

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

ICMA: Climate Action Forum brings together civil society, researchers, and communities. How does this collaboration strengthen climate action across Pakistan?

Dr. Roomi Hayat: Pakistan's climate challenges cannot be addressed in isolation. When practitioners, researchers, and communities work together, they blend scientific insight with lived realities. This collaboration ensures that climate responses are not only technically sound but also socially grounded and locally achievable. It also creates a unified front strengthened by scientific evidence which allows policymakers and other stakeholders to make more coherent climate action across the country.

ICMA: What innovative approaches has CAF used to support grassroots climate projects that might not fit into conventional funding channels?

Dr. Roomi Hayat: Many promising ideas originate at the grassroots level but struggle to secure formal funding. We respond by creating linkages that connect local innovators with technical mentors, partnering organizations, and platforms that can amplify their work. Instead of a rigid funding model, we focus on enabling access: visibility, partnerships, and small innovative micro-pilots and seed support, matchmaking, incubation and mentorship, storytelling and visibility, and flexible criteria. Such unconventional ideas demonstrate impact and eventually attract larger investments that lead to climate smart decisions.

ICMA: Which community-led sectors, like climate smart agriculture or local conservation initiatives, show the most promise for building resilience?

Dr. Roomi Hayat: The strongest results are emerging where communities are enabled through technical support and linkages and then these aware community members manage their natural resources. Climate smart agriculture, participatory water management, rangeland rehabilitation, and village-led conservation efforts consistently show good returns. These sectors work because they combine indigenous knowledge with modern scientific techniques, allowing communities to adapt quickly and sustainably. Community buy-in is the most significant factor in the success of any such initiative. The outcome is better yields, reduced water conflict, biodiversity protection, and reduced disaster losses.



Dr. Roomi S. Hayat

Chairperson, Climate Action Forum (CAF) &
Chair, Certification Panel at
Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP)

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ICMA: How does CAF ensure that climate projects create real benefits for vulnerable communities while advancing social fairness?

Dr. Roomi Hayat: Fairness is built into our project design. We prioritize interventions that strengthen livelihoods, reduce climate-induced vulnerabilities, and empower marginalized groups. Community-based consultations guide decisions with a deliberate focus on women, youth, and low-income households. We align climate goals with social development safeguards and ensure responsible implementation through monitoring and tracking who benefits, so resilience and equity advance together.

ICMA: Capacity building is a key focus for CAF. How does equipping local actors with knowledge and skills improve climate action on the ground?

Dr. Roomi Hayat: Local actors are often the first responders to climate shocks. When they understand climate risks and have the skills to plan, organize, and implement practical solutions, action becomes faster, more locally relevant, and easier to sustain. Capacity building shifts communities from passive recipients to active leaders, creating long-term ownership, reducing dependency, and keeping climate action moving beyond project timelines.

ICMA: What lessons has CAF learned from piloting climate smart projects, and how can these models be scaled nationwide?

Dr. Roomi Hayat: Our pilots show that what works best is simple, affordable, and locally owned. Projects succeed when solutions are easy to adopt, aligned with local practices, and supported over time. To scale nationally, we

focus on documenting evidence, creating cross-district learning networks, and packaging proven approaches into practical toolkits that member organizations can replicate within their own areas, ideally in alignment with government programs and partners.

ICMA: How does CAF engage youth and emerging climate leaders to drive sustainable development locally?

Dr. Roomi Hayat: Youth engagement must go beyond awareness-raising. CAF involves young people in practical climate work such as data collection, community mobilization, local innovation, and climate entrepreneurship, allowing them to build real skills and credibility. By trusting them with responsibility and giving them platforms to lead, we develop emerging leaders who are not only climate-conscious but also capable of driving sustainable development in their communities.

ICMA: Looking ahead, what role can multi-stakeholder platforms like CAF play in shaping Pakistan's climate strategy and attracting international support?

Dr. Roomi Hayat: Multi-stakeholder platforms like CAF bring together diverse perspectives, generate grounded evidence, and translate it into unified recommendations for government and development partners. This

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approach strengthens policy coherence and improves coordination across sectors and regions. Internationally, it enhances Pakistan's climate narrative and gives donors a credible platform to support a transparent pipeline of well-aligned, high-impact climate investments.

The Editorial Board thanks Dr. Roomi S. Hayat, Chairperson, Climate Action Forum (CAF) & Chair, Certification Panel at Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP) for sparing his precious time to give an exclusive interview for Chartered Management Accountant Journal.