

PRES RELEASE

Karachi Climate Action Plan Faces Slow Progress as Experts Call for Stronger Government, Civil Society, and Media Coordination for Mitigation Targets

KARACHI, Oct 4: Speakers at a media dialogue on the Karachi Climate Action Plan (KCAP) have expressed concern over the slow implementation of the Karachi Climate Action Plan, as the city braces for Super El Nino, while struggling with severe climate risks, including extreme heat, urban flooding, drought, coastal hazards, air pollution and rapid loss of green spaces

The speakers were addressing a **Media Dialogue on the Karachi Climate Action Plan and Progress on Implementation**, jointly organised by The Knowledge Forum (TKF), Karachi Union of Journalists (KUJ) and the Local Government Reporters Association, Karachi, at a local hotel on Saturday.

Two presentations were made at the dialogue by experts who provided an overview of the climate action plan and the energy challenges facing Karachi.

In his presentation on the KCAP, M. Mashood Tariq of the Urban Research and Design Cell of the Department of Architecture and Planning at NED University of Engineering and Technology said Karachi was experiencing growing climate risks and needed urgent and coordinated action.

According to him, the KCAP provides a pathway for Karachi to become emissions-neutral by 2050 while setting an ambitious interim target for 2030. The plan also seeks to strengthen the city's ability to adapt to present and future climate hazards and ensure that the social, environmental and economic benefits of climate action are distributed more equitably among citizens. He noted that the KCAP requires periodic review and updating of the plan's targets through the proposed Directorate of Environment and Climate Change as part of its governance structure.

Mr Tariq warned that Karachi's greenhouse gas emissions, calculated under KCAP, could almost double by 2040 and triple by 2050 if urgent mitigation measures were not introduced. He noted that Karachi, as a member of the C40 network of major cities, is expected to work towards carbon neutrality by 2050.

He highlighted the rapid expansion of the city's built-up area as one of the major factors contributing to its climate vulnerability. Between 2013 and 2023, he said, Karachi's built-up area increased from 270 square kilometres to 538 square kilometres.

During the same period, grass and shrubland declined by 45 per cent, agricultural land by 59 per cent and mangrove areas by 23 per cent, he added.

Mr Tariq said the loss of natural areas was increasing the city's exposure to heat, flooding and other climate-related hazards. He said the KCAP proposed a range of adaptation measures, including conservation and expansion of mangrove forests, improvement of drainage infrastructure, floodwater storage and restoration of natural riverbeds.

The Plan also comprehensively lays down mitigation measures including increasing urban green spaces, enhance energy efficiency in the industries sector in Karachi; and reducing GHG emissions from solid and sewage waste, among others. A Directorate of Environment and Climate Change and a Climate Change Board has been proposed for implementation of KCAP.

He stressed that improved sewage and solid waste management was equally important because waste accumulation and blocked drains significantly increased the risks of urban flooding during heavy rainfall.

The second presentation was delivered by Clean Energy Expert Basil Andrews of The Knowledge Forum, who discussed the changing energy landscape of Karachi and the challenges faced by electricity consumers.

Mr Andrews said the use of rooftop solar panels has substantially increased across the country, amid the energy crisis, rising electricity tariffs and persistent load-shedding. He said solar panels with an estimated total capacity of around 50,000 megawatts had arrived in Pakistan, mostly from China.

He estimated that around 2,300MW of solar capacity had been installed in Karachi alone, describing the development as a major shift in the city's electricity landscape. The increasing cost of electricity and load-shedding were among the key factors driving consumers towards rooftop solar, he said.

Of the total solar capacity in Karachi, around 606MW had been brought into the K-Electric system through net metering, Mr Andrews added.

He said wind energy technologies for both small- and large-scale applications were also gradually emerging in Pakistan, offering further opportunities for the country to move towards cleaner and more indigenous sources of energy.

However, he cautioned that the benefits of Karachi's energy transition were not yet reaching smaller consumers and vulnerable sections of society.

Mr Andrews said K-Electric had become increasingly dependent on electricity supplied through the national grid because of its relatively lower cost. Between fiscal year 2020 to 2025, K-Electric's power imports from the national grid increased from 5,764 gigawatt-hours to 10,234GWh, while its own generation declined from 10,185GWh to 6,433GWh.

Referring to a National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) order issued in August 2026, he said commercial losses, electricity theft and non-payment could not be used as a blanket justification for load-shedding affecting consumers who regularly paid their electricity bills. Moreover, affordable electricity is equally important to ensure that citizens are protected against rising episodes of extreme weather in the city.

He called for targeted action against electricity theft, improvement of distribution networks, and promotion of community- and apartment-based solar solutions, energy storage and greater consumer choice.

“Karachi must move beyond simply managing electricity scarcity towards providing affordable, reliable and inclusive electricity to its consumers,” he said.

During an interactive session, journalists asked the presenters questions about different aspects of the KCAP, including its implementation, climate risks, urban planning, energy transition and the role of civic institutions.

The journalists and speakers also underlined the need to strengthen cooperation between civil society and the media to highlight Karachi’s environmental and climate-related problems and to keep citizens informed about progress on the implementation of the climate action plan. They called for close coordination among civil society organisations, civic bodies, researchers and journalists covering local government institutions to ensure effective implementation of the city’s climate action strategy.

TKF Director Zeenia Shaukat said Karachi was facing multiple and interconnected problems and its temperatures were increasing partly because of the rapid expansion of concrete structures and the loss of natural spaces.

She urged journalists to give greater attention to climate change and its impact on Karachi and to regularly report on environmental issues affecting the city’s residents.

Karachi Union of Journalists President Tahir Hasan Khan appreciated the role of the Local Government Reporters Association, Karachi, in highlighting civic and municipal issues and said journalists covering local government institutions had an important role in keeping the public informed about developments affecting the city.

The speakers agreed that effective implementation of the KCAP would require stronger coordination between government institutions, civil society, researchers, media organisations and citizens. They said climate action could not remain limited to policy documents and required sustained monitoring, public participation and accountability at the implementation stage.