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AZERBAIJAN-CHINA RELATIONS: THE IMPACT OF THE SUCCESSFUL CONVENING OF THE COP 29 IN BAKU

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The successful convening of COP 29 in Baku has not only brought attention to the urgent challenges posed by climate change but has also greatly strengthened the relations between Azerbaijan and China. This research employs a blend of literature analysis and case study methodologies, by examining the impact and achievements of the successfully convened the COP 29, the author aims to assess the contributions that Azerbaijan and China, as key players in the global community, can make in tackling the increasingly urgent climate challenges and the potential for collaboration between the two sides.

Keywords: COP-29, Climate Change, International Cooperation and Coordination, Azerbaijan-China Relations.

Introduction. In recent years, global climate change has emerged as a critical global issue, with more frequent extreme weather events posing an imminent risk to the survival and development of humankind. To tackle this worldwide challenge, the COP (the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC), as a key platform for international climate governance, has taken on the vital task of fostering international cooperation and developing response measures. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement constitute the legal basis for international climate governance and provide a framework and objectives for cooperation among countries.

In 1992, majority of countries around the world joined an international agreement known as the UNFCCC, which serves as a framework for global collaboration aimed at addressing climate change by restricting the rise of in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, and dealing with potential risks and impacts caused by climate change. There are now 197 Parties to the Convention. In the same vein, all nations embraced the 2015 Paris Agreement to strengthen the worldwide effort against the looming danger of climate change by capping the rise in global temperatures this century to significantly below 2 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels and striving to limit the increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius [1, p.2-4].

The COP 29, which took place in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November 2024, gathered world leaders, scientists, and business executives to address the climate emergency and advocate for a sustainable transition. Among the main objectives of the COP 29 is establishing a new target for climate finance, ensuring all nations possess the resources needed to implement significantly stronger climate actions, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and fostering resilient communities. Nevertheless, being an emerging country in the global energy market, Baku was involved in a contentious debate on hosting COP 29 while its economy is heavily dependent upon oil and gas output. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, addressed during COP 29 opening speech that every natural resource is a gift from God, including oil and gas. The country should neither be faulted for possessing them, nor should it be blamed for delivering these resources to the market because the market demands them” [6]. To a broad sense, the successful holding of COP 29 in Baku is not only conducive to improving the status of Azerbaijan in the international arena, but also provides impetus to the country's sustainable energy transformation and green development strategy.

Nearly 72,000 delegates representing 196 countries and parties registered to take part in the COP 29 in Baku, which could make it the second-largest COP on record. As a host country, it was common to see at the COP summits that Azerbaijan became the largest delegation with 2229 individuals signing

up for the badges. Following by Brazil (1914 participants, due to the fact that Brazil will be hosting COP 30 in 2025) and Türkiye (1862 participants, close neighboring and brotherly country), China is ranking the fourth delegation size with 969 participants [5]. As significant participants, Chinese delegation actively showcased its green technologies and achievements at the conference and explored further opportunities for collaboration.

The COP 29 summit serves as an excellent opportunity for nations to enhance cooperation in various domains, including but not limited to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, advancing renewable energy initiatives, reinforcing the development and enforcement of environmental protection laws and regulations, and collectively fostering improvements in the global climate governance framework. As far as we know, Azerbaijan and China are developing countries, yet who always are committed to accelerate energy transition, reduce carbon emissions, and innovate green technologies. To lower greenhouse gas emissions and encourage energy diversification, both Azerbaijan and China have developed a national strategy for renewable energy advancement.

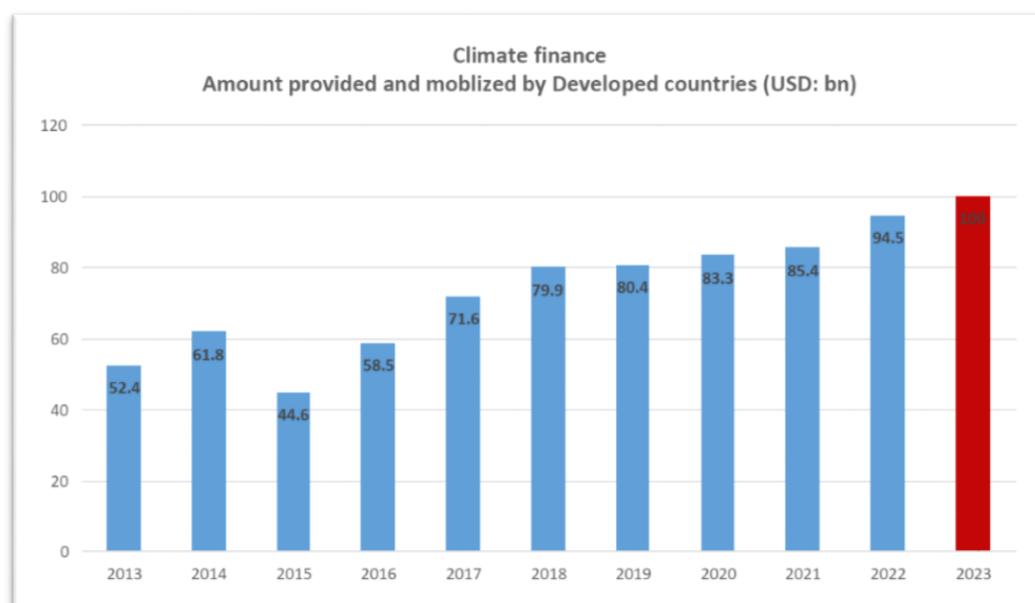
Since 2019, President Aliyev of Azerbaijan signed a document titled "Measures for the Implementation of Pilot Projects in the Field of Renewable Energy Utilization," which exempts renewable energy investment initiatives from land tax [8]. Additionally, companies involved will receive tax benefits, including a seven-year reduction in income tax. The news reported by AZERTAC special correspondent in 2022 that China ranks first in the world in terms of the amount of electricity produced by solar panels. Last year, 53 GW of solar energy was produced in China [7]. In line with this, Azerbaijan aims to collaborate with Chinese companies to create a carbon-neutral future collectively, assisting in the diversification of its economy and decreasing reliance on oil and natural gas.

Consequently, by examining the impact and achievements of the successfully convened the COP 29, the author aims to assess the contributions that Azerbaijan and China, as key players in the global community, can make in tackling the increasingly urgent climate challenges and the potential for collaboration between the two sides. For example, the two nations can pursue extensive cooperation in various sectors, including but not limited to, decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, advancing renewable energy initiatives, enhancing the development and implementation of environmental protection laws, and working together to improve the international climate governance framework. Through the exchange of knowledge, technologies, and resources, Azerbaijan and China will be better equipped to address the difficulties posed by climate change and positively contribute to safeguarding our collective planet.

Research Methods and Data Sources. This research employs a blend of literature analysis and case study methodologies. The literature analysis is primarily utilized to examine and evaluate the historical context, conference agendas, and outcome documents from the United Nations Climate Conference, along with the policy documents and action plans of Azerbaijan and China regarding climate change. The case study approach offers an in-depth analysis of specific collaborative efforts between China and Azerbaijan in climate governance, seeking to identify areas of alignment in their cooperation and governance strategies.

The data sources consist of the official site of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the governmental websites of Azerbaijan and China, reports from pertinent international and non-governmental organizations, as well as academic journals.

The outcomes of the COP 29 and Expectations of international community. On 24 November, after the meeting was extended for 35 hours, the COP 29 eventually closed its sessions. Within the two-week negotiation among nearly 200 countries in Baku, first and foremost, the COP 29 reached a remarkable agreement regarding climate finance. This includes that to increase financial support to developing nations, raising the previous target from USD 100 billion per year to USD 300 billion per year by 2035; ensure collaborative efforts among all stakeholders to boost financing for developing countries, reaching a total of USD 1.3 trillion annually by 2035 from both public and private sources. However, \$300 billion climate finance goal might be hindered by the complexities of international economical-political dynamics.



Source: OECD, data based on an average of OECD scenarios

Originally, developed countries, during the COP 15 in Copenhagen, who committed to supplying \$100 billion (£78 billion) annually to developing countries for climate actions by the close of 2020. However, by the conclusion of that year, the total amount reached \$83.3 billion (£65 billion) – the target was ultimately achieved three years later [2, p.7-9]. Therefore, it is difficult to determine if developed nations will be able to meet their pledged amounts on schedule by 2035. On the other hand, the reelection of Donald Trump of the United States probably overshadows climate actions of international community. The analysis by Carbon Brief earlier this year indicated that Trump’s presidency could result in an extra 4 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (GtCO₂e) in US emissions by 2030, in comparison to the ongoing plans of current-President Joe Biden [5].

Least developed countries (LDCs) are classified as low-income nations that face structural barriers to achieving sustainable development. Based on the three criteria set by the United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP), there are 45 countries that are considered as low-income nations. Similarly, small island developing states (SIDS) denotes a collection of small island nations (or states) that are developing and generally face comparable challenges in sustainable development. Both LDCs and SIDS are among the most susceptible nations impacted by climate-related issues [3, p.14-31].

An instance worth highlighting is that in November 2024, coinciding with the COP 29 summit period, the Indonesian Parliament enacted legislation to relocate the capital from Jakarta. Despite issues like swift urban growth and excessive depletion of groundwater, increasing sea levels due to global warming are also a decisive factor why small island nations like Indonesia have to relocate their capital. For this reason, The COP plays an irreplaceable role as one of the important platforms for S LDCs and SIDS to express their concerns. For the LDCs in Africa and Asia, climate change will lead to the inundation of coastal regions that are low-lying, heightened water shortages, reduced agricultural productivity and fishery resources, as well as a decline in biological diversity.

Nevertheless, in the past ten years, merely 2.8% of existing international climate funding has been directed towards Small Island Developing States, while 18% has been allocated to LDCs. It is an undeniable responsibility of countries in the Global North and South to provide more support and access to the LCDs and SIDS and help them cope with the disasters caused by climate change.

The Impact of the COP 29 on Azerbaijan-China.

4.1 Increasing public awareness and education for sustainable development

The climate change crisis poses a significant risk to sustainable development and demands immediate intervention at global, national, and local scales. Climate change is connected to other challenges associated with the loss of biodiversity, health concerns, food security, and sustainable production and consumption practices. Every nation across the globe should put in their utmost effort

and collaborate to safeguard the planet that we depend on for our existence. Azerbaijan and China actively engage in the United Nations (UN) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), both of which are essential in fostering the global sustainable development agenda, increasing national awareness of sustainable development, and amplifying the urgency of climate change and the importance of environmental protection.

Intergating education for sustainable development to economic growth is a vital strategy for fostering a sustainable future. For example, research conducted at Baku State University (BSU) related to environmental conservation and addressing climate change has been growing, with numerous projects underway to enhance environmental awareness and promote greater environmental responsibility. In 2024, BSU became a member of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. A variety of ecology and environmental conservation projects carried out by students in collaboration with faculty at BSU showcase the university's dedication to advancing sustainable development and safeguarding the environment. These initiatives not only contribute to the university's academic excellence but also foster a sense of responsibility and stewardship among its students and faculty towards the natural world.

Furthermore, a delegation headed by Isa Habibbayli, the President of the Azerbaijani National Academy of Sciences, visited the China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation (CBCGDF) and engaged in detailed discussions regarding responses to climate change, scientific and technological collaborations, and partnerships in green development. Both parties signed a strategic cooperation agreement aimed at actively participating in Global Climate Governance and other related matters. Secretary General Zhou Jinfeng of CBCGDF called on nations globally to engage in the COP 29 and collaboratively provide insights and efforts in the battle against climate change.

4.2 Promoting green development and sustainable energy cooperation

Increasing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions commonly indicate a reliance on energy systems that utilize environmentally damaging sources, including fossil fuels and biomass, which are vulnerable to different types of disruptions. Only by diversifying the energy structure and investing in clean energy and green technology can we effectively reduce GHG emissions and ultimately achieve a zero-carbon community. However, for numerous developing nations, attaining zero carbon emissions is not an immediate process, particularly for those that depend on a singular oil resource as the cornerstone of their economy.

The COP 29 offered Azerbaijan with more opportunities for experience sharing and technical exchanges regarding the transition to green energy. As China's continued progress in renewable energy innovations and its capabilities in green investment and financing, the conference presents considerable potential for collaboration in energy transformation between the two sides. As early as October 2023, the China State Construction Engineering Company (CSCEC) commenced its photovoltaic power generation project, which is located in Gobustan [4, p.18]. The Gobustan photovoltaic initiative currently stands as the largest renewable energy project in Azerbaijan. Once it becomes operational, it is anticipated to generate 500 million kWh of electricity annually, which will be enough to provide power for 110,000 homes in the area, reduce carbon dioxide emissions by over 200,000 tons each year, and significantly improve the local energy infrastructure. This project is owned by the Masdar Company from the United Arab Emirates, with subcontracting managed by Chinese firms.

Similarly, the data published on Chinese automobile manufacturer BYD's official website in July 2024, the company has secured the bid for the Azerbaijani government's electric bus procurement project, receiving an order for 160 electric buses. BYD stated that this shipment of electric buses will contribute to the COP29 initiative for promoting green and low-carbon hosting. Moreover, the Chinese electric vehicle brand NIO signed a strategic partnership with its Azerbaijani collaborator Green Car during the COP 29, announcing that it will commence operations in Azerbaijan and offer electric vehicle products and services to the local market.

4.3 Deepening bilateral diplomacy and climate governance cooperation

His Excellency Mr. Ilham Aliyev, the President of Azerbaijan, has extended an invitation to Heads of State and Government (HoS/G) to take part in the World Leaders Climate Action Summit (WLCAS), scheduled for 12 and 13 November 2024. The invitation to the WLCAS in Azerbaijan

during COP 29 highlights the necessity for global leaders to actively participate and elevate their commitments, facilitating efforts to decrease emissions, adapt to the impacts of climate change, and respond to loss and damage. On this occasion, Chinese Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang, as the special representative of Chinese President Xi Jinping, met with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev. Vice Premier Ding stressed the importance of the promising prospects inherent in the strategic partnership between the two countries and conveyed a wish for Azerbaijan and China to collaborate in building a green and sustainable future.

After the meeting, Chinese Vice Premier delivered a speech at the Summit stated that the international community need to work jointly to fight against global warming with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. For instance, developed countries need to boost sustainability goals and action, take the initiative in meeting emission reduction obligations, and accelerate the timescale for carbon neutrality. The People's Republic of China, as a developing country, should also do the best within its capabilities. It plans to present its 2035 nationally determined contribution, which encompasses the entire economy and all greenhouse gases, and aims to reach carbon neutrality by 2060 [8].

Through negotiations at the COP 29, delegations from Azerbaijan and China have established plenty of agreements aimed at promoting the adoption of advanced technologies and executing large-scale renewable energy initiatives. One of the key agreements is between China Energy Overseas Investment Co. Ltd. and SOCAR Green, which involves the development of a 160 MW solar power facility in the Fizuli region. The plans also entail setting up a research and development center in Azerbaijan, intended to be a center for innovation and the exchange of knowledge. This initiative highlights the dedication of both countries to a progressive energy strategy, using state-of-the-art technologies and research to facilitate the green transition.

Azerbaijan is recognized for its substantial potential in renewable energy resources, which includes 3000 MW of wind energy, 23000 MW of solar energy, 380 MW of bioenergy capacity, and 520 MW from mountain rivers. China's expertise in solar and wind energy technologies is anticipated to enhance Azerbaijan's renewable energy industry. Conversely, Azerbaijan's strategic location and robust infrastructure make it a vital contributor to the development of green energy routes under China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Conclusion. The successful convening of COP 29 in Baku has not only brought attention to the urgent challenges posed by climate change but has also greatly strengthened the relations between Azerbaijan and China. The event served as a platform for both countries to showcase their commitments to green growth and sustainable development. Azerbaijan, hosting the conference, emphasized its desire to build understanding and solidarity between the "Global North" and "Global South," with China being praised as a champion for green technology.

At the two-week summit, countries conducted in-depth negotiations in terms of climate actions and funding and finally adopted more than 20 important decisions. Among them, the most groundbreaking result is the establishment of a climate finance target of US\$300 annually for developing countries by 2035. Azerbaijan and China, as significant participants in the global community, should collaborate to tackle the escalating climate challenges together. By exchanging experiences, technologies, and resources, the two nations can more effectively address the difficulties posed by climate change and contribute positively to the safeguarding of our survival. In summary, the COP 29 in Baku has enhanced the current partnership between Azerbaijan and China, and offered a worldwide platform for joint efforts to tackle climate change and advance green development. As both countries further strengthen their collaboration, they will undoubtedly be instrumental in creating a sustainable future for the planet.

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AZƏRBAYCAN-ÇİN MÜNASİBƏTLƏRİ: BAKIDA COP 29-UN UĞURLA KEÇİRİLMƏSİNİN TƏSİRİ

Bakıda COP 29-un uğurla keçirilməsi təkcə iqlim dəyişikliyinə yaratdığı təcili çağırışlara diqqətə cəlb etməklə kifayətlənməyib, həm də Azərbaycan və Çin arasındakı münasibətləri xeyli gücləndirib. Bu tədqiqat ədəbiyyatın təhlili və nümunə araşdırması metodlarından istifadə edir. Müəllif COP 29-un uğurla keçirilməsinin təsiri və nailiyyətlərini araşdırmaqla, qlobal icmanın əsas iştirakçıları olan Azərbaycan və Çinin getdikcə daha aktual olan iqlim çağırışlarının həllində göstərə biləcəyi töhfələri və iki tərəf arasında əməkdaşlıq potensialını qiymətləndirməyi hədəfləyir.

Açar sözlər: COP-29, İqlim Dəyişikliyi, Beynəlxalq Əməkdaşlıq və Koordinasiya, Azərbaycan-Çin münasibətləri.

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ОТНОШЕНИЯ МЕЖДУ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНОМ И КИТАЕМ: ВЛИЯНИЕ УСПЕШНОГО СОЗЫВА COP 29 В БАКУ

Успешный созыв COP 29 в Баку не только привлек внимание к неотложным проблемам, связанным с изменением климата, но и значительно укрепил отношения между Азербайджаном и Китаем. Это исследование использует сочетание методов анализа литературы и изучения случаев. Изучая влияние и достижения успешно проведенного COP 29, автор стремится оценить вклады Азербайджана и Китая, как ключевых игроков мирового сообщества, которые могут внести важные изменения в решение все более неотложных проблем, связанных с климатом, а также потенциал сотрудничества между двумя сторонами.

Ключевые слова: COP-29, изменение климата, международное сотрудничество и координация, отношения между Азербайджаном и Китаем.

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