

## **Societal Cohesion: Promoting Tolerance and Peace for Inclusive Development**

### *Panel Discussion*

Pakistan's rich cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity enhances the vibrancy of its society but also presents significant challenges. This diversity necessitates deliberate efforts to promote unity, mutual respect, and social harmony. National cohesion is currently undermined by internal fault lines such as provincial grievances, deprivation in tribal regions, economic vulnerabilities, public frustration over the lack of swift justice and economic opportunities, internal security issues, religious extremism, and governance shortcomings. Provision of quality education and healthcare has also become a major challenge.

Societal cohesion - fostering unity while respecting differences - is pivotal for enabling inclusive development and ensuring long-term stability. The [Constitution of Pakistan](#) as well as the [National Security Policy of Pakistan 2022-26](#) recognise that national unity, based on principles of tolerance and peaceful co-existence, is essential for the country's internal security and international standing.

This panel discussion will provide a platform for dialogue aimed at building a cohesive society that respects diversity and fosters inclusive development. Recognising that there is no one-size-fits-all formula for strengthening national cohesion, it is crucial for each country to analyse its situation according to domestic circumstances and local requirements. As Pakistan approaches 78 years of independence, it is imperative to take stock of the prevailing conditions and pose critical questions about the nation's future:

- How can Pakistan leverage its cultural and demographic diversity to strengthen societal cohesion?
- What are the key factors in promoting tolerance and peace in a way that mitigates social tensions, reduces violence, and strengthens national solidarity?
- How can governance structures and policy frameworks be aligned with the principles of societal cohesion as given in the Constitution of Pakistan?
- What role can civil society, religious leaders, and local communities play in fostering mutual co-existence?

### **Panel Organisers**

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