

## SDPI-IHCBA's Roundtable on Climate Conscious Lawyering

Event Report: **“Bridging the Climate Gap: Mediation and Climate Conscious Lawyering”**

By: *Barrister Sarah Kazmi, Energy and Climate Lawyer, IHCBA*

On Saturday 26 April 2025, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in collaboration with Islamabad High Court Bar Association (IHCBA) hosted for the first time, a roundtable on “Bridging the Climate Gap: Mediation and Climate Conscious Lawyering” at SDPI Islamabad. The objective was to explore the emerging role of climate conscious lawyering and build capacity at the intersection of law, policy and mediation in the context of climate change. Special addresses were delivered by Justice (R) Mushir Alam, former Supreme Court Judge, Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam, Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, MoCC & EC and Justice Jawad Hassan (Lahore High Court) who was the first one to represent the judiciary internationally in COP28. Dr. Abid Sulehri the Executive Director of SDPI and Barrister Sarah Kazmi on behalf of IHCBA welcomed the participants. Dr. Sulehri in his address highlighting the role of think tanks, to strengthening climate evidence for litigation to assist lawyers and the bench.

Emily Morrison (International Bar Association) virtually addressed from London to talk about how lawyers can engage in the lead up to COP30. In the first panel Barrister Sarah Kazmi as a moderator laid out that climate conscious lawyering requires the legal practitioners to be aware of the shifting understanding of climate change risks to their clients and advise in view of the impacts of climate change. Muzaffar Mirza (SECP) explained SECP's ESG Disclosure Guidelines while Bulent Sohail (IBA-ADRIC) also highlighted the potential role of lawyers in new green projects with the Pakistan Green Taxonomy developed by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). Omer Soomro (Former Law Minister Sindh) stressed the need for mandatory mediation in environmental disputes citing the dumping of untreated waste in Karachi's seas. Dr. Palwasha Ayaz Khan (Executive member IHCBA) highlighted the climate impacts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa noting water scarcity and pollution.

In the second panel, Judge Sufiyan Rana, District Judge, Manchester England & Wales, shared examples of mediation in UK used to resolve environmental issues and how early mediation helped narrow issues in the 2021 UK case of the Friends of the Earth and Heathrow Airport saving time and reducing costs.

Judge Ghazan Mahmood (E&W) emphasized that mediation is particularly effective in environmental disputes because of the involvement of multiple stakeholders and expert evidence citing that courts in

England and Wales are duty bound to propose mediation even without party consent. Justice Jawad Hassan (LHC) set out the legal frameworks for climate financing, another area where disputes are arising around the world. He also underlined the judiciary's vital role in reinforcing the right to a clean and healthy environment through various judgements.

Ms. Romina Alam joined the panel discussion, recognizing the efforts of judiciary through their judgments and called for need to have international caucus on climate justice and for faster resolution mechanisms to prevent the misuse of court processes to delay climate action.

The session concluded with closing remarks from Honourable Justice (R) Mushir Alam and IHCBA President Syed Wajid Ali Gillani.

*The resources referenced by Justice Jawad Hassan may be accessed [here](#)*

*The full video recording of the session is available [here](#)*