

**Statement by the Foreign Minister of Pakistan at the**  
**6<sup>th</sup> CICA-CFM Meeting at Nur-Sultan**  
**(11-12 October 2021)**

Your Excellency, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan,

Distinguished Heads of Delegation,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to address this Ministerial Meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA).

We are confident that CICA will attain new heights under the able stewardship of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Chairman,

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the intra and inter-state inequalities.

Over 4 and a half million lives have been lost. Economies have been disrupted. The most vulnerable have suffered disproportionately.

We need global solidarity, more than ever before.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan views CICA as an invaluable platform for promoting peace, security and development in the Asian continent through dialogue and cooperation.

We firmly believe in the guiding principles underpinning this important organization.

Pakistan fully supports the spirit of the Declaration on the Principles Guiding Relations among the CICA Member States and the Almaty Act.

The Declaration highlights the interdependence of political, military, economic and socio-cultural aspects of inter-state relations and lays out a comprehensive vision of security in Asia.

As a country that has always sought to promote regional and global harmony, Pakistan recognizes the imperative of approaching issues of peace, security and development in a holistic manner.

Mr. Chairman,

Four decades of war and conflict in Afghanistan have killed over a million Afghans; injured, maimed and traumatized many more; and devastated the country's already fragile economy.

After Afghanistan, Pakistan has been most severely affected. We have suffered more than 80,000 thousand casualties and economic losses of over 150 billion dollars.

Pakistan continues to host about 4 million Afghan refugees.

For Pakistan, the restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan is absolutely essential.

Today Afghanistan stands at a critical juncture in its history.

We call upon the international community to support the people of Afghanistan in their quest for peace, stability and development.

Mr. Chairman,

South Asia is home to one quarter of the world's population. Despite its enormous potential, long-standing disputes have prevented the region from advancing firmly on the path towards development.

Sustainable peace in South Asia would remain elusive as long as the core dispute of Jammu and Kashmir is not resolved in accordance with the resolutions of the UN Security Council and the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

Pakistan aspires for good relations with all its neighbours. We seek cooperation, not confrontation.

India's illegal and unilateral actions since 5 August 2019 in Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir have vitiated the environment.

The onus remains on India to create enabling conditions for meaningful and result-oriented engagement with Pakistan.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan has made a policy decision to shift focus from geo-politics to geo-economics. In this regard, we seek development partnerships and enhanced regional connectivity.

There is tremendous scope for improvement of regional connectivity in Asia. In order to bring the continent at par with other, more integrated regions of the world, Asian countries have to overcome political and logistical barriers.

Long-term peace and prosperity are essential for poverty reduction. This requires cooperation and collaboration at the international and regional levels.

Asian countries have far stronger trade links with countries from outside the region than with each other. Promotion of trade within Asia would contribute to socio-economic development.

Pakistan's location offers a natural bridge and conduit between regional economies. We invite our friends in the region to take advantage of this aspect.

Mr. Chairman,

We must find political solutions to the conflicts in the Middle East. Peaceful resolution through dialogue is the key.

A just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian question is essential for comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Pakistan, once again, underscores the need for a two-state solution in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, with pre-1967 borders, and Al-Quds Al-Sharif as the capital of a viable, independent and contiguous Palestinian State.

Mr. Chairman,

We reaffirm our commitment to the CICA process and the concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security in Asia.

We wish you success in steering this august entity towards realization of the vision of peace and security in Asia.

Pakistan will provide full support to you and the CICA process.

I thank you.

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