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Contributions from readers are welcome on any matter relevant to the mission of COMSATS, namely the promotion of South-South cooperation in science and technology for sustainable progress of the developing countries. The responsibility for the accuracy of any information rests with the original source. Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of its editors, publisher or COMSATS.



The Prime Minister of Pakistan with the delegates to the Second Commission Meeting (16 April 2012)

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From the Executive Director's Desk

As the Spring flowers in Islamabad began to adorn the city with myriad of colours, COMSATS Secretariat anxiously looked forward to receiving the delegates to the second Commission Meeting of COMSATS, planned for 16-17 April, 2012 (Special Report on pages 4-11). Taking care of the protocol, security and logistical matters of the representatives of seventeen Heads of State/Government, at the level of Ministers or other high-level officials, was indeed a daunting task, for which elaborate arrangements had been in progress months ahead of the actual event. The Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of Pakistan, as the official host of the meeting, undertook immaculate preparations in order to hold the meeting in a befitting manner, especially considering that it was being held after a considerably long gap.

The Commission Meeting is a forum where the Commission Members express their political will to make S&T a vehicle of socio-economic progress in their respective countries and renew the commitment to utilize COMSATS as a multilateral platform for achieving this objective. Such an affirmation at the level of Heads of State/Government or their representatives certainly serves the purpose of building confidence that S&T capacity is being given due attention in the developing countries, and international cooperation through various multilateral platforms, including COMSATS, is playing an important role in this process.

However, irrespective of the Commission Meetings, COMSATS has a robust mechanism of South-South cooperation based on the interactions among its seventeen Centres of Excellence, spread across three Continents. The Heads of these Centres of Excellence constitute a Coordinating Council, which has been holding its annual meetings regularly. The 15th meeting of the Council is planned to be held on 24-25 May 2012, and will be hosted by TÜBİTAK Marmara Research Centre (MAM), Turkey. The Coordinating Council meetings provide opportunity to the leaders of R&D organizations in COMSATS' member countries to explore avenues of collaboration, approve technical activities of COMSATS and plan its future course of action in terms of various on-going collaborative projects.

The Commission Meeting held in Islamabad, on the other hand, served the purpose of giving the Council a reassurance that its work is recognized and appreciated at the highest level of their Governments. Naturally, the meeting can be regarded as a turning point for COMSATS in terms of getting recognition for its international role. The immense optimism expressed by the member countries about South-South cooperation and their sincere desire of supporting the organizations engaged in facilitating such cooperation were the hallmarks of the meeting, reflected in the Country

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NEWS/ACTIVITIES/HIGHLIGHTS FROM COMSATS SECRETARIAT

MEETINGS WITH THE COUNTRY DELEGATIONS TO THE 2ND COMMISSION MEETING

Availing the presence of a number of country delegations headed by Ministers (or other high-level officials), a number of meetings were arranged on the sidelines of the Commission Meeting, in which bilateral matters were discussed with the delegates by the Executive Director COMSATS, Dr. Imtihan Elahi Qureshi, and other senior officials from the Secretariat. Formal meetings were held with delegates from Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Ghana, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Tunisia and Zimbabwe, while informal discussions were held with all other delegations attending the Commission Meeting. Extensive in-house preparations to hold these sideline meetings with all expected country delegations were made prior to the Meeting. These included comprehensive desk research on the S&T standing, capacity, contribution, and policy and developmental issues of member countries; and preparation of talking points and other related documents.

Matters taken up during the meetings broadly covered a multitude of topics, including: existing state of scientific cooperation with the respective member country; identification/nomination of R&D institutions for inclusion in COMSATS' Network of Centres of Excellence; member countries' Annual Membership Contribution to COMSATS; their participation in COMSATS' capacity-building activities, International Thematic Research Groups, as well as its publications, e.g. newsletter and science journal.

During the meeting with H.E. Nurul Islam Nahid, Minister for Education, Bangladesh, the Executive Director COMSATS informed about the on-going cooperation with the COMSATS' Centre of Excellence in Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR), and the contribution of COMSATS to Bangladesh's scientific capacity-building. Dr. Qureshi invited the Bangladeshi scholars to participate in three upcoming workshops being co-organized by COMSATS.

A meeting with the three-member Tanzania delegation, headed by H.E. Prof. Makame Mbarawa, Minister for Communication, Science and Technology, took place at the Commission Meeting venue. During the meeting, Dr. Qureshi recalled COMSATS' scientific cooperation with Tanzania and expressed the desire to scale up the level of its scientific activities by firstly improving interactivity with the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH), which is COMSATS' focal point in the country. With the same objective, COMSATS' request to designate a liaison officer at COSTECH was communicated.

Meeting with the three-member Tunisian delegation, including the Ambassador of Tunisia in Islamabad, was held at the Commission Meeting venue. The delegation was headed by Prof. M. Ben Amor of the Water Research and

Technologies Center of Borj-Cedria. The benefits COMSATS offers to its member countries in the form of collaborative technical programmes and activities were highlighted. It was impressed upon the visiting dignitaries that one of the Tunisian R&D institutions should be nominated to join COMSATS Network of Centres of Excellence.

The key outcome of the meeting with H.E. Prof. Nadia Iskandar Zakhari, Minister for Scientific Research, Egypt, was the pledge of Annual Membership Contribution towards COMSATS. Detailed meeting on strengthening scientific ties with Egypt and COMSATS' Centre of Excellence in Egypt also took place over a dinner hosted by the Egyptian Ambassador to Pakistan at his residence.

In a meeting with the Sri Lankan delegation, headed by H.E. Prof. Tissa Vitharana, Senior Minister for Scientific Affairs, it was pledged that, one S&T centre would soon be nominated to be affiliated with COMSATS' Network.



COMSATS' officials and Zimbabwean delegation in front of COMSATS Secretariat building in Islamabad (18 April 2012)

The country delegation of Zimbabwe, headed by the Zimbabwean Minister for Science and Technology Development, Hon. Prof. Henri A.M. Dzinotyiweyi, visited COMSATS Secretariat and held meeting with its senior officials. Avenues of cooperation were explored in order to boost the scientific cooperation between COMSATS and Government of Zimbabwe. While discussing the South-South cooperation taking place through COMSATS Coordinating Council meetings, the Executive Director recalled COMSATS' earlier requests made to Zimbabwe for designating an R&D institution to have representation in the Council. The Minister expressed his strong commitment to South-South cooperation and cited several examples of Zimbabwean engagements in this regard.

Important matters discussed during the meeting with H.E. Ms. Sherry Ayittey, Ghanaian Minister for Environment,



Meeting between Mr. Cai Zhiping and Dr. I.E. Qureshi at COMSATS Secretariat (19 April 2012)

Science & Technology, included: building strong working relations with Ghana in its new capacity as the Chair of COMSATS; re-designation of COMSATS' Centre of Excellence in Ghana from Building and Road Research

Institution (BRRI) to its parent institution the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR); and offer of CIIT scholarships to Ghanaian students/researchers.

The meeting with a member of the Chinese delegation, Mr. Cai Zhiping, Counselor, Ministry of Science and Technology, China, took place at COMSATS Secretariat. Speaking with Mr. Cai, the Executive Director expressed his gratitude to the Government of People's Republic of China for its strong and consistent support for the programmes and activities of COMSATS. Dr. Qureshi recounted the scientific activities jointly held in collaboration with the Chinese Government and COMSATS' Centre of Excellence in China, ICCES. Continuation of the same spirit of cooperation and support was urged. Mr. Cai was also shown around the technical facilities of COMSATS Internet Services (CIS).

Several other discussions were held with the country delegates and representatives of diplomatic missions in Islamabad to strengthen COMSATS' role as a promoter of 'S&T for development' in the member countries, which included the delegates from Colombia, Jamaica, Iran, Kazakhstan, the Philippines, Sudan and Syria.

contd. from page 1 ...'From the Executive Director's Desk'

Statements during the plenary sessions and the joint Resolution (page 10-11) adopted at the end of the Meeting. The excellent facilities provided at the venue of the Meeting created an ambience extremely conducive for bilateral sideline consultations and interactivity among delegates. The participants, while expressing their personal impressions, were particularly appreciative of the fact that the Government of Pakistan attaches great importance to COMSATS, as manifested by the deployment of its resources through the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Interior, for the organization of the Commission Meeting. Above all, the Prime Minister of Pakistan joined the delegates twice during a single day to show his personal interest in COMSATS' affairs.

On its part, COMSATS Secretariat ensured seamless proceedings during the plenary sessions and provided all the information and documentation required by the delegates for their active participation in the meeting. The audio-visual recording of the Meeting was made for record and reference. The social and cultural aspects were given due attention during the delegates' sojourn in Islamabad by arranging a tour of the city and a cultural show at the Pak-China Friendship Centre in Islamabad. This centre was also the venue of an industrial exhibition held under the Pak-China Business Forum, organized jointly by COMSATS Institute of Information Technology-Pakistan and Xuzhou Normal University-China (page 12). Among the exhibition stalls were also those representing R&D achievements of various organizations working under the Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of Pakistan.

The Commission Meeting can be regarded as most successful, in all respects. The objectives achieved on the occasion can be summarized as:

- a) The commitment to support COMSATS' programmes and activities was renewed in the Country Statements by all delegations.
- b) The announcements of financial contributions or pledges in this respect were made by the member countries.
- c) The delegates agreed to create an International Endowment Fund of US \$10 M with seed money of \$1 M from the Government of Pakistan, as announced by the Prime Minister of Pakistan.
- d) The future strategy for enhancing the international role and impact of COMSATS was endorsed by all delegates.
- e) The election of the new Chairperson of COMSATS was held and Ghana was elected by consensus to be the new Chair for the next three years.
- f) A Resolution was adopted unanimously, in which, inter-alia:
 - The support provided by the Government of Pakistan to COMSATS Secretariat for successfully carrying out its international functions was commended;
 - The role of COMSATS' Network of Centres of Excellence and the Secretariat in promoting South-South cooperation was appreciated; and
 - The member countries pledged to devise an effective framework for disbursement of adequate financial contributions to COMSATS on voluntary basis and also to contribute towards COMSATS Endowment Fund.

SPECIAL REPORT: 2ND COMMISSION MEETING OF COMSATS

Staying true to the vision with which it was created and fulfilling its international obligations, COMSATS held its 2nd Commission Meeting on April 16-17, 2012, at the level of Ministers nominated by the Heads of Member State/Government. The Meeting was convened by the incumbent Chairperson of COMSATS, the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Fifty country delegates from 17 Member States, in addition to the representatives of three international organizations (observers); COMSTECH, ISESCO and TWAS, attended the Meeting. The countries represented at the Meeting were: Bangladesh, China, Colombia, Egypt, Ghana, Iran, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Tunisia and Zimbabwe. The participating delegates extensively deliberated on the 12-point agenda of the Meeting during three plenary sessions spread over two days.

Preparations for the 2nd Commission Meeting had been in progress for the last many months with strong support from the Government of Pakistan. Arduous efforts were made for smooth organization of the Meeting in cooperation with the Pakistani Ministry of Science and Technology and its affiliated institutions. As reported in the earlier issues of COMSATS Newsletter, necessary preparations were being made by the especially constituted Organizing and Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committees comprising of senior officials from various ministries and departments of Government of Pakistan. As the event approached nearer, frequent follow-up meetings of these committees and the 8 sub-committees formed under the Organizing Committee were held. Moreover, by means of a dinner hosted by the Minister for Science and Technology, Government of Pakistan, and separate meetings with the Ambassadors from Member States, diplomatic matters regarding the Member States' participation in the Commission Meeting were streamlined. Assurances of fool-proof measures by the organizers, especially viz security arrangements, were reciprocated with pledges by representatives of the foreign missions of making efforts to ensure highest level participation from their respective countries. The appositeness of the meeting arrangements did not go unnoticed by the participating international delegates.

Main highlights of the Meeting included: report by the Executive Director COMSATS, overviewing COMSATS' activities; Country Statements; an Open Forum to discuss cooperation issues and COMSATS' future strategy; discussions on financial sustainability of the organization; amendments in the International Agreement of COMSATS; and election of the new Chairperson of COMSATS. This section of the newsletter comprehensively covers proceedings of the important event of COMSATS.

RECEPTION DINNER AT CIIT (APRIL 15, 2012)

A reception dinner for the delegates arriving to attend the Commission Meeting was held at the Islamabad Campus of



Reception Dinner at CIIT, Islamabad (15 April 2012)

the COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT) on 15th April 2012. During the dinner, pre-meeting consultations were made for organizing the work of Commission Meeting through constitution of a Bureau and a Drafting Committee. The draft of a Resolution was also handed over as a working document to the delegates for their consideration.

COMMISSION MEETING (DAY 1)

The Commission Meeting was inaugurated on 16th April 2012 by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, in Islamabad. Other guests of honour at the inauguration were the Minister for Science and Technology (MoST), Government of Pakistan, Mir Changez Khan Jamali; Federal Secretary MoST, Mr. Akhlaq Ahmad Tarar (Chairperson of COMSATS Consultative Committee); Executive Director COMSATS, Dr. Imtihan Elahi Qureshi; and the Chairperson of COMSATS Coordinating Council, Dr. Eduardo Posada Flórez (Executive Director CIF, Colombia). Members of Parliament and senior officials of the Government of Pakistan, as well as envoys of the member countries placed in Islamabad also attended the inaugural session.



The National Anthem of Pakistan being honoured at the Inaugural Session chaired by the Prime Minister of Pakistan



Glimpses of the Inaugural Session (16 April 2012)

From L to R: Executive Director COMSATS; Chairman COMSATS Coordinating Council; Federal Minister MoST and Prime Minister of Pakistan

In his Introductory Remarks, Dr. Qureshi stressed the need for allocating sufficient resources for enhancing the scientific capacity of the developing countries and working out technology-based solutions to help solve the enormous socio-economic problems faced by these countries.

“The ownership of COMSATS belongs to Member Countries. It is up to each country to see how best this resource can be utilized for its own benefits.... I would love to see all of you, referring to COMSATS as ‘our COMSATS’ and asking us or tasking us to do what is in your interest.”

**...Introductory Remarks by Dr. Imtihan Elahi Qureshi,
Executive Director COMSATS**

In his Remarks, Dr. Posada advocated the need for a substantial increase in the financial allocation for S&T in order to ensure social and economic development. He considered the Meeting a wonderful opportunity to collectively address the challenges of building stronger synergies between the institutions of COMSATS’ member countries for mutual benefit.

“COMSATS is an excellent platform for South-South cooperation.... The real asset of COMSATS is its Network of Centres of Excellence.... that includes members from three continents.... I call upon Member States to give this institution the importance it deserves, to provide sufficient funds, send requests of your technology-transfer requirements and make offers of how you can help other developing countries.”

**...Remarks by Dr. Eduardo Posada Flórez,
Chairperson of COMSATS’ Coordinating Council and
Executive Director CIF, Colombia**

In his Welcome Address, Federal Minister Jamali pointed out that it was in the collective interest of all COMSATS’ member countries to share their experiences, pool

resources – human, material and technical – and actively collaborate in research and development activities.

“Let me assure you that the Government of Pakistan is ready to play its part in our collective efforts and provide full support to COMSATS Secretariat in pursuing its objectives and looks forward to similar commitment from other Member Countries.”

**...Welcome Address by H.E. Mir Changez Khan Jamali,
Minister for Science and Technology,
Government of Pakistan**

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister of Pakistan considered South-South cooperation indispensable for the sustainable progress of the developing world and lauded COMSATS’ role as the proponent of science and technology for socio-economic development. Moreover, he expressed his confidence that all the member countries will stand by the Government of Pakistan in extending full support to the future efforts of COMSATS, aiming to bring peace, prosperity and socio-economic well-being to the poor segments of their populations. To ensure the long-term availability of sufficient funds for COMSATS, the Prime Minister proposed the establishment of an Endowment Fund of US\$ 10 million, with inputs from all COMSATS’ Member States and international donor organizations. In this regard,

“...special thanks go to the COMSATS’ Member Countries and their leadership for providing continued cooperation for the programmes of COMSATS. The COMSATS’ Network of International Science and Technology Centres of Excellence has played a commendable role in providing scientific and technological support to COMSATS’ various projects, linked to capacity building and research facilitation.”

**...Inaugural Speech by H.E. Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani,
Prime Minister of Pakistan**



COUNTRY STATEMENTS

“Priority should be given to development of mechanisms to address the climate change issue, to have better food production and to ensure public health and safety using knowledge of science and technology... COMSATS has an important role to provide a common platform for relevant dialogue and activity.”

– **H.E. Mr. Nurul Islam Nahid M.P., Minister of Education, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh**

“The Chinese government values the role of COMSATS in promoting South-South science and technology cooperation and achieving sustainable development. China encourages COMSATS to take further steps to boost its international influence, expand areas of cooperation, enlarge the scope of projects, and deepen cooperation with Member States and other international organizations. China will continue to provide donations to COMSATS, support the Centres of Excellence, conduct joint projects, provide training and jointly host activities.”

– **Mr. Cai Zhiping, Counselor, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Science and Technology, People’s Republic of China**

“Our government is aware of the importance of international cooperation, with emphasis on South-South collaboration. In this respect, the role of COMSATS is of strategic importance for our country... COMSATS (needs) to stimulate the cooperation of universities and research centres with industry through government financing and tax reductions, and to establish incentives for the creation of new high-tech industries.”

– **Dr. Eduardo Posada, Executive Director Centro Internacional de Fisica, Republic of Colombia**

“Egypt is offering all facilities to strengthen scientific collaboration with all member countries of COMSATS, as it provides a conducive environment for high-quality research of international standard and by providing critical mass of infrastructure, equipment, services and technical support.”

– **H.E. Prof. Nadia Iskandar Zakhary, Minister for Scientific Research, Arab Republic of Egypt**

“The international programmes based on S&T are critical components of the IROST’s international policy, and it is particularly running joint ventures with cooperation and collaboration of the regional countries and international organizations such as COMSATS.”

– **Dr. Ahmad Akbari, Vice Minister and the President of Iranian Research Organization for Science and Technology (IROST), Islamic Republic of Iran**



Plenary Session-I in progress under the chairmanship of Pakistan Federal Minister, Mir Changez Khan Jamali

he announced Pakistan’s willingness to contribute US\$ one million as its share.

During the first Plenary Session that was presided over by the Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Government of Pakistan, the Provisional Agenda of the Meeting was presented for adoption and unanimously approved by all participants. Thereafter, elections for the Vice Chairpersons and Rapporteur-General took place, and a Drafting Committee and a Bureau of Meeting were constituted.

Under the agenda item-4, the Executive Director COMSATS

Elections and Organization of Work	
<i>Elected Vice-Chairs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Prof. Nadia Iskandar Zakhary, Minister for Scientific Research, Egypt • H.E. Ms. Sherry Ayittey, Minister for Environment, Science & Technology, Ghana
<i>Elected Rapporteur-General</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Earle Courtenay Rattray, Ambassador of Jamaica to China
<i>Members of the Bureau</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Prof. Tissa Upali Vitharana, Minister (Senior) for Scientific Affairs, Sri Lanka • H.E. Dr. Ahmad Akbari, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, Iran • Dr. Ahmad Obeid Hassan Gubelnour, General Coordinator, National Project on Bio-Fuel, Ministry of Science and Technology, Republic of the Sudan
<i>Members of the Drafting Committee</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hon. Prof. Henri A. M. Dzinotyiweye, Minister for Science and Technology Development, Republic of Zimbabwe • Dr. Eduardo Posada Flórez, Executive Director, International Centre of Physics, Colombia

presented his Report, 'Overview of COMSATS' Activities and Future Plans', covering the period since 1st Commission Meeting. The highlights of the Report, inter alia, were; COMSATS' initiatives and activities, salient features of its five-year future strategy, and financial position of the organization. He noted that 167 events in scientific areas were held during the last 17 years having direct impact on socio-economic development in Member States. Dr. Qureshi underscored the key role of COMSATS' Network of 17 Centres of Excellence in achieving the objectives of promoting S&T collaboration among member countries. With regard to national and international collaboration, the Report covered COMSATS' cooperation programmes with Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO. Some important initiatives of COMSATS recalled in the Report were: COMSATS Institute of Information Technology; Syria-COMSATS-COMSTECH Information Technology Centre; COMSATS Internet Services; and COMSATS' Tele-health Programme. Other salient points of the Report included COMSATS' efforts for enhancement of the Membership of the Commission and its Network of Centres of Excellence, and more recently, the constitution of eight International Thematic Research Groups. COMSATS' publications and information dissemination activities were highlighted as an important source of enhancing South-South cooperation.

Presentation of the Country Statements by the heads of delegations was taken up under the agenda item-5. On the first day of the Meeting, Statements were made by: Bangladesh, China, Colombia, Egypt, Iran, Jamaica, and the Philippines. These Statements highlighted various initiatives taken by the government of each country for development through science and technology and touched upon their future aspirations in the light of national priorities.

COMMISSION MEETING (DAY 2)

The Country Statements continued through the 2nd Plenary Session that commenced on the 2nd day of the Meeting,



H.E. Ms. Nadia Iskandar chairing the 2nd Plenary Session (16 April 2012)



"Jamaica will utilize S&T to attain its vision of becoming the place of choice to live, work, raise families, and do business by 2030... Jamaica seeks to become internationally renowned for the excellence of its research, and to be at the forefront in generating and using new knowledge for economic and social progress, within an innovation driven culture."

– **H.E. Mr. Earle Courtenay Rattray, Ambassador of Jamaica to China**

"For the period 2011-2016, our focus is on: (1) S&T solutions for pressing national problems, (2) appropriate technologies that create growth in the country side, (3) improved industry competitiveness, (4) S&T applications to enhance government and social services, and (5) capacity building in emerging technologies... Indeed, the global challenges facing us require collective action...the Philippines is willing to share experiences in certain S&T areas."

– **Hon. Mr. Fortunato De La Pena, Undersecretary Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Republic of the Philippines**

"The government has been investing in R&D as part of our strategy to transform Ghana into a knowledge-based, innovation-driven economy. The involvement of all other role players is vital in ensuring that we build and maintain a confident, competent, and sustainable scientific and technical base for the transformation of our economy. That is why I want to use this platform to invite individuals and international bodies to invest in Africa, in general, and Ghana, in particular."

– **H.E. Ms. Sherry Ayittey, Minister, Ministry of Environment, Science & Technology, Republic of Ghana**

"Kazakhstan gives great value to development of scientific and technical cooperation with foreign countries and the international organizations."

– **H.E. Mr. Nurlan Ybraiyim, Chairman Science Committee, Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Kazakhstan**

"Pakistan would continue to support COMSATS for assistance and sharing experiences of the member countries to promote innovation, development of appropriate technologies and technology diffusion through SMEs for socio-economic development."

– **Statement read out by Mr. Amjad Hussain, Joint Scientific Advisor (International Liaison), Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST), Govt. of Pakistan, on behalf of H.E. Mir Changez Khan Jamali, Minister for Science and Technology, Islamic Republic of Pakistan**



“Environmentally sustainable economic development is essential for meeting the challenges of climate change and global warming. The oil crisis requires focused research and development in the area of renewable energy and perhaps COMSATS should make that one of its thematic programmes. Sri Lanka has given highest priority to achieving self sufficiency in food and the scientific community is being mobilized and coordinated to address this need.”

– **H.E. Prof. Tissa Upali Vitharana, Minister (Senior) for Scientific Affairs, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka**

“Sudan recognizes the significant role of economic and technical co-operation between developing countries ... Future strategies should be orchestrated for South-South cooperation suited to new situation and continue to initiate new projects.”

– **Statement read out by Prof. M. Galal Mohamed Ahmed, Director General, National Centre for Research, Sudan, on behalf of H.E. Dr. Eisa Bashari Mohamed, Minister for Science and Technology, Republic of the Sudan**

“In Syria we are eager to enhance the S&T cooperation among the member countries in order to increase S&T research for them to benefit from each other’s experiences.”

– **H.E. Dr. Ali Muhra, Head of Mission, Embassy of Syrian Arab Republic in Pakistan**

“Consistent with this aspiration, the Government is aiming at improving the quality of education and health infrastructures, raising the proportion of the rural and urban population... Our country endeavors are quite in line with COMSATS’ initiatives.”

– **H.E. Prof. Makame Mbarawa, Minister, Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology, the United Republic of Tanzania**

under the Chairpersonship of H.E. Nadia Iskandar Zakhary, Minister for Scientific Research, Egypt. The following nine countries presented their Statements on the second day: Ghana, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Tunisia and Zimbabwe.

The intersecting points in these Country Statements are highlighted below:

- Recognition of Science and Technology (S&T) as the vehicle to secure fast-track, socio-economic development and cooperation in research and development in frontier science.

“The new Tunisian Government has the will to collaborate with COMSATS and Pakistan Government... My country is ready to share experience in the field of renewable energies and water management especially by making Borj Cedria technopark as focal point especially for Maghreb region... Tunisia suggests the establishment of scientific forum on insufficiency of water in the Mediterranean region with the participation of a research group composed from different Arabic and African countries under the auspices of the COMSATS to collect information and propose solutions to water scarcity.”

– **Statement read out by Mr. Mohamed Ben Amor, Water Researches and Technologies Center of Borj-Cedria, Tunisia, on behalf of H.E. Mr. Moncef Ben Salem, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Republic of Tunisia**

In order to address key developmental issues, emphasis should be laid on more interaction with policy makers... Centres of Excellence should be given a greater role in addressing regional issues; it is important to utilise their scientific capacities to the fullest.

– **Hon. Prof. Henri A.M. Dzinotyiweyi, Minister, Ministry of Science and Technology Development, Republic of Zimbabwe**

- The provision of an overview of these countries’ scientific and technological activities in the S&T institutions and research organizations.
- The expression of commitment to and support for COMSATS’ national and regional programmes and projects.

The second Plenary Session was concluded with the agenda item-6, Open Forum discussion, under which the delegates deliberated upon issues of mutual interest. Based on the deliberations and discussions of the Forum, the participating countries reached a consensus on: sharing and exchanging of resources; capacity-building activities; promotion of the benefits of science and technology at the grassroots level; interactivity among member countries; and development of indigenous research and production.

The agenda item-7 concerning mobilization of financial resources for COMSATS was extensively debated in the 3rd Plenary Session that was steered by the second Vice-Chairperson, H.E. Ms. Sherry Ayittey, Minister for Environment, Science and Technology, Republic of Ghana. Appreciating the Government of Pakistan’s generous and



H.E. Ms. Sherry Ayittey chairing the 3rd Plenary Session
(April 17, 2012)

continued financial support to COMSATS for the past 17 years and the commitment of Pakistan to extend its financial support for COMSATS' future activities, the delegates made pledges for the membership contributions and identified other avenues for mobilizing funding. The Vice-chairperson emphasized the need for strengthening the financial health of COMSATS to expand its future scientific and technological programmes for the benefit of the member countries.

The financial commitments and pledges made during the meeting were appreciated by the Executive Director COMSATS and representatives of the observer organizations. Dr. M.H.A. Hassan, former Executive Director TWAS, stated that each of the 17 Centres of Excellence should ensure that a detailed study and profile of the Centre was undertaken, and highlighted the strengths and opportunities for commercialization of science and research within the COMSATS' Network. ISESCO's in-cash and in-kind contributions to COMSATS' capacity-building activities, through joint regional and inter-regional programmes, were also recalled. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Deputy Director General ISESCO, opined that COMSATS should seek an increased proportion of in-kind contributions from its partners and advised the member countries to involve COMSATS in the international moots planned to be held in their countries.

It was suggested that international organizations like the World Bank, African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank and other organizations should be approached for sponsorships and support for developmental activities of COMSATS.

Under agenda item-10, the long awaited rotation of the chairpersonship of COMSATS was taken up and Ghana was elected by consensus to be the new Chair for the next three years. On behalf of the President of Republic of Ghana, H.E.

John Evans Atta Mills, the Ghanaian Minister for Environment, Science & Technology, Ms. Sherry Ayittey, accepted the Chairpersonship of COMSATS. In her acceptance speech, Ms. Ayittey thanked the participating representatives of the Member States and pledged strong support on Ghana's part to promote S&T cooperation among the Member States of COMSATS. In the Ghanaian Country Statement, it was noted by Ms. Ayittey that the new Chairperson of COMSATS, the President of Ghana, was of the view that 1% of the country's GDP should be allocated for S&T and research. Ghana is also collaborating with South Africa in space research and would be launching its own space centre.

After the election of the new Chairperson of COMSATS, the Rapporteur-General, Mr. Rattray, presented a report recapitulating the proceedings of the two day's of the Commission Meeting.

Various recommendations that were made during the proceedings of the Meeting, inter alia, pertained to matters of cooperation between universities, research centres and industry; commercialization of research undertakings of scientific organizations and promotion of science and technology in member countries. Some specific recommendations of the Meeting related to:

- Member countries' financial contributions to COMSATS' programmes and projects on a permanent basis;
- Greater focus on science and technical/vocational education through establishment of academic institutions, like CIIT;
- Exchange of young students, scientists and experts within COMSATS' S&T Centres of Excellence;
- Expansion of COMSATS' Network in Africa and other continents;
- S&T activities to be modelled on Colombia's drive to introduce S&T at the school level;
- Technology-transfer agreements to be reached with the help of UNESCO and ISESCO, and to bring member countries together.

DINNERS HOSTED BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE PAKISTANI MINISTER FOR S&T

One of the highlights of the Commission Meeting was the banquet hosted by the Prime Minister of Pakistan in honour of the international delegates. Senior officials from various government departments and COMSATS Secretariat also attended the dinner. Speaking at the banquet, the Prime Minister urged the delegates to suggest ways to further improve and strengthen S&T capacity, especially through the platform of COMSATS.

At the conclusion of the Meeting on 17th April 2012, a dinner was hosted by the Pakistani Minister for Science and

Technology at the Pak-China Friendship Centre, Islamabad. The dinner was preceded by a multi-hued cultural show, comprising highly entertaining theatrical and musical performances.

OUTCOMES OF THE COMMISSION MEETING

Apart from fulfilling COMSATS' important international obligation and reinvigoration of commitment on part of the member countries, the Commission Meeting had the following outcomes:

- The Chairpersonship of the Commission of COMSATS was passed on to the Republic of Ghana for a period of three years with a consensus vote.
- Agreement was reached on creating an Endowment Fund of US\$ 10 M, to which the Government of Pakistan

would contribute US\$ 1 M as seed money.

- The heads of delegations from the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe pledged to nominate R&D institutions in their countries to join COMSATS Network of Centres of Excellence, while Egypt, Sudan and Tanzania showed willingness to nominate a second Centre of Excellence each.
- Pledges and announcements of financial contributions to COMSATS were made by a number of Member States.
- Amendments in the International Agreement were deliberated upon and approved by consensus.
- Broad policy guidelines for the future functioning of the Commission were worked out.
- Based on the understanding reached after exchange of views, a joint Resolution was adopted.



The Prime Minister of Pakistan delivering speech at the banquet hosted by him on 16 April 2012



Dignitaries at the dinner hosted by Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Government of Pakistan on 17 April 2012

Resolution of the 2nd Commission Meeting of COMSATS (16-17 April 2012, Islamabad, Pakistan)

We, the participants of the Second Commission Meeting of COMSATS, representing Members of the Commission, hereby resolve as under:

APPRECIATING the efforts of the Government of Pakistan for hosting the Commissions' Meeting in Islamabad;

REALIZING the importance of the applications of Science and Technology for the socio-economic progress of the countries of the South;

RENEWING the member countries' resolve and commitment to support the objectives of the Commission as contained in its International Agreement of October 1994;

EMPHASIZING the need to strengthen the Scientific and Technological Activities of the Commission in the light of new challenges and to enhance its financial strength to achieve its objectives;

APPRECIATING the role of Commissions' Network of Centres of Excellence and the Secretariat in the progress made so far for the socio-economic benefits provided to the member countries through the mechanism of South-South cooperation;

NOTING with satisfaction the adoption of innovative mechanisms by the Secretariat in cooperation with the Centres of Excellence for strengthening the Scientific and Technological Capacity base of the Commission through the introduction of thematic research programmes and its efforts for expanding the membership of the organization;

COMMENDING the support provided by the Government of Pakistan to the Secretariat for successfully carrying out its international functions and obligations;

WELCOMING the election of Ghana as the new Chair of the Commission for the next three years;

The Member Countries of the Commission pledge to:

1. **CONTINUE** extending their full support to the Commission in its efforts for promoting the integration of Science and Technology into member countries' national and regional development plans for achieving rapid socio-economic development in the South;
2. **INCREASE** the allocation of funds for strengthening the Scientific and Technological capacities of their countries and make full use of the collaborative forum of COMSATS in these efforts.
3. **STRENGTHEN** the role of Focal Points in ensuring the allocation of sufficient funds for the COMSATS Centres of Excellence based in their own countries, to enable their effective participation in COMSATS' programmes and activities and their full transformation into international Centres of Excellence;
4. **PROMOTE** the objectives and programmes of the Commission at the national as well as the international level through diplomatic and other channels and devise effective framework for disbursement of adequate financial contribution to COMSATS on voluntary basis;
5. **CONTRIBUTE** towards the COMSATS Endowment Fund of US \$10 M, of which a seed amount of US \$1 M is to be contributed by the Government of Pakistan as announced by the Prime Minister of Pakistan in his inaugural address.
6. **FACILITATE** the exchange of scientists, engineers, technicians, educationists, scholars and experts among the relevant organizations of the member countries to enhance the pace of activities related to capacity building and transfer of technology;
7. **FACILITATE** the continuity of the Commission's Meetings once every three years as stipulated in the Commission's Agreement and agree to convene the next meeting of the Commission in Accra (Ghana) in 2015;

And urge the Executive Director of the Commission to:

8. **CONTINUE** making all efforts to achieve the objectives of the Commission with the support of the Governments of the member countries and through its Centres of Excellence;
9. **DEVELOP** an Action Plan for the next three years, based on COMSATS over-all five years' strategy in consultation with the member countries;
10. **STRENGTHEN** the Scientific and Technological programmes of the Commission through joint technical cooperation projects employing the concept of International Thematic Research Groups in order to provide maximum socio-economic benefits to the member countries;
11. **TAKE** measures to harmonize the 'International Agreement to Establish COMSATS' and the 'Charter of the Network of International S&T Centres of Excellence', which would be considered jointly as COMSATS Statutes.
12. **INCREASE** efforts for elevating the S&T capacity and the international status of its affiliated Centres of Excellence;
13. **ENHANCE** the campaign for the expansion of the membership of the Commission and Centres of Excellence to achieve wider South-South cooperation;
14. **PREPARE** a comprehensive follow-up report on the relevant provisions of this resolution for presenting to the Commission at its next meeting.

ACTIVITIES/NEWS OF COMSATS' CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

CIIT-PAKISTAN ORGANIZES PAK-CHINA BUSINESS FORUM

COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT), Pakistan, organized the Pak-China Business Forum along with an Industrial Exhibition at Pak-China Friendship Centre (Islamabad, Pakistan), from 15th to 18th April 2012. The purpose of the event, held in concurrence with COMSATS' 2nd Commission Meeting, was to promote University-Industry collaborations in business and economic sectors of both China and Pakistan. The Forum and the exhibition were inaugurated by the Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Government of Pakistan, Mir Changez Khan Jamali, on April 15, 2012. The guests of honour at the inauguration were Federal Secretary MoST, Mr. Akhlaq Ahmad Tarar; Executive Director COMSATS, Dr. Imtihan Elahi Qureshi; Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Mr. Masood Khan; and Chairman Cong Song, Mr. Zia Mian. While addressing the gathering, Pakistan's Ambassador to China proposed several business programmes of mutual interest, and the Rector CIIT, Dr. S. M. Junaid Zaidi, announced the establishment of "Pak-China Youth Entrepreneurs Center" under the Chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Science & Technology, Government of Pakistan. He also announced the holding of this Forum on annual basis in the last week of March.

The Forum served as a platform for commercialization of products and processes of the participating organizations. The main themes of the Forum included: Renewable Energy Technologies, New Energy Technologies, Information & Communication Technologies, Water Conservation, Purification & Sanitation, and Biomedical Materials. Major Chinese and Pakistani companies, small and medium enterprises, entrepreneurs, universities, and research & development organizations attended the Forum activities. Around one hundred Pakistani and Chinese companies exhibited their products at the exhibition. Sideline meetings with industrialists, academicians and Pakistani Business community were also arranged and workshops conducted for the promotion of Pak-China business activity.

DIRECTOR AND PATRON-IN-CHIEF OF ICCBS-PAKISTAN DECLARED THE MOST PRODUCTIVE SCIENTISTS OF PAKISTAN

The Pakistan Council for Science and Technology (PCST), Islamabad, has rated Prof. Dr. Atta-ur-Rahman, Patron-in-

Chief of International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), Pakistan, and Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Director ICCBS, the most productive scientists of Pakistan. PCST, in its sixth directory, titled 'Productive Scientists of Pakistan 2011', has ranked these two scientists the first and second, respectively, among 1,109 most productive scientists of Pakistan that are employed in public/private sector universities, colleges and R&D organizations, in terms of contributions in research, supervision of students and any other productive work carried out during the period 1960 to 2008.

CAPACITY-BUILDING EVENTS OF EMBRAPA AGROBIOLOGIA-BRAZIL

Embrapa Agrobiologia, Brazil, in collaboration with the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply, organized the 2nd Workshop on Community Seed Banks, on 5-6 March 2012 in Seropédica, Rio de Janeiro. About sixty people, including farmers and technicians from 23 municipalities in the state of Rio de Janeiro, attended the event.



The Pakistani Federal Minister for S&T giving a souvenir to a Chinese businessman at the Pak-China Business Forum

On 14-15 March 2012, another event was held at the premises of Embrapa Agrobiologia to discuss the development of research projects on the theme 'Agroecology and Organic Farming'. Researchers from eight units of Embrapa and representatives of the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply; Federal University of Viçosa (UFV); Advisory Services for Projects in Alternative Agriculture (AS-

PTA); Associação Brasileira de Orgânicos (Brasil Bio) and Brazilian Association of Agroecology (ABA) participated in the event. This event aimed to discuss the possibility of creating a portfolio of projects on agroecology and organic farming.

JOINT CONFERENCE OF RSS-JORDAN DISCUSSES STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE ENERGY POLICIES

A two-day Conference on 'Intelligent Cities: Strategies for Sustainable Energy Policies in the Middle East and North Africa' was organized in Amman-Jordan, by the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation of Germany, in cooperation with the Berlin-based Innovation Center for Mobility and Societal Change (InnoZ). The Conference brought together some 100 experts from Jordan and the MENA region to discuss diverse city projects, including those in Masdar, United Arab Emirates; Berlin,

Germany; New Delhi, India; as well as the 'Amsterdam Smart City Project' in the Netherlands.

Speaking on behalf of the President of RSS, HRH Princess Sumaya bint El Hassan, Dr. Odeh Al-Jayyousi, Vice-President RSS for Science and Research, asserted the need for all to fulfill the individual responsibility towards protecting environment in both urban and rural areas. Dr. Al-Jayyousi added that the sharp climb in Jordan's oil-import bill, last year, calls for careful future thinking and planning for urban areas. Dr. Al-Jayyousi informed that the country's oil bill rocketed by 58.1% to JD 3.46 billion (US\$ 4.89 B) in 2011, a trend that is unsustainable and extremely dangerous to national security. In his opening remarks, Mr. Achim Vogt, the Resident Director of the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation, stressed that a complex and creative set of regulations, incentives and behavioural changes are needed if the ever growing mega-cities of the region are to provide its population with decent and environment-friendly living conditions.

RSS-JORDAN AND THE TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION COMPANY SIGN PATENT COMMERCIALIZATION AGREEMENT

Continuing its efforts to share and promote sustainable development solutions, the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) of Jordan has signed a commercialization agreement for the patent, 'Galvanic Corrosion Monitoring and Analyzing System', with the Technology Integration Company. The patent was invented by the Principal Investigator and Consultant at the RSS, Dr. Farqad Al-Hadeethi, who holds a Ph.D in Chemical Engineering.

"This invention enables engineers and technicians across various industries to simulate the galvanic corrosion behaviour under a range of operating conditions (temperature, pH, and agitational forces), as well as to select the appropriate materials to be utilized in cathodic protection



Prof. Al-Jayyousi, Vice-President of RSS and Mr. Fakhouri at the signing ceremony of the commercialization agreement

systems. This invention is considered highly beneficial for power and water pumping stations as well as various industries, including oil and gas, chemical, petrochemical, automotive, maritime and aerospace. In addition, it is considered an excellent educational device to be used in universities and research centres", said Dr. Farqad Al-Hadeethi at the signing ceremony.

The agreement was signed by Prof. Odeh Al-Jayyousi, Vice-President of RSS for Science and Research, and Mr. Monah Fakhouri, the General Manager of Technology Integration Company, which specializes in developing technical training equipment based on a fundamental hands-on approach and prepares students and technicians for professional training in a variety of science and engineering disciplines.

The patent is registered for RSS in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Patent No. 2377) and the EU (Patent No. EP1956357). Additionally, the patent has been filed in USA (No. US 2008/0257729 A1), Japan (No. JP2008304448), and India (No. 246/DEL/2008A).

HIGHLIGHTS OF RECENT ACTIVITIES OF BCSIR-BANGLADESH

The Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) has established itself as the largest Public Research Institute of Bangladesh and is conducting scientific, industrial and technological research to expedite the economic, environmental and social development of Bangladesh. Recent advancements BCSIR has achieved are as follows:

An Instrumentation & Calibration Service laboratory of BCSIR is running the 'Designated Reference Institute of Chemical Measurement', which would soon be formally inaugurated.

- A modern Food Safety Laboratory for Research to Produce Safe & Quality Food to Support Food Processors has been established under the Annual Development Programme (ADP) of the Government of Bangladesh.
- A state-of-the-art Microbiology Laboratory has been established under ADP of Bangladesh, which facilitates advanced research and analytical services.
- A Bio-metallic Implant Laboratory has been set-up to provide state-of-the-art research facilities.

The present R&D activities of BCSIR pertain to: development of slow release nano-fertilizers (incorporating into porous ceramic materials, e.g. zeolite and hydroxyapatite, etc.); fuel cells, solar panels, solar cells and rechargeable batteries, etc., using nanotechnology to explore the energy sector; and nano photocatalytic technology for the treatment of industrial effluents.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT

SAVING LIVES WITH EARTHQUAKE-RESISTANT TABLES

Earthquakes are unpredictable and there are no means to stop devastation to human life when these occur. Many lives are lost when buildings collapse. People are usually advised to take shelter under the staircases or tables if available at the time. However most tables, especially in schools, are not strong enough to stand the weight of heavy debris of a collapsing building. Now researchers have come up with a design of a table that can withstand the weight of around one tonne of falling debris. The earthquake-proof table is designed to remain upright when a single-storey building caves in, like that of schools located on geological fault lines, or in developing countries where many buildings are poorly constructed. Tables could also be designed and placed in such a way as to provide passageways for rescue teams to move around a collapsed building while looking for survivors. Many precious lives could be saved by this simple innovation.

PROGRESS IN HYDROGEN STORAGE PROCESS

Clean alternative fuel for transportation is the dream of every energy entrepreneur. Hydrogen is one of the cleanest fuels abundantly available from large water sources. But the storage of hydrogen at large-scale has been a great concern for the industry. However, the dream of using hydrogen-gas as clean fuel on a large-scale has come a bit closer to reality. *Science News* (April 21, 2012) has reported that researchers have developed a new molecule that can drive chemical reactions to store and release hydrogen under mild temperatures and pressures. In this study, the scientists have created a water-soluble molecule that contains atoms of the metal iridium. The new molecule triggers hydrogen to convert to a form that remains stored in the liquid, even at low pressure. Addition of a base or an acid to this iridium-containing molecule in solution will store or release hydrogen, respectively. The process of packing and unpacking hydrogen will have potential applications in making hydrogen-fuelled cars. If commercially successful, the large-scale hydrogen storage will usher in the era of hydrogen economy that will enormously boost the environmental health of our planet, as burning of hydrogen for energy-generation produces only water as the by-product.

HIGHER YIELDING SALT-TOLERANT WHEAT

One of the major concerns of developing world is food security for its growing population. According to some estimates (*e!Science*, March 11, 2012), the world population will be around 9 billion in 2050, and the demand for food will be expected to rise by 100%. With this projected scenario, the poor countries have to give serious attention to boosting their agricultural output, with the maximum utilization of modern scientific techniques. According to a news-item in

SciDev.Net (March 16, 2012), the researchers in Australia have successfully carried out field-tests of salt-tolerant durum wheat, enhancing the grain-yield by 25% in salty soils. Durum is one of the most widely grown cereals in the world, but in saline soils it is vulnerable to salt build-up in the leaves, which can hinder growth and reduce yields, threatening food security. The scientists have successfully introduced a salt-tolerant gene in the plant by conventional (non-GM) breeding methods, and have achieved highly encouraging results. Soil salinity affects over 20% of the world's arable lands and poses a serious challenge, particularly for the irrigated agriculture, and in regions of the world where natural salinity levels are high. In the United States alone, the production-losses due to salinity are well over US\$ 12 billion. The study proves the theory that salinity tolerance can be improved in cereals and opens up the doors for conventional breeding to transfer the relevant gene to a whole host of wheat and other plant varieties.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH BENEFITTING HUMAN HEALTH

Socio-economic development and human health are strongly related to each other. Scientific research has gone far ahead in providing reliable solutions to innumerable health issues being faced by mankind. Recently *e!Science News* published three very useful research results that can benefit everyone in a variety of social and cultural settings. In its April 23, 2012 edition, *e!Science News* reports that two forms of vitamin E (gamma and delta-tocopherols) found in soybean, canola and corn oils as well as nuts prevent colon, lung, breast and prostate cancers. In the second report of April 24, 2012, the publication informs us that a new study has shown oregano, a popular herb used in seasoning a variety of foods, also helps prevent prostate cancer. The scientific background of oregano's healing potential is that a constituent of this herb called 'carvacrol' induces programmed cell-death in cancerous tissues. These two scientific reports show how simple measures, i.e., taking the right food ingredients in everyday diet, can help people to ward off deadly ailments like cancer. The wonders of scientific research are also manifested in another health-related report by *e!Science News* of March 16, 2012, which says that scientists have found eye health to be related to brain health. According to this report, problems with the tiny blood vessels in the eye may be a sign that there are also problems with the blood vessels in the brain that can cause cognitive problems. This correlation has been established by researchers on the basis of prolonged tests on patients suffering from diseases of retina. The report suggests that simple eye screening procedures could be extremely useful in giving doctors an early indication that people might be at risk of problems with their brain health and functioning. In this manner, the disastrous socio-economic effects of brain damages both for the individuals and the societies could be prevented.

PROFILE OF HEAD OF COMSATS' S&T CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

DR. SYED MUHAMMAD JUNAID ZAIDI, RECTOR CIIT – PAKISTAN

Dr. Syed Muhammad Junaid Zaidi is the founding Rector of the COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT). Dr. Zaidi has also served as Acting Executive Director of COMSATS for the period December 1998 to February 2000. Initially, started as a project of COMSATS in 1998, the CIIT was granted charter as a degree awarding institute by the Government of Pakistan in August 2000. Today, it is amongst the leading public sector higher education institutions in the country. With seven campuses spread across the country, 20,000 students, 1,900 faculty members, offering over 65 graduate and undergraduate programmes, it is now ranked among the top 10 universities of the country (Source: Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, 2012). The phenomenal growth of CIIT bespeaks of the commitment and dedication of its founding Rector and his team.

Dr. Zaidi acquired a doctorate from the University of Birmingham, England (UK) in 1984. He possesses expertise in diverse disciplines, including Technology and Economic Policy Making, Operations Research, Industrial Information Networking, Project Planning and Management, Technology Commercialization and Utilization, Technology Forecasting, Technology Transfer, Build-Operate-Transfer mode of Project Financing, etc.

Dr. Zaidi's name is synonymous with the Government of Pakistan's success in the field of Information Technology (IT), through developing and training human resources. He has prepared and implemented plans for training of youth as well as diverse sections of the society in basic and advanced Information Technology concepts.

One of the high points of his career is the establishment of IT ventures and development of the IT Policy in Pakistan in the late nineties. Prior to that, he had been a key architect of similar policies in Asia-Pacific countries, including Malaysia – the front runner in the region.

Dr. Zaidi has been a driving force behind a number of initiatives in Higher Education, Science & Technology and Information Technology sectors in Pakistan, which include Virtual University, National Testing Service, Inter Islamic Network on Information Technology (INIT), ISESCO Center for Promotion of Scientific Research (ICPSR), Edward De Bono Foundation Pakistan, etc. He has completed a number of consulting assignments for multilateral institutions, Governments of a number of developing and developed countries, and has lectured extensively both in Pakistan and abroad, on matters relating to Science and Technology Policy and Human Resource Development.

Dr. Zaidi has served in many high-profile positions at the United Nations (UN) and with the Government of Pakistan.

He worked as an Advisor with the UN-ESCAP Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT), from 1987 to 1991. At APCTT, he



contributed significantly to the enhancement of technology and information handling capabilities of developing countries of the region and also established a computerized online network of Asian and Pacific countries. During this period, Dr. Zaidi undertook several advisory missions as an IT specialist to Fiji, Ghana, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand and Vietnam, and helped them establish their technology-transfer and industrial technology information systems.

Dr. Zaidi has conducted pioneering research and was successful in developing a special form of algebra and algorithm that ultimately led to the development of a high speed processor. He was a key member of the team working for the development of email on a commercially viable scale. After the successful completion of this research project, Dr. Zaidi established the first international online information sharing network in Pakistan in the mid eighties – much ahead of the rest of the countries in the region. He is considered an authority in the field of Networking.

Dr. Zaidi is highly regarded for his intellectual achievement and pragmatic approach to conceiving and implementing innovative ideas. The practicality with which Dr. Zaidi works and delivers results has earned him accolades both nationally and internationally. In appreciation of his services and in recognition thereof, he has been honoured with many national and international awards; the most notable among them is the prestigious civil award of Pakistan, *Sitara-e-Imtiaz* (Star of Distinction), conferred upon him by the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in 2004.

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COMSATS' BRIEF AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SELECTED FORTHCOMING SCIENTIFIC EVENTS IN COMSATS' COUNTRIES

01-02 June 2012	1 st PIBS – First Pakistan International Biophysics Symposium, Karachi, Pakistan (www.neduet.edu.pk)
20 - 22 June 2012	Rio+20 – United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.html)
01-04 July 2012	Climate Change and Population Conference on Africa, Legon, Accra, Ghana (www.ug.edu.gh/climateconference/index1.php?)
02-06 July 2012	MMM3 – Meeting on Mangrove ecology, functioning and Management, Galle, Sri Lanka (www.vub.ac.be/APNA/greendyke/MMM3/)
03-05 July 2012	ISWPC-2012 – 7 th International Symposium on Wireless Pervasive Computing 2012, Dalian, China (www.iswpc.org/2012/index.html)
08-12 July 2012	GCGW 2012 – Global Conference on Global Warming, Istanbul, Turkey (www.gcgw.org)

15TH MEETING OF COMSATS COORDINATING COUNCIL GEBZE KOCAELI, TURKEY (May 24-25, 2012)

The Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS) is pleased to announce the convening of 15th meeting of its Coordinating Council to be held in Gebze/Kocaeli, Turkey, on 24th-25th May 2012. The meeting is being hosted by COMSATS' Centre of Excellence in Turkey, TÜBİTAK Marmara Research Center (MAM). The Coordinating Council meets every year to: review the activities of COMSATS' Network; follow up on the decisions and recommendations made in the last meeting; and outline the future course of action.

CALL FOR PAPERS FOR COMSATS' JOURNAL – SCIENCE VISION: VOL. 16

Science Vision is a biannual scientific journal of COMSATS. It primarily aims at highlighting the important scientific and technological developments that have a bearing on socio-economic conditions of the people. It invites research as well as review articles that have general scientific descriptions, with comprehensive elucidation of the impact of S&T discoveries and innovations for creating understanding of the contemporary issues and challenges.

COMSATS invites scholarly contributions for the Volume 16 of its journal. Scientists, researchers, policy-makers and young scholars from S&T organizations and R&D institutions are encouraged to contribute articles on any scientific field of interest relevant to the focus of the journal. As per the policy of the journal, contributors are compensated for their time and efforts with a modest amount of honorarium.

For more details, please visit COMSATS' official website: www.comsats.org or the journal's website: www.sciencevision.org.pk. Contributions may be sent to the Chief Editor at: comsats@comsats.org.

A BRIEF ON COMSATS

The Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS) is an inter-governmental organization, with its Secretariat located in Islamabad, Pakistan.

COMSATS, currently, has 21 countries as its members, spread across three continents, i.e. Africa, Asia and Latin America. A network, of 17 International Science and Technology Centres of Excellence, is also affiliated with COMSATS to contribute to scientific development of its Member States. For detailed information, please visit COMSATS' website: www.comsats.org.

COMSATS NETWORK OF INTERNATIONAL S&T CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

- Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR), Bangladesh
- Centro Internacional de Física (CIF), Colombia
- COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT), Pakistan
- Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Ghana
- Embrapa Agrobiologia, Brazil
- Higher Institute for Applied Sciences and Technology (HIAS), Syria
- Industrial Research and Consultancy Centre (IRCC), Sudan
- International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), Pakistan
- International Center for Climate & Environment Sciences (ICES), China
- International Centre for Environmental and Nuclear Sciences (ICENS), Jamaica
- Iranian Research Organization for Science and Technology (IROST), Iran
- National Mathematical Centre (NMC), Nigeria
- National Research Centre (NRC), Egypt
- Royal Scientific Society (RSS), Jordan
- Tanzania Industrial Research and Development Organization (TIRDO), Tanzania
- The Biosphere Reserve – Beni Biology Station (BBS), Bolivia
- TÜBİTAK Marmara Research Center (MAM), Turkey