



CENTRE for AEROSPACE & SECURITY STUDIES

Press Release

**Decentralisation and Youth Development Essential for Future Growth –
CASS Organises Catalyst Conversation**



As Pakistan nears its centennial year of independence, engaging in thoughtful discussions to envision a prosperous future becomes imperative. This **Catalyst Conversation**, organised by the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Islamabad, was designed to facilitate such discourse. The session was guided by insights and expertise of Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Chairman Sanober Institute and former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan.



Air Marshal Zahid Mehmood (Retd), moderator for the session and Director at CASS, initiated the discussion by reflecting on the creation of Pakistan — a saga marked by struggle and sacrifice under the guidance of visionary leaders. He stressed that as Pakistan approaches its centenary, it is crucial for all Pakistanis to learn from the past 77 years and chart a forward-looking course aligned with the original vision of its founders and the aspirations of its people. He also highlighted that the responsibility for Pakistan’s development extends beyond policymakers and national leaders to every citizen.

On the main subject **'Pakistan of 2047,'** Distinguished Speaker, **Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry** (Retd), discussed the formidable challenges and potential strategies for envisioning a prosperous future for Pakistan. During his talk, he noted the difficulty in predicting the nation's future given the current political and economic climate and regional conflicts.



Ambassador Chaudhry stressed the importance of having a clear vision and long-term socioeconomic development plans, similar to those implemented by nations like the United States, China, and Singapore. He outlined several critical challenges facing Pakistan today, including inadequate devolution of power; substantial portion of the population not contributing to the tax base; excessive reliance on donor aid to balance economic shortfalls; and lackluster export growth. Additional issues highlighted included weak economic growth; water and food insecurity; bureaucratic barriers for the private sector; non-competitive knowledge economy, and insufficient development of human resources.

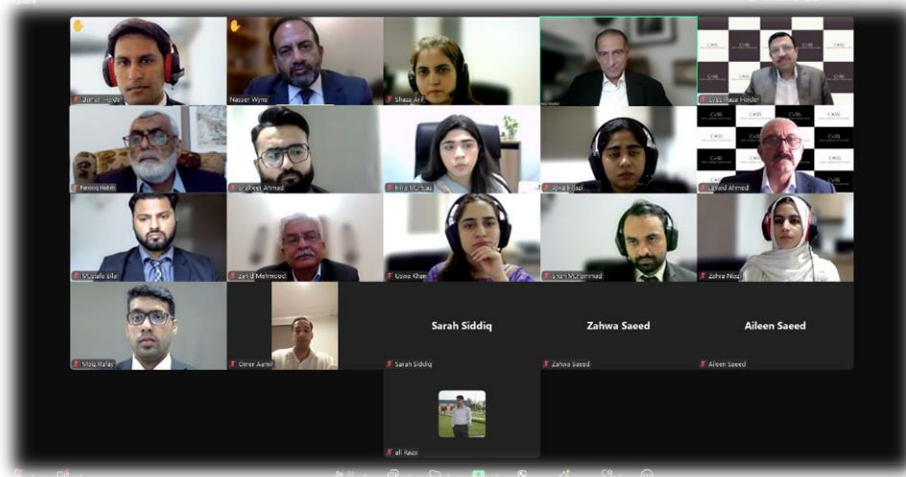
Despite these challenges, Pakistan's potential was underscored by its young population, rich natural resources, and strategic geographic location. Ambassador Chaudhry advocated for a citizen-centric approach, as originally championed by the country's founder — Quaid-i-Azam.

Ambassador Chaudhry outlined several key reforms needed to transform Pakistan's potential into reality, including stable political governance through decentralisation; economic self-reliance; living within means; continuity of economic policies; and ease-of-doing business to facilitate the private sector. He also called for streamlining regulations; enhancing tax compliance; non-partisan accountability; and significant investments in human development, particularly in education and skill development for youth in emerging technologies such as AI. The speaker concluded by stating that with these reforms, Pakistan could look forward to a peaceful and prosperous future by 2047, marking the centennial of its independence. Conversely, without such reforms, the future remains uncertain.



In his concluding remarks, **Air Marshal Javaid Ahmed**, President of CASS, Islamabad, pointed out dual nature of the challenges Pakistan faces, with both known and unknown elements. He stressed the immediate need for action and the pivotal role of think tanks in fostering foresight and developing a balanced perspective for the nation's future. He remarked on critical imbalance in the national narrative, which often

oscillates between two extremes, underscoring the importance of grooming current and future leadership to better address these difficulties.



In the question and answer session, participants and speakers agreed that understanding Pakistan's challenges is essential for planning and executing future actions that will steer the country toward a prosperous and stable future, ensuring balanced development that includes contributions from all sectors of society.