



**Press Release**

**Pakistan at the debate of the UN General Assembly on the Zones of  
peace, trust and cooperation of Central Asia**

**New York – May 16, 2023**

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Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations spoke at the debate of the UN General Assembly on the Zones of peace, trust and cooperation of Central Asia today.

He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to promote peace and cooperation in its own and adjacent regions. "Pakistan actively advocated the creation of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in South Asia for over two decades" he said. "This was thwarted by the nuclear explosions initiated by our neighbor" he added.

Regarding the creation of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, in accordance with the declaration in the UN General Assembly in resolution 2832 (XXVI), he expressed his concern that the Indian Ocean being drawn into a geo-strategic construct that implies renewed great power rivalry and the emergence of new military alliances. "These developments could destabilize large parts of Asia, the Pacific and even Africa" he warned.

In the face of these steps that escalate great power military and political competition, he insisted to preserve Central Asia as a Zone of Peace. "A peaceful Central Asia can be a bulwark against the extension of conflict from Europe to Asia. Instead, it can serve as a bridge of peace across the Eurasian landmass" he said.

In regard to regional collaboration Ambassador Akram said that both Pakistan and Central Asia also accord the highest priority to ensuring durable peace and stability in Afghanistan. "The platform of Afghanistan's 6 neighbours plus Russia, which includes 3 Central Asian countries, is a vital forum to promote peace, stability and economic development in Afghanistan" he said. "In turn, once it is stabilized, Afghanistan will serve as the critical connection for regional cooperation, between Central Asia, Pakistan and all the countries who are committed to the early implementation of the several shovel-ready connectivity projects, including the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan gas pipeline, the CASA electricity grid from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Railway" he added.

He mentioned the recently held Pakistan-China-Afghanistan trilateral Ministerial meeting in Islamabad agreed to extend the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to Afghanistan. "This will further reinforce the close connection between Central Asia and Afghanistan, Pakistan and China" he hoped.

"Such economic integration within Central Asia and with its adjacent regions, will unleash the vast productive potential of these regions. Their prosperity will in turn consolidate peace and security, including in the Central Asian Zone of Peace" he concluded.