

Empowering AJK Youth for Climate Resilience Emphasised:



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ISLAMABAD: February 4 : Seasoned environmental experts, while addressing a capacity building workshop, exclusively for youth, strngky stressed the urgency of building adaptive capacities among young leaders to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change in Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJ&K), a region highly susceptible to extreme weather events, glacial melting, and environmental degradation.

AJK-based Kashmiri NGO / think tank – The Centre for Peace, Development, and Reforms (CPDR) hosted the Youth Climate Resilience Workshop at the federal metropolis yesterday bringing together young climate advocates, researchers, and policy makers, hailing from across Azad Jammu Kashmir, to develop youth-led solutions for tackling climate challenges in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K).

Our Special Jammu and Kashmir state Correspondent Altaf Hamid Rao reports that Correspondent reports that the event emphasized the crucial role of youth engagement in climate adaptation and mitigation, fostering innovative approaches to enhance AJ&K's climate resilience.

The workshop featured interactive discussions and expert-led sessions, allowing participants to explore and discuss solutions to address climate vulnerabilities in their communities.

The workshop began with an insightful opening session led by Sher Shah Khan Bangash, CEO Skillistan, who discussed global climate challenges and the role of youth in shaping climate resilience policies. He emphasized the importance of youth-driven advocacy and community-based action in combating climate threats, urging young leaders to take an active role in addressing environmental challenges.

Following this, Dr. Shaheen Akhtar, HOD International Relations (IR) Department National Defense University

(NDU) Islamabad, delivered a comprehensive session on climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, highlighting the need for youth participation in nature-based solutions, disaster preparedness, and ecosystem restoration initiatives. She stressed that young people are not just stakeholders but key drivers of meaningful climate action.

Participants were encouraged to share their ideas and innovative climate solutions with CPDR for further review. CPDR committed to evaluating these proposals to determine their feasibility and reconvening with participants for future discussions and potential implementation. This approach ensures that young voices remain at the center of actionable climate resilience strategies.

The workshop also resulted in several key commitments.

Empowering young climate

leaders emerged as a central theme, with an emphasis on capacity-building programs that equip youth with the knowledge, skills and resources to lead climate action in AJ&K. Policy advocacy was another major takeaway, with experts and participants calling for greater youth representation in environmental decision-making processes at both governmental and non-governmental levels.

Additionally, the workshop

underscored the importance of community-based action, highlighting how youth-led grassroots movements can play a vital role in enhancing climate resilience, particularly in rural and vulnerable communities

The event reinforced the need for a collaborative, youth-centered approach to climate resilience in AJ&K, with participants leaving motivated to take concrete steps toward a sustainable future.

In his closing remarks, Irtaza Muhammad, Director Programs of CPDR, emphasized CPDR's commitment to fostering climate-conscious leadership among the youth of AJ&K. He stated: "Youth are at the forefront of the climate crisis, and their active participation is key to driving sustainable solutions. CPDR is dedicated to equipping young leaders with the tools needed to create a climate-resilient future.

The workshop also featured valuable contributions from climate advocates, researchers, journalists, and student leaders, including Hunain Mehmood, Ayesha Khan, Mughiza Imtiaz, Hasiba Aziz, Mohid Zafar, Muhammad Abdullah, Uzair Sarfaraz and Huzaifa Khan, all of whom reinforced the importance of youth-led initiatives in shaping climate policies and building resilient communities.

Speakers termed the initiative another milestone in CPDR's climate action efforts, as the organization continues to work towards inclusive, sustainable, and climate-resilient development in AJ&K.