

**Statement by H.E. Senator Mohammad Ishaque Dar
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan
at the Seventh CICA Ministerial Council Meeting
17 December 2024**

**Honourable Chair H.E. Jeyhun Bayramov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan,
H.E. Murat Nurtleu, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan,
Distinguished Foreign Ministers,
Secretary-General CICA,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great privilege to participate in the 7th Ministerial Meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA).

2. On behalf of Pakistan, I extend warm greetings to Azerbaijan on assuming the CICA Chair. We are confident that under your leadership, the forum will continue to grow and explore new avenues of cooperation. I also thank Kazakhstan, the outgoing Chair, for its leadership in advancing CICA's key objectives in recent years. My gratitude also goes to the Secretary-General and CICA Secretariat for organizing this important event.

Excellencies,

3. Asia is home to more than half of the world's population and spans nearly a third of the earth's landmass. As the global economic center of gravity shifts, it is essential that we seize this moment of opportunity to ensure inclusive regional transformation.

4. Pakistan values CICA's role in promoting cooperation and advancing peace, stability, and security in Asia. As we gather today, we are reminded of Asia's vast potential and the challenges that hinder our shared goals.

5. We must strengthen political ties, pool economic resources, and ensure growth benefits reach all corners of our continent. However,

lasting progress cannot be achieved in isolation. Persistent challenges, including political disputes, conflicts, foreign occupations, and the denial of self-determination—along with poverty, illiteracy, and climate change—undermine our collective development.

6. Sustainable peace and security can only be achieved by addressing the root causes of conflict. This requires inclusive political solutions based on dialogue, mutual respect, and adherence to international law. In this context, a just resolution of the Palestinian and Jammu and Kashmir issues, guaranteeing their right to self-determination, is key to fostering lasting peace and stability in the region.

7. Regional frameworks like CICA play an indispensable role in advancing confidence-building, preventive diplomacy, and conflict resolution. Pakistan is a strong proponent of CICA's core principles, particularly its commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for territorial integrity, and the non-use of force. We call on all Member States to continue utilizing this platform for dialogue and cooperation.

Excellencies,

8. Pakistan fully supports CICA's vision of advancing economic cooperation and regional connectivity. Investment in infrastructure, particularly transport and energy corridors, is crucial for integration and sustainable development. We are committed to enhancing connectivity through CICA and other regional frameworks. Initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) highlight the transformative potential of such projects.

9. It is important to view these initiatives not through narrow political lenses but as opportunities for shared growth. By strengthening collective connectivity, we can build an economically integrated and interconnected Asia for the benefit of all.

10. Pakistan is equally committed to fostering people-to-people ties and promoting cultural exchanges under CICA's framework. Mutual understanding and respect will lay the foundation for lasting cooperation, transcending borders and enriching our societies.

Excellencies,

11. Pakistan fully supports strengthening CICA's institutions. Pakistan recently ratified the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Secretariat and have established links between Pakistan's key research institutions and CICA's Think Tank Forum. These steps reflect our dedication to supporting CICA's initiatives and promoting deeper regional cooperation.

12. As a newly elected member of the UN Security Council for 2025-26, Pakistan looks forward to collaborating with UN Member States and regional organizations like CICA. We are committed to advancing the UN Charter's vision—preventing conflicts, fostering prosperity, and promoting human rights. We also support greater cooperation between the UN Security Council and regional bodies to enhance global and regional peace efforts.

Excellencies,

13. The challenges we face today demand collective action, shared responsibility, and unwavering commitment. We are optimistic that, under Azerbaijan's leadership and guided by our collective Asian Spirit, CICA will continue to grow stronger, making Asia a bastion of peace and prosperity.

Thank you
