



**INSTITUTE OF  
STRATEGIC STUDIES**

web: [www.issi.org.pk](http://www.issi.org.pk)  
phone: +92-51-9204423, 24  
fax: +92-51-9204658

*Report – Public Talk*

# **“Pakistan-China Relations and Next Phase of CPEC”**

**February 20, 2020**



*Rapporteur: Ali Haider Saleem*

*Edited by: Najam Rafique*

China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a Public Talk on '*Pakistan-China Relations and Next Phase of CPEC*' under the Ambassadors' Platform Series on February 20, 2020. H.E. Mr. Yao Jing, Ambassador, People's Republic of China to Pakistan delivered the talk which attracted a large turnout. Members of the audience included policy makers, diplomats, academics and students.

Director China-Pakistan Study Centre, Dr. Talat Shabbir welcomed Ambassador Yao Jing and the guests. He requested the audience to join him in expressing solidarity with the people and Government of China who were going through testing times in face of the outbreak of the deadly coronavirus. Acknowledging the efforts made by Chinese authorities to deal with this challenge, he stated that China will come out stronger and continue playing its positive role in regional and global affairs. He added that CPEC is a mega-initiative for both countries, and which has helped Pakistan transform while attaining sustainable growth.

In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General ISSI, expressed solidarity with the people and government of China and urged the international community to come together in support of that beleaguered country. He said that Pakistan and China have always stood together and there has never been any divergence in their relationship. He added that some countries are envious of CPEC and China's rise.

Ambassador Yao Jing stated that right now China is in a very difficult situation, but we deeply appreciate the support extended by the government and people of Pakistan since the outbreak of the deadly virus. He emphasized that the Chinese government is committed to looking after Pakistani students in Wuhan.

The Chinese Ambassador went on to talk about the strength of Pakistan-China relations and also discussed the latest developments under CPEC. He said that CPEC is the latest stage of our friendship which is proving to be beneficial for the people of Pakistan. He added that 16 projects have now been completed, while a number of new projects have been added in line with the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan. In the next phase, there will be greater role of the private sector. Ambassador Yao Jing stated that China's development relies upon peace and progress in its neighborhood, and therefore, it is committed towards Pakistan's development.

He said that the present government in Pakistan is very focused on poverty alleviation and Chinese government is keen to support it in this objective. He added that a number of mega projects have come down under CPEC, but projects that are more relevant for building Pakistan's capacity are well underway. He said that China is helping build smart classrooms across the country along with upgrading vocational training centres. He said that the next phase of CPEC has attracted a lot of interest from the private sector.

The talk was followed by an interactive session.

A question was raised regarding the possibility of shifting to local coal in CPEC energy projects. The ambassador replied that the power plants are designed to work efficiently and can only be supported by imported coal.

Responding to a question on the impact of coronavirus on the construction of projects, Ambassador Yao Jing said that most of the technology has been transferred to Pakistani counterparts and the number of Chinese workers involved in the projects is also less. The projects will not face lengthy delays despite travel restrictions on Chinese personnel involved in CPEC projects.

Pointing to the excessive criticism from Western media on China, a question was raised regarding China's perception building strategy and how it plans to counter false narratives. In response, the Chinese Ambassador said that China is not in favor of confrontation. He added that we should do our job with full commitment and focus on facts. Responding to objections raised against CPEC by Western countries, he said that our progress is not well-received by these countries and they are always looking for opportunities to defame us. He posited that China's development cannot be sustained without the development of its neighborhood, especially partners like Pakistan.

In his concluding remarks, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BOG, ISSI, stated that relationship between the two countries has strengthened over the years, while CPEC has added new dimensions to the partnership. He added that the people of both countries can look back at the last 70 years of this friendship with immense pride. Ambassador Khalid Mahmood said that both countries will continue to work closely in order to overcome common challenges.

## PICTURES OF THE EVENT



