

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

by

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**21st Meeting of COMSATS Coordinating Council, Almaty, Kazakhstan
3-4 April 2018**

- Honourable Prof. Dr. G. M. Mutanov, Rector, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Kazakhstan
- Honourable Prof. Dr. Ashraf Shaalan, President, National Research Centre, Egypt, and Chairperson COMSATS Coordinating Council
- Honourable Prof. Dr. Tlekkabul Ramazanov, Vice Rector for Research & Innovations, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Kazakhstan
- Honourable Members of COMSATS Coordinating Council
- Honourable Members of Diplomatic Community of COMSATS Member States
- Honourable Representatives of International Partner Organizations
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentleman

Good Morning and Assalamualaikum!

On behalf of the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS), it is an honour and immense pleasure for me to welcome you all to the inaugural ceremony of the 21st meeting of COMSATS' Coordinating Council. This year's Council meeting is being hosted by the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (KazNU), which is a Centre of Excellence of COMSATS and among the top-ranked universities of the world. We are grateful to KazNU for making impeccable arrangements and extending warm hospitality to all participants. I would like to extend my special gratitude to the honourable Rector and Vice Rector of KazNU for the cooperation and support they extended for the organization of this meeting. The commitment of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Al-Farabi Kazakh National University towards COMSATS is indeed appreciable.

I am immensely thankful to the Council members and other foreign participants for taking out time and travelling long distances for this meeting. I am also grateful to the

diplomatic community of COMSATS Member States; representatives of R&D organizations, academic institutions, government and private-sector organizations based in Kazakhstan as well as the officials and scientists of KazNU who have all gathered here, which indeed reflects their commitment towards achieving science-led sustainable development in the South.

Ladies and Gentleman!

There has been a long-standing commitment for the achievement of sustainable growth by bringing equality and peace through education, science and technology while protecting the environment at the same time. This commitment, under the umbrella of United Nations, initially took the form of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and later on transfigured into Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The universal and inclusive nature of sustainable development goals requires more than ever before to invest in education, health and environment and on the top, forging partnerships and building cross-border cooperation that may facilitate the cross-cultivation of experiences and knowledge; building competencies and reducing the technological gap between the developed and developing nations of the world.

Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) is the key for finding solutions to multi-faceted global challenges: from the aftermaths of climate change to the jeopardies of war and conflict to the perils of poverty, hunger and food scarcity. Inscribed in COMSATS' mission, is the need for the achievement of sustainable development through judicious use of science and technology, which is materialized through joint efforts of 21 Centres of Excellence of COMSATS. I must say that these Centres of Excellence have the potential to act as catalysts for achieving the objectives of the Organization.

Ladies and Gentleman,

There lies within the South, a rich reservoir of resources and competencies, which needs to be rightly tapped in order to achieving socio-economic development. The

prescribed cooperation for development has evolved over time from North-South to South-South and then to South-North-South, commonly known as Triangular Cooperation. The international organizations based in Europe are planning to invest billions of dollars in the developing countries, particularly Africa, in order to facilitate the development. Moreover, the People's Republic of China has set a tremendous example of regional cooperation by launching Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which is benefiting 13 of 26 Member States of COMSATS. Initiatives of such kind and others engaging multiple stakeholders are the need of the hour. The presence of the representatives of international partner organizations based in North in the meeting is expected to put energy and momentum into the efforts for facilitating Triangular cooperation.

The Coordinating Council is an effective forum for technical and South-South cooperation. It is hoped that the Council in the present meeting shall strategize and determine the future course of action for achieving social, economic and environmental sustainable development in compliance with the '2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'.

I would like to appreciate the hard work of the officials of COMSATS Headquarters for the preparation of detailed working paper and other documents of the meeting as well as providing maximum facilitation to the delegates. The efforts of local organizing committee members for the organization of this meeting are also commendable. I would once again like to thank the host Centre of Excellence, KazNU; honourable Rector, Prof. Mutanov and Vice-Rector, Prof. Ramazanov and his dedicated team.

I wish you all meaningful and target-oriented deliberations during the next two days for achieving South-South and Triangular cooperation as one of the main objectives of COMSATS.

Thank you for your kind attention!