

Statement by H.E. Mr. Jalil Abbas Jilani
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan
at the Informal Meeting of the CICA Ministerial Council

21 September 2023, New York

**Excellencies,
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is a distinguished pleasure to attend this informal meeting of CICA Ministerial Council.

I congratulate Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan, Murat Nurtleu, for convening this gathering of friends.

We highly appreciate Kazakhstan's CICA chairmanship, which has injected further dynamism and impetus into the conference.

My gratitude also goes to Secretary General Kairat Sarybay for the Secretariat's support and efforts towards the organization of this meeting.

Pakistan reiterates its firm commitment to global and regional peace and stability, and prosperity.

Maintaining cordial relations with all States based on sovereign equality, mutual trust and respect are the guiding principles of Pakistan's foreign policy.

These principles are well grounded in the CICA Charter.

Pakistan, therefore, attaches great importance to CICA and its activities.

As a multilateral forum, the conference has been playing an important role in enhancing cooperation and promoting peace, security, and development in the Asian continent.

Pakistan believes that sustainable peace in Asia, and around the world, can only be achieved through fostering dialogue and cooperation.

Pakistan remains committed to the purposes and principles of CICA and extends its continued support for the implementation of CICA's agreed CBMs.

These CBMs assist CICA members in creating an atmosphere of trust, understanding and friendship in the region.

We believe that CICA can play an important role in bringing the Asian continent at par with other, more integrated regions of the world, for mutually beneficial trade, economic and people-to-people linkages.

Countries in Asia must overcome political and logistical barriers.

We have far stronger trade links with countries from outside the region than within. Promotion of trade within Asia is direly needed as it would most definitely catalyze socio-economic development.

Pakistan is determined to play its role and work with our partners to advance this vision for our collective benefit.

CICA platform must be utilized to synergize efforts for increasing connectivity in the region.

Excellencies,

CICA transformation into an international organization is a significant endeavor. Pakistan fully supports this vision.

The 6th CICA Summit provided clear guidance with respect to this transformation.

The Summit envisaged the transformation process to be gradual, incremental, and consensus-based, while ensuring inclusiveness and transparency.

The Roadmap for CICA Transformation, that we are endorsing today, is clearly reflective of these considerations. I appreciate the engagement of all member states towards the finalization of this comprehensive roadmap.

Approval of this roadmap today is a major milestone in the transformation process.

We now have to work together to ensure that progress is made in all areas anchored in the roadmap, while ensuring that the process remains incremental and based on consensus.

I assure you that Pakistan will remain constructively engaged in the negotiations and will work with all CICA member states towards a meaningful outcome of the transformation process.

I thank you.