



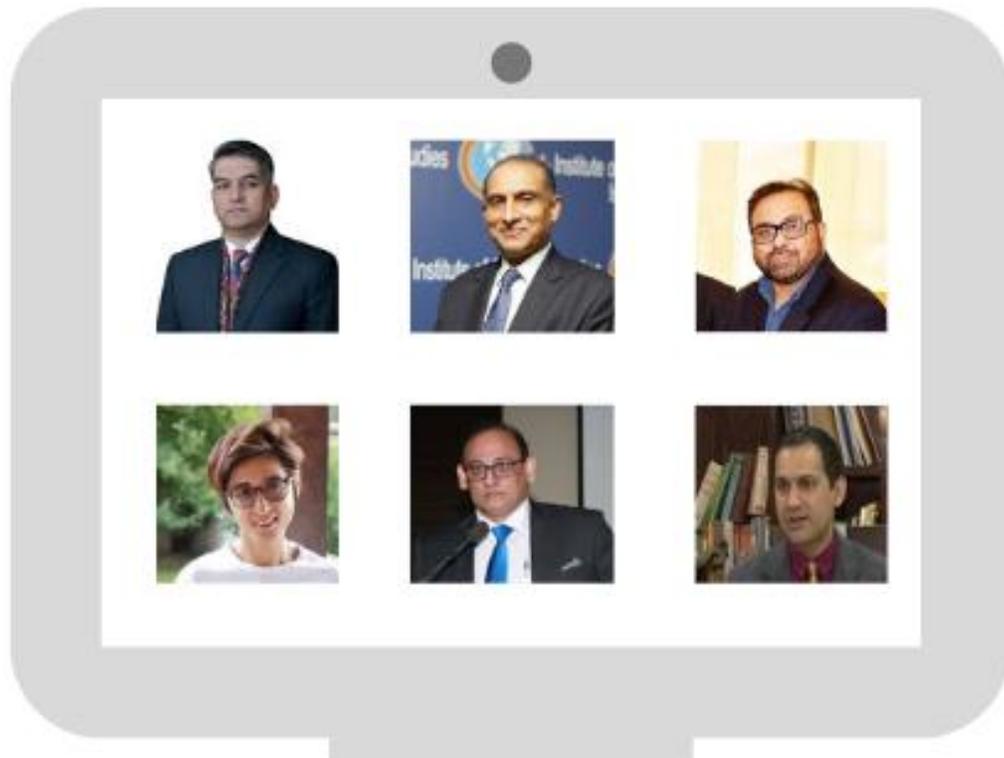
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Report – Webinar

“Political, Economic and Social Impact of COVID-19”

April 16, 2020



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China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) in collaboration with AGAHI and Mishal Pakistan hosted a Webinar on April 16, 2020 titled '*Political, Economic and Social Impact of COVID-19*'. Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, DG ISSI, was the keynote speaker at the occasion. Speakers at the webinar included: Mr. Amir Jahangir, CEO Mishal Pakistan; Mr. Hasan Daud Butt, CEO, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade; Ms. Puruesh Chaudhary, President AGAHI; Mr. Yasir Masood, Geo-Political Analyst and Former Director of Media at CPEC Centre of Excellence, Islamabad and Dr. Ma Haiyun, Assistant Professor, Frostburg State University, USA. More than 100 participants joined the online session and took part in the discussion. The session was moderated by Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director CPSC.

Mr. Amir Jahangir and Dr. Talat Shabbir welcomed the speakers and participants. Dr. Talat said that the purpose of organizing this event was to discuss the situation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and understand future challenges and opportunities.

Mr. Hasan Daud Butt appreciated the organizers for holding an event on such a critical issue. He said that COVID-19 has changed the world and the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is taking several measures to minimize its harmful effects on the economy. He added that environmental protection will gain more relevance and Asia's rise will speed up in the post COVID-19 world.

Ms. Puruesh Chaudhary stated that the global economy has been badly affected by COVID-19 and called the present situation worse than the economic crisis of 2008. She said that it is just the beginning and serious efforts are required to prevent economic and social chaos. Ms. Chaudhary also pointed out that the well-being and financial effects of the coronavirus pandemic are being borne lopsidedly by needy individuals.

Mr. Yasir Masood discussed how lack of preparation and misguided policies has caused huge losses to societies across the world. He stressed that it is much more than a health crisis and is causing geopolitical changes as well.

Dr. Ma Haiyun also believed that economic and health impact of COVID-19 is being borne disproportionately by poor people. He warned that if this crisis cannot be addressed properly, it

may also increase inequality, exclusion, discrimination and unemployment in the short and long-term.

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry acknowledged the organizers for undertaking this initiative. He appreciated the contribution of the speakers and participants. On COVID-19, he said that such a situation is not unprecedented in history. He added that we are more technologically advanced this time but still everyone is vulnerable. COVID-19 has brought the changes in the pattern of globalization and it is now understood that the world will use technology more than any other sources. To combat this situation government should be more vigilant and adopt such policies that are beneficial for the people, especially those who are struggling due to poverty. Moreover, the government should enhance the research work so that people come to know more about this pandemic.

A lively discussion followed the presentations. A number of plausible solutions to control the outbreak and limiting the economic and social costs were evaluated. The role of research institutions was also debated. Ambassador Aizaz stressed that government should support research related to infectious diseases in order to create awareness amongst the masses. On the importance of technology in the post-COVID-19 era, the discussants delivered suggestions on how to make the most out of it. It was argued that focus of technological advancement should shift towards improving social facilitates like education and healthcare. Adaptation of modern technology can make societies and businesses more resilient in face of future pandemics so policies need to be adjusted. Moreover, innovative approaches should be adopted to offset rising inequality and unemployment. Dr. Haiyun Ma proposed a universal protection system to fight against poverty.

Concluding the event, Dr. Talat Shabbir thanked the participants for being part of CPSC's first webinar and making it a successful endeavor. Ambassador Aizaz congratulated the organizers and stated that this meaningful discussion will serve as an encouragement for continuing the process of dialogue and exchange of ideas during these testing times.