**Pakistan in Davos 2020**

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This year the 50th World Economic Forum takes place in [Davos](https://dailytimes.com.pk/542578/the-davos-aspirations/), Switzerland. Business tycoons and managers, leading politicians, media representatives and social workers since 1970 are gathering in the small Swiss village of Davos, Graubünden to ‘improve the state of the world by engaging business, political, academic, and other leaders of society to shape global, regional, and industry agendas’. The last days of January when the mountains are snow-clad around Davos and the sun is shining from an unbelievably blue sky are the time when the global makers and shakers have been gathering for the last 50 years in this posh setup to promote their businesses, exchange view about how to go ahead and stimulate growth, share innovations and make money. There is no doubt that the World Economic Forum as it is named is one of the most long-standing international business organizations with a global agenda meaning an agenda that promotes globalization itself.

While in the 70s and 80s globalization has been there the process has been speeding up during the last thirty years and while in the 1990ies anti-globalization movements tried to stop the process and decry its need or usefulness by today the inevitability of globalization has been acknowledged. On the back side, the draw-backs of globalization that had been decried before proved also real: climate change, rising temperatures, extinction of species, air pollution, water scarcity, danger of pandemics – you name it. While those features are not caused by globalization they are severed and promoted by it and they have now reached an extend that had to be generally acknowledged safe of course the US President who still denies it. But that would be due to the fact (or is it a belief only?) that America is so exceptional.

This year’s theme ‘Stakeholders for a Cohesive and Sustainable World’ tries to address the problems that are facing the world because no company, institution or individual alone can address the economic, environmental, social and technological challenges of a complex, interdependent world. From climate change to tensions in the Middle East, via trade conflicts and fears of pandemics, the more than 3,000 delegates at the World Economic Forum will discuss the challenges that are endangering the world. US President Trump will grace the event and deliver another show-down with the 17-year-old Swedish Greta Thunberg though the outcome might not surprise anyone: neither will bog down. Apart from climate change and ecosystems loss the WEF will focus on sustainable and inclusive business models; governing technology and its impacts; and adaptation to demographic, social and technological trends.

The deliberations of the WEF take place behind close security screens and are not open to the general public. This has been criticized many a time and that is why and ‘Open Forum’ has been initiated since 2003 that takes place parallel to the WEF in Davos. The Open Forum is an event format that allows a broader audience to participate in the discussions because it is accessible and casual visitors can peep in without the extra security check that is needed for the main WEF. The high and rising security cost to manage the WEF event in Davos and the security of the prominent participants, though not without reason, has been a continuous point of critique in the Swiss national media. The costs of the security measures are shared by the WEF foundation and the Swiss cantonal and national authorities. Nevertheless, the event is important as one of those global meetings that bring together more personalities of public life than any other and represents an important interface between big business, politicians and civil society.

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Why it is so important for Pakistan that really needs an international face lifting to be present in Davos? Many countries like Pakistan are treated unfairly by the media than there are those who think they are not represented enough, India stages major annual appearances in Davos during those crucial four days. They offer walk-in information points about their countries, policies and represent their national opinions that are not taken normally in the media. For the 19th time in a row this year Pakistan will present itself again through two major events: the Pakistan Breakfast and the Pakistan Pavilion. Both events which are entirely funded by private corporate entities without any government support, have by now become an integral part of the WEF Annual Meeting at Davos. Sponsored and organized initially by Pathfinder Group and later joined by Martin Dow Group Pakistan few years ago, this unique presentation of Pakistan in this global forum has for many years been a tremendous platform for both current and past Pakistani leaders – civilian and military both- to inform the international community and the media about what is really going on in Pakistan in an attempt to improve the image of Pakistan. For that an elaborate program has been devised.

One important topic that has been made controversial in the media is CPEC. Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, Adviser to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Finance and Revenue and Chairman of the Economic Coordination Committee of the Cabinet, Dr Reza Baqir, Governor State Bank of Pakistan and Lt. Gen. Asim Saleem Bajwa (Retd) HI(M), T.Bt, Chairman, CPEC Authority will host a debate about what has already been achieved by CPEC, what is in the making and what are the hick-ups. Another important theme will be a presentation about the ongoing efforts for “Economic Reform and Revival, Financial Inclusion in Pakistan” that form a central piece of policy of the current government of Pakistan. “Digital Pakistan & IT/Start-up” is another hot topic that will be presented and discussed by Tania Aidrus, Advisor to Prime Minister of Pakistan on Digital IT Transformation and Mickey Iqbal, CEO my mediport and moderated by Dr Aftab Rizvi will give evidence that despite the many problems that Pakistan might have otherwise the future is in the making in Pakistan as well. Finally Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib, Founder and Executive Director of ‘Akhuwat’ (Brotherliness), Chaudhry Faisal Mushtaq, Chairman of ‘Roots Millennium Education’, SadaffeAbid, Founder of CIRCLE Women Association and Aisha Nawaz Chaudhary, Member Provincial Assembly of Punjab, Pakistan will present Pakistan’s vision of “Corporate Social Responsibility force-multiplying Gender Empowerment, Education and Philanthropy in Pakistan”.

The Pakistan Breakfast on Thursday mornings that despite its early hour has been drawing a rising number of international and media representatives (there are already 300 acceptances) will give an additional opportunity for discussion about Pakistani policy-related topics. This intellectual menu will be accompanied by Pakistani snacks and specialities and elaborate diners and lunches so that the mind may not miss driving power. Given the enormous financial, logistic and organizational effort in preparation for bringing in about 60 people from Pakistan to make this this event happen. Let’s keep our fingers crossed that all may go well and Pakistan may find new friends and supporters.

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