

Gilani urges COMSATS to pool economic resources for development



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on Monday urged upon the COMSATS countries (Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South) for a untied approach to make progress in the field of science and technology.

Addressing the delegates from above 20 countries at the second COMSATS Commission meeting on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South here, Gilani called for significantly enhancing the importance of science and technology in the social fabric of their nations.

"It is very clear that we cannot make significant progress in science and technology unless we cooperate with one another, pool our available intellectual and economic resources for collective benefits and above all give a central place to science and technology in our policy decisions backed with strong political and financial support," he said.

Prime Minister Gilani stressed the COMSATS countries to bring its member countries closer to the relevant organs of the United Nations, particularly in the areas of socio-economic development and climate change.

He proposed to establish an Endowment Fund of US \$10 million with input from the COMSATS member countries and international donor organizations. He announced to contribute US\$ one million on behalf of the Pakistan government towards this fund.

Gilani said the 21st century is going to be a decisive century in defining the shape of new World Order and mentioned that uncontrolled population had increased in the developing countries, dilemmas of energy and industrial growth. He said other challenges counted climate hazards, weaknesses in global economic management system, mindless global conflicts, rising costs of food, health and education.

He highlighted that the widening knowledge gap between the advanced countries and the developing countries, in the capacities of science and technology.

He stressed South-South cooperation as indispensable for the sustainable progress of the developing world in the present century.

Gilani said there was a need for effective transfer of technology and economic resources from the developed to the developing countries to escape from the horrible consequences of natural disasters and energy crises globally.

He said the United Nations should revisit the effectiveness of its international initiatives like the Millennium Development Goals as these should be more aligned to the requirements of poor countries.

He hoped that Rio+20 summit later this year, would be an opportunity to reiterate this point of view.

Gilani lauded the services of COMSATS, saying that it had strived hard to carry out a noble mission for the past 17 years and had succeeded in achieving commendable results.

He mentioned that the credit of realizing the great dream of Nobel laureate Prof. Abdul Salam and other distinguished founding fathers of COMSATS goes squarely to Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto (Shaheed), the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, who provided solid political and financial support to host the COMSATS Secretariat in Islamabad on a permanent basis.

He said such far-sighted decisions, which reflect the aspirations of the people, can only be taken by democratically elected governments.

"The COMSATS is a noble legacy of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and my government is committed to carry this legacy forward for the welfare of not only the people of Pakistan but also for all the member countries of COMSATS.

Chairperson of COMSATS Coordinating Council, Dr Eduardo Posada Florez highlighted the role of the organization in promoting the education on science and technology. He stressed need for more research on science, innovation and increasing number of Ph.Ds. He called for a special support from all member countries for the implementation of these projects.

Minister for Science and Technology Mir Changez Khan Jamali said his ministry was providing proper technical and scientific support to COMSATS on its projects.

He said the government intends to firm up the grounds for promoting science and technology at grassroots level.