CHEEMA, SHABBIR, Senior Fellow, Research Program, East-West Center, USA

Panel 3.2: Democratic Governance Challenges in Asia-Pacific

Role of Media in Promoting Democracy in Pakistan

The transition to democracy in 2008 and the first peaceful transfer of power from one civilian government to another in 2013 are two landmark events in Pakistan's political history. The freedom of the media, civil society engagement, independence of the judiciary, electoral reforms and the 18th amendment to the constitution to devolve powers to provinces reflect significant progress in the process of democratization in the country. There are, however, serious challenges in improving the quality of democratic process.

The media in Pakistan is vibrant, generally free and has significant influence. This presentation examines the role and challenges faced by the media in promoting democratic process, including its codes of conduct, regulatory framework, relationship with the government, safety and security and the capacity of journalists for free and responsible reporting. We also discuss the contextual factors that affect its quality, professionalism and effectiveness in the democratic process.