



ISSRA

INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES, RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME
FOR DEVELOPMENT & STABILITY

IPDS 2024

24-26 SEPTEMBER 2024

Post Workshop Report





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International Programme for Development and Stability (IPDS)

Institute for Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis (ISSRA), National Defence University, Islamabad organized International Programme for Development and Stability (IPDS) – 2024 from 24-27 September 2024. The programme was attended by Foreign Security Advisers (FSA's), Diplomatic staff of Embassies, representatives from international agencies and members from civil society.

The Programme was aimed to provide a platform for shared understanding and perspective on 'development and stability in the region & Pakistan':-

- Study transforming global, regional environment & enabling conditions for attracting investment/sustainable development in the region.
- Discuss trade, development and stability in Pakistan while analyzing policy options for investment in the country.
- Explore the possibilities of startup businesses, entrepreneurship and venture capital in Pakistan.

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME
FOR DEVELOPMENT & STABILITY
IPDS 2024
EXPLORING NEW PERSPECTIVES

علم الانسان ما لم يعلم

NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY







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Inaugural Session

24 September, 2024





DAY 1
Session I
24 September, 2024
**Contours of Emerging Global
Order & Trends**



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Amb Sardar Masood Khan



SPEAKER - I
Carlyle A. Thayer



SPEAKER - II
Mr Victor Gao



SPEAKER - III
Ms Kashmala Kakakhel



SPEAKER - IV
Mr Ahmer Bilal Soofi



MODERATOR
Mr Faisal Rehman

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- US-China relations are marked by a flurry of sanctions against Chinese tech sector; sanctioning of Chinese goods will drag US to an economic abyss.
- China strongly advocates multi-polarity in the world and gives renewed importance to infrastructural connectivity; only trade can lead to sustainable peace.
- China does not view India as a competitor even if it bandwagons the US; China will still prosper as it is following a policy of peace through cooperation.
- In the international political system, the contemporary trends include, spread of disruptive technologies, China's military modernization, climate change, intensification of US-China rivalry, greater role of NATO/EU in the Indo-Pacific and the proliferation of nuclear technologies.
- Human rights are either collective or individual in nature; economic and social rights, being collective human rights, figure out significant.
- Subjugation of nations and violation of rights leads to disenchantment of individuals.
- Trade organizations and tribunals can be invoked to address trade malpractices and address the issue of economic rights, at individual as well as at national and international level.
- Climate Change is silently reshaping the fundamentals of global equilibrium; it is being weaponized to shape modern day trade and countries are forced to reduce trade in the name of curbing emissions.
- Leadership plays a key role in climate change as it outlines how countries articulate their international standing on the issue thus defining winners and losers of the future.
- The impact of climate change is slow and has compelled the farmers to readjust their farming practices in accordance with changing trends of cropping and weather patterns. This has also forced the policy makers to devise policies through the lens of climate change.
- Energy is a key determinant of a country's economic security; green energy has gained substantial importance being cheaper.
- China has benefitted the most from renewable energy and is the largest importer and exporter of solar energy technology.

DAY 1
Session II
24 September, 2024
Regional Cooperation & Stability



SPEAKERS



SPEAKER - I

Maj Gen Inam-ul-Haque (R)



SPEAKER - II

Amb Abdul Basit



SPEAKER - III

Amb Masood Khalid



MODERATOR

Ms Sumera Khan

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Pakistan-India relations are a story of perpetual stalemate and we have been in this vicious circle as both countries have not been able to move from conflict management to conflict resolution.
- At present, India is riding the wave of arrogance and not amenable to resolve the Kashmir dispute; however, it is imperative to find solution to realize economic integration of the region.
- 15 Aug 2016, PM Modi indirectly admitted that they are in cahoots with the separatist forces in Balochistan. In the same year, Pakistan arrested Kulbhushan Jadhav which exposed India's plot to sabotage CPEC; it is greater plan to keep Pakistan economically and politically unstable.
- Unless the Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) conflict is resolved, there is simply no possibility for restoration of confidence and mutual trust which is imperative not only to put this relationship back on track but also to build regional as well as economic integration.
- The solution of J&K conflict can be achieved through dialogues; the outcome will have to be acceptable to India, Pakistan and the people of J&K who are the primary stakeholders.
- As Palestinians are fighting for their right to self-determination, Kashmiris too have that right to continue fighting for their right for self-determination; their struggle is beyond what Pakistan does or does not do.
- Pakistan and Afghanistan are congenital twins; for the last two decades, Pakistan has been working hard to stabilize Afghanistan which is in the strategic interest of Pakistan.
- Interestingly, the constants between Pakistan and Afghanistan relationship are all positive which include trade, religion, culture, history and sectarian & linguistic affinity.
- Afghanistan is also our corridor to Central Asia and it affects the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline which still remains a dream.
- From 2017 to 2022, the Iranian exports to Pakistan also decreased from \$848 Mn to \$762 Mn due to sanctions against Iran and fluctuating price of PKR.
- Pakistan would benefit from Chinese investment, integrating with their region economically, and hopefully, for other countries, it will be a trigger for investment.

DAY 2

Session I

25 September, 2024

**Trade, Investment & Entrepreneurship
in Pakistan**



SPEAKERS



SPEAKER - I

Mr Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan



SPEAKER - II

Syed Aftab Haider



SPEAKER - III

Ms Maheen Rehman



MODERATOR

Ms Aiza Azam

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Despite challenges, Pakistan benefits from its strategic geographic location, a young workforce, and high linguistic proficiency; facilitating global market integration.
- Pakistan's investment environment is marked by policy volatility, cumbersome regulations, and inconsistent decision-making, leading to low FDI performance compared to regional peers like India, China, and Bangladesh.
- To address these structural issues, the SIFC aims to streamline investment facilitation and policy implementation through better coordination among federal, provincial, and private sectors.
- The SIFC emphasizes export-oriented FDI to integrate Pakistan into global supply chains, enhancing competitiveness and ensuring sustainable economic growth.
- Digitalization enhances trade efficiency and democratizes access, enabling underrepresented groups to compete globally.
- E-commerce is projected to grow by 56% from 2021, driven by digitalization, which lowers barriers and enables SMEs to enter international markets more easily.
- Pakistan struggles with inadequate infrastructure, restrictive data policies, and lack of data protection laws, limiting its potential in digital trade.
- In 2022, global trade volumes reached \$31 trillion, a 13% increase from 2021, but faced challenges from regulatory complexities like the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.
- Innovations like 3D printing are reshaping production models, shifting manufacturing closer to consumer markets and disrupting the comparative advantages of developing economies.
- Pakistan's digital and tech ecosystem is growing rapidly, but access to local VC funding remains a critical barrier for start-ups.
- Despite limited funding of \$1 billion over 6 years, 70% of the 700+ start-ups since 2000 are still operational, showing strong growth potential.
- Despite being the fifth most populous country, Pakistan's share of global GDP is just 0.37%, highlighting underutilized economic potential.
- Pakistan has 128 million broadband subscribers, 189 million cell phone users, and 42% of banking transactions conducted digitally, indicating strong digital adoption.
- Mobilizing domestic funds through risk mitigation frameworks can boost tech investments and reduce reliance on external financing.

DAY 2

Session II

25 September, 2024

Trade Potential of Pakistan



SPEAKER



SPEAKER

**Jam Kamal Khan,
Federal Minister for
Commerce of Pakistan**

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Pakistan's economy is grappling with high inflation, interest rates, and governance challenges that hinder business operations and economic growth. These issues create an unstable environment for both local and foreign investors.
- The government recognizes the need to adapt to global trade dynamics and is exploring natural resource opportunities through new communication channels and strategic partnerships to enhance competitiveness.
- Recent discussions in last months with Gulf States, China, and Central Asian countries indicate a proactive stance toward foreign investment, with commitments approaching \$26 billion for various competitive and bankable projects in Pakistan.
- Trade agreements such as GSP+ with the EU and RFTAs with China and Turkey are pivotal for maximizing export potential, offering preferential access to key markets.
- Stagnation in trade with key partners like the US, UK, and EU highlights an urgent need for improved governance and compliance measures to facilitate better trade relations.
- Consistent policies and effective governance structures are vital for Pakistan to successfully engage with global markets and improve its trade performance, which has been hampered by erratic governance.
- High manufacturing costs and a complex GST and taxation system burden various sectors, underscoring the necessity for a more favorable business climate to attract foreign investment.
- Upcoming challenges include adapting to EU's stringent GSP requirements and resolving compliance issues which are key for maintaining trade benefits.
- A new monitoring portal for trade investment offices will be established to ensure accountability and provide robust support for Pakistani businesses operating abroad, enhancing their competitiveness.
- The Ministry of Commerce is identifying key sectors for trade policy, with a focus on branding Pakistan and enhancing its global presence to attract foreign investment. Branding efforts, such as the "Emerging Pakistan" initiative, aim to promote positive narratives and highlight stories about the country's potential and strengths in various sectors.
- The establishment of sectoral councils aims to provide regular feedback from the private sector, fostering better communication and collaboration between the government and businesses for more effective trade policies.

DAY 2

Session III

25 September, 2024

**Role of Art & Culture in Promoting
National Cohesion**



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Mr Jamal Shah



SPEAKER - I
Mr Rohail Hyatt



SPEAKER - II
Ms Fiza Ali



SPEAKER - III
Mr Kamran Lashari



MODERATOR
Ms Naila Shuja

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Pakistan's national cohesion was not drawn on lines of existing diversity rather artificially created on the lines of ideology, language and common threats.
- Culture is region bound not religion bound. National Cohesion cannot be possible unless we are rooted in our land and history. Culture is a soft force and unfortunately is largely downplayed overtime.
- Regional diversity is not a threat to national cohesion, in fact, frequent exchanges, recognition and celebration of each other's culture holds the key to fostering it.
- Culture needs to take center stage for projecting Pakistan's soft image abroad and forge unity among the federating units. In this regard, the role of cultural sports and festivities needs to be enhanced and due acknowledgement is necessary.
- Cultural downplaying in Pakistan is mainly attributed to 2 main factors, religiosity and security, coupled with bureaucratic red tape. Unless we realign our preferences and project them rightly, our culture will continue to be misinterpreted.
- Cinema is an important tool for projecting Pakistan's image, but unfortunately, it has not been used effectively. Culturally rich films were censored from time to time due to the boundaries set by the ministries and censor board.
- When it comes to National cohesion, diversity is a very integral tool.
- Diversity, when it is celebrated allows people to go beyond themselves. Coke Studio was based on the idea of inviting artists from different backgrounds and producing a fusion of music together.
- Fusion arts present an opportunity for communal pride, and in the modern age, it is the most effective medium of recognizing and keeping the people connected.
- Cultural diverseness means embracing not forcing conformity on the people arriving.
- Lowest-hanging fruit in Pakistan is religious tourism. Three prominent religions were born here; Sikhism, Hinduism and Buddhism. There is a need to prioritize our religious tourism by making things more inviting and accessible.
- Pakistan is a small market for films and there are less number of films being produced and fewer screens. There is a need to enhance domestic audience for these films.

DAY 3

Session I

26 September, 2024

**Art & Science of Narrative Shaping
in the Post Truth Era**



SPEAKERS



SPEAKER - I
Ms Oksana Boyko



SPEAKER - II
Mr Fahad Hussain



SPEAKER - III
Ms Mahreen Aziz Khan



MODERATOR
Ms Aroobah Sarfraz

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- There exists a dire need of narrative shaping and social media in today's society as emotions now play a more significant role than factual accuracy in shaping public opinion.
- Although the phenomenon of fake news predates social media; the rise of social media platforms has exacerbated the problem, leading to a more pronounced sidelining of factual information.
- Social media has personalized content consumption, allowing individuals to curate their information based on personal preferences, which often leads to echo chambers.
- The society has become increasingly polarized, with divisions deepening as traditional media sources lose credibility. The migration of newspaper content to digital platforms has further contributed to this fragmentation.
- There are no clear solutions to these challenges, as society continues to grapple with the implications of new media landscape. The way forward is still unknown due to the ingress of technologies such as generative AI in media domain.
- Narratives aligning with U.S. interests are often accepted without scrutiny while opposing viewpoints are met with skepticism.
- Independent journalism has exhibited its strength in present times particularly in light of current events such as the Israel-Gaza conflict.
- Unfortunately, Pakistan gets negative narratives imposed by the international media mainly due to islamophobia, colonial mindset, liberal and feminine misperception. However, more violent incidents or crimes when happen in neighboring countries like India are reported differently.
- The lack of balanced representation not only perpetuates misconceptions about Muslims but also diminishes the opportunity for diverse voices to be heard and appreciated in global media.
- The current climate of "half-trust" in media narratives is creating confusion and complexity that is blurring the truth and facts in present day dissemination and reception of information at both global and state level.

DAY 3

Session II

26 September, 2024

**Looking into the Future
Technology & Human Society**



SPEAKERS



SPEAKER - I
Mr Brad Martin



SPEAKER - II
Mr Habib Ullah



SPEAKER - III
Dr Umar Saif



MODERATOR
Dr Maria Sultan

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Pakistan is currently right at the dead stage of the economic growth, however, when it comes to potential it has 100% potential.
- The potential in Pakistan is tremendous – digital market is at 1% which can be increased. Mobile Payments are key indicators of future wealth of nations. Wherever mobile payments go high, the ability to increase local entrepreneurship, local economic activities also increase.
- Women need to be involved in economy in Pakistan; digital economy can be one way to go about it in a patriarchal society like Pakistan.
- The Government of Pakistan needs to transform the tax system to a more user friendly so that individuals can easily file for their taxes.
- There needs to be high speed data with low-cost mobile phones for the digital economy to grow.
- The most important aspect of a nation's security is to understand technological advancements and try to incorporate them in military planning.
- AI in manufacturing can allow widespread production of sophisticated products such as drones.
- AI can aid in governance by using it in various areas like tax collection, enhancement of agricultural output and disaster mitigation / rehabilitation.
- The real estate sector can be taxed by using satellite images which can automatically identify size of properties and use them to estimate their potential use instead of relying on inspectors who go there manually; a team of professionals is already working on a model which can facilitate government in this regards.
- AI with satellite imagery can be used to check where out of school children are concentrated; it can assist the government in identifying the areas where schools need to be built.
- Impact on the lives of population due to natural disasters can also be estimated through AI by identifying the areas which got impacted by the flood and other catastrophes.

PICTURE GALLERY









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