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Center of Research
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中國-巴基斯坦研究中心聯盟

IPDS
IMPACT PROMOTED THROUGH KNOWLEDGE DIALOGUE

2025

Sustainable Development Cooperation Policy Paper

Strengthening China- Pakistan Relations





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BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Moderator:

Dr Waqasia Naeem, Assistant Director CRIMA



Executive Summary

The 1st Virtual Symposium on China–Pakistan Relations 2025 brought together experts, scholars, and policymakers to examine the evolution and future direction of bilateral cooperation. Discussions highlighted the enduring strategic partnership between China and Pakistan and emphasized the transition from infrastructure-led CPEC projects to a more inclusive phase focused on industrial growth, technology, sustainability, and human development. This policy paper synthesizes key insights to guide policymakers, researchers, and development stakeholders.

Introduction & Purpose

China–Pakistan relations continue to shape regional economic and strategic dynamics through initiatives such as BRI and CPEC. The purpose of this policy paper is to consolidate expert perspectives from the symposium and provide an analytical overview of geopolitical trends, economic opportunities, infrastructural development, and knowledge-based cooperation, while offering strategic recommendations aligned with national and regional priorities.



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Historical & Strategic Significance

The China–Pakistan partnership is built on diplomatic trust, strategic convergence, and societal goodwill. Since the launch of CPEC in 2013, cooperation has expanded beyond energy and transport to include digitalization, climate resilience, and technological innovation, reinforcing its long-term relevance.

Symposium Overview

Held on 18 September 2025 and jointly organized by CRIMA, Mr Asif Noon, and IPDS, the symposium gathered over 850 participants. Under the theme “BRI and CPEC: Opportunities for Sustainable Economic Development,” discussions focused on CPEC 2.0, regional integration, governance reforms, sustainability, and innovation-driven growth.

1st VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM ON CHINA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS - 2025

THEME: “BRI AND CPEC: OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT”





Key Insights from Speakers

Speakers emphasized maritime connectivity and the blue economy, inclusive and people-centered development, the role of higher education and academic diplomacy, governance reforms, legal and institutional frameworks, cultural diplomacy, and agricultural innovation.

⚓ Prof Dr Sajid Mehmood Shahzad, Vice Chancellor, MUL

Prof Dr Sajid emphasized the role of higher education institutions as catalysts of research-driven policy and innovation. He underscored the responsibility of universities to prepare youth for emerging opportunities in technology, trade, and entrepreneurship that stem from CPEC's second phase. His keynote reinforced the need for interdisciplinary collaboration, strong academic networks, and joint research centers between Chinese and Pakistani universities.



⚓ Dr Muhammad Ishfaq Director, CRIMA

Dr Ishfaq emphasized the strategic significance of maritime connectivity within the broader CPEC architecture. He explained how maritime routes have become central to global trade flows and highlighted Pakistan's unique advantage through its coastline and the deep-sea port of Gwadar. He stressed that harnessing maritime potential requires integrated planning, efficient port operations, and stronger collaboration with Chinese maritime institutions. His remarks underscored the need for capacity-building in maritime research, human security at sea, and blue economy initiatives that complement CPEC's long-term economic vision.





Dr Farhat Asif President, IPDS

Dr Farhat Asif provided a human centered perspective on China–Pakistan cooperation, underscoring peace diplomacy, dialogue facilitation, and international partnerships as core pillars of sustainable development. She explained that CPEC should not only enhance economic outcomes but also foster regional peace by enabling cooperative frameworks. Her insights highlighted the value of inclusive development, women’s participation, and local stakeholder engagement as essential components of CPEC 2.0.



Ambassador Masood Khalid – Former Ambassador of Pakistan to China

Ambassador Masood Khalid provided a deep diplomatic overview of China–Pakistan relations, tracing their evolution from traditional strategic cooperation to a modern, multi-dimensional partnership. He explained how political trust and mutual respect have shaped decades of relationship-building. His keynote highlighted China’s role in Pakistan’s economic resilience and stressed the importance of framing CPEC as a model of peaceful development, emphasizing transparency, shared benefits, and long-term vision.



Dr Wang Li Shiliang School of Law, Changzhou University

Dr Wang Li offered a legal and geopolitical analysis of BRI and CPEC, explaining how global shifts in power, economic volatility, and regional competition influence the direction of bilateral cooperation. He highlighted the importance of legal harmonization, dispute-resolution mechanisms, and academic collaboration in international law. His insights underscored the importance of creating robust institutional structures to protect investments, encourage transparency, and support long-term development goals.





🚢 Raja Amer Iqbal Former Chairman, APCCI Committee on CPEC

Raja Amer presented an in-depth assessment of Pakistan's governance challenges that directly impact CPEC implementation. He explained that bureaucratic delays, weak coordination, and inconsistent policies create uncertainty for investors and undermine economic potential. He argued for strengthening regulatory bodies, introducing digital governance tools, and ensuring uninterrupted political support. His analysis positioned governance reform as the most critical determinant of CPEC's future success.



🚢 Dr Samina Sabir University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir

Dr Sabir elaborated on CPEC's social and developmental dimensions, emphasizing its potential to uplift marginalized communities through improved health, education, and employment systems. She detailed the transition from infrastructure-focused development to inclusive, people-centered frameworks under CPEC 2.0. Her insights highlighted opportunities for youth development, vocational training, and rural empowerment that align with global sustainability standards.



🚢 Prof Dr Guoyaling Hebei Normal University

Prof Guoyaling delivered a comprehensive framework for CPEC's expansion through five interconnected corridors: livelihood, growth, green, innovation, and strategic. She explained how these corridors align with global development trends and the SDGs, encouraging Pakistan to adopt evidence-based planning. Her keynote emphasized environmental safeguards, gender inclusion, and technological transformation as essential drivers of long-term prosperity.



🚢 Prof Tang Jun Inner Mongolia Honder College of Arts and Sciences

Prof Tang highlighted the soft power dimension of China–Pakistan cooperation, emphasizing cultural diplomacy, mutual understanding, and sustained academic exchanges. He discussed how cultural familiarity strengthens diplomatic relations and enhances economic cooperation. His insights stressed the need for media collaboration, language programs, and student mobility initiatives to deepen people-to-people ties.



🚢 Dr Wang Fangyan, Qingdao Agricultural University

Dr Fangyan provided a detailed analysis of agricultural innovation and its relevance to Pakistan’s food security challenges. He showcased successful Chinese models using precision agriculture, climate-resilient crops, and water-efficient technologies. His intervention highlighted how technology transfer and joint agricultural research can transform Pakistan’s rural economy, enhance productivity, and reduce climate vulnerability.



Policy Analysis

🚢 Opportunities

- Alignment with SDGs through thematic corridors
- Agricultural modernization and food security
- Digital innovation and entrepreneurship
- Strengthened academic and research collaboration

🚢 Challenges

- Trade imbalances
- Weak institutional capacity and governance delays
- Environmental risks
- Limited technology transfer



Recommendations

The paper recommends strengthening institutional capacity, diversifying cooperation beyond infrastructure, expanding SEZs, enhancing academic and people-to-people exchanges, improving communication strategies, and embedding sustainability and climate resilience into all future projects.

Conclusion

The 1st Virtual Symposium on China–Pakistan Relations 2025 reaffirmed the enduring depth and strategic relevance of the bilateral partnership. As both nations navigate evolving global dynamics, their collaboration under CPEC continues to be a cornerstone of regional development, economic resilience, and strategic stability. The discussions highlighted the need for policy innovation, strengthened institutions, diversified cooperation, and sustainable development practices. By embracing a forward looking approach rooted in research, dialogue, and mutual trust, China and Pakistan can unlock new opportunities for shared prosperity. This policy paper synthesizes expert insights to guide policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders in shaping the next chapter of China–Pakistan cooperation.

