national parks, encompassing a strategy that allows the usage of sustainable resources while concurrently pursuing conservation. This approach is inclined towards biodiversity conservation, ecosystem protection, and scientific and educational recreation. In contrast, neighboring

countries in the Hindu Kush region, such as Nepal, Bhutan and India, exhibit a more landscape-oriented approach. An approach that integrates policy and practice to promote multiple land usages and creates a link between nature, culture, and community. The former focuses more on the conservation and utilization of resources while the latter focuses on promoting traditional modes of land maintenance concurrently creating a link between people, state, and nature. These variations related to governance and resource allocation provide for a lot of maneuverability as to who has access to these resources and who governs them. These protected areas are essential instruments for in-situ conservation (preservation of species in their natural habitat) and safeguarding biodiversity resources. Additionally, these are also aimed at offering a broad range of socio-economic and cultural benefits to society, especially to the communities that live next to the park.

Moreover, the Global Biodiversity Framework has set a 30x30 target, calling for the conservation of 30% of Earth's land and sea through the establishment of protected areas and other conservation measures by 2030. Focusing on Pakistan and its target of achieving "30x30" as part of the global expansion of protected areas, Nawaz argued that it was important to see how Pakistan is going to achieve this long-term objective. As of now, Pakistan has 14% of its land protected. In the next seven years, how is Pakistan going to have an additional 17% of land as protected area, while also doing conservation, providing ecosystem services, and bringing socio-economic benefits to communities? Keeping in mind, the most critical of these is the achievement of effective management and socio-economic benefits.

Delving further, he discussed that Pakistan's legislative framework concerning biodiversity conservation has experienced notable changes over time. The whole conservation strategy, wildlife protection, and establishment of protected areas have been under continuous change depending on the constitutional arrangements observed through martial laws and other governmental regimes. In the near past, The Protected Areas Initiative launched in 2020 under the PTI government, aimed to expand the country's

coverage to 15% of the total area by 2023 while also declaring 15 new national parks with an additional goal of developing effective management regimes for existing protected areas. It was pertinent to note that only a limited number of protected areas in Pakistan have approved management plans or effective governance regimes.

Central Karakoram National Park (CKNP) serves as a focal point for Nawaz's analysis due to its possession of an approved management plan and sustainable resource practices that offer an ideal context for examining the design and performance of existing governance. CKNP spans an area of 10,557 km<sup>2</sup> with 72 percent of the area as the core zone and the rest constituting the buffer zone. It was established in 1993 while the park received a five-year management plan in 2013. Approximately 230 settlements, housing a quarter million people reside there. They are fragmented and concentrated along the western and southern boundaries. These communities are mostly agro-pastoralists and understood to be the primary stakeholders of the park. They have farm and non-farm incomes depending heavily on the natural resources of CKNP. The key challenges faced by CKNP includes conservation problems, balancing sustainable socio-economic benefits, and promoting community awareness at the local level. The study's objectives encompassed an analysis of CKNP's governance framework, the interaction between different actors, and CKNP's resources to achieve desired outcomes. It had two central research inquiries: understanding how institutions form patterns of interactions between different stakeholders/actors, CKNP's resources and the effectiveness of CKNP's governance system; and how it can deliver equitable conservation while achieving socio-economic development goals.

To elucidate the analytical framework, Nawaz shared that his framework borrows from three different authors: Peterson, Christofferson, and Watten. He summarized their ideas in five main components. These include: a) natural attributes and features of protected area; b) roles and decision-making power of different actors and stakeholders within a governance system; c) institutions comprising of rules, norms, conventions, and legislative structures and mechanisms; d)

patterns of interaction - how actors interact with one another, and how actors interact with the protected area; and lastly outcomes, encompassing both positive or negative impacts stemming from modifications to the governance framework.

Further, Nawaz discussed that CKNP has four national resource regimes based on which people interact with wildlife: one, wildlife hunting, which involves hunting and retaliatory killing of carnivores like markhor, etc., and can result in biodiversity and wildlife loss; two, pasture and rangeland use, whereby unregulated use of pastures can lead to competition between livestock and wildlife, invariably resulting in disease transmissions; three, tourism, which includes porter services and tour guides that may result in uncontrolled pollution and unregulated tourism; and lastly forest resources, which includes firewood and timber collection, whose excess use promote deforestation and habitat loss.

Elaborating on the institutions governing CKNP, he pointed out that protected areas including CKNP were mostly dormant or "paper parks" as all interactions were prohibited under the Wildlife Preservation Act 1975. The protected areas governance has undergone a process of evolution and is shifting away from "fortress conservation". These protected areas became operational in 2008 as community engagement and access were recognized. The first management plan was also approved in 2013 following sustainable natural resources use in the buffer zone.

After this approval, certain modifications were observed in the interactions. Wildlife hunting introduced new forms of trophy hunting programs, livestock insurance, and predator-proof corals. This modification reaped benefits for the community as they receive an 80 percent share in permits, compensation, and prevention of depredation. In pasture and rangeland use, livestock vaccination programs and assistance with fodder production were introduced which helped in healthier livestock and in alleviating fodder shortages. The tourism regime increased support to develop local tourism ultimately helping in capacity and infrastructure development while also developing a share in waste management fees. For forest resources, tree

plantation drives were initiated that helped in increasing tree population, the proliferation of seeds, and the cultivation of saplings.

These modifications reaped several notable outcomes. The commodification of ungulates (hoofed mammals) and pastures i.e. marketable exchange of animals promoting animal care and conservation, encouraged locals to protect and conserve flagship species. Revenue sharing brought local development in communities. There has been an increase in key ungulates and carnivore populations. The introduction of protection mechanisms for disease transmissions is another positive outcome. Moreover, a certain kind of legitimacy and mechanism is evident that has aided in improving trust among local communities.

Concluding the entire discussion, Nawaz shared how local communities prioritize socio-economic benefits and overall concerns. All these communities are widely diverse and it is extremely difficult to group them into a single entity. Benefits are not equally shared across all communities. Thus, it is important to create awareness regarding key issues, resource use, and the need to work together and create linkages among these communities and different regimes.

The talk was followed by a stimulating Q&A session. One of the participants inquired about the role of traditional practices and local wisdom in achieving biodiversity conservation as people see the construction of protected areas as foreign intrusion. Also, there is a large gap that exists between society, state, and NGOs. Nawaz answered that establishing protected areas is a political decision, and conservation is one of the objectives. Overall, the larger objective is to make it a world heritage site. Overall, the study questions the role of different actors in making decisions and how these decisions are made. Another participant asked the speaker to elaborate on political issues and the sociological context under which people are now adopting state-bound activities. Nawaz replied that the conservation narrative in Gilgit-Baltistan has evolved over the last 50 years. It is shifting towards community involvement, also called as co-management, but the state community partnership will take another 20-25 years to reach the required level of understanding. This is how democracy works, it takes time.

:**Jourdain Vaillant**, a diplomat and climate negotiator; **Sohaib Anwar**, an environmental engineer at Hagler Bailly Pakistan; and **Noor Ahmed**, Deputy Director at the Environment Protection Agency Punjab, were invited by the CPPG to speak on “**International Climate Change Negotiations: Challenges to Justice and Security**” on January 25, 2023 in collaboration with the French Embassy.



Pertaining to the ongoing debate on Climate Change, Vaillant highlighted that the public understanding of climate issues has evolved in the last few years, and the international framework for the fight against Climate Change has become more integrated. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), adopted in 1992, considered Climate Change as human-induced. To tackle Climate Change and its negative impacts, world leaders at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris reached a landmark multilateral agreement on 12th December, 2015 termed the Paris Agreement. It sets forth three main agendas for negotiation: *one*, mitigation – limiting global warming and rise in global average temperature to well below 2°C from preindustrial levels, preferably 1.5 degrees celsius; *two*, adaptation and resilience – creating a global consensus on what adaptation means. It is a fairly difficult task because some countries believe that adaptation requires funding and that creates financial constraints; *three*, provision of financing to developing countries to mitigate Climate Change. In COP15 (2019), the developed countries promised to channel US\$100 billion a year to less wealthy nations to support climate action. Needless to say, the promise has not been met as yet. However, Vaillant shared that efforts are being made to bridge this financing gap.