

2-COMSATS-05



Second Commission Meeting of COMSATS

16-17 April 2012

Islamabad, Pakistan

Speeches



Commission on Science and Technology for
Sustainable Development in the South
(COMSATS)

2nd COMSATS Commission Meeting
16 – 17 April 2012, Islamabad, Pakistan

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**2nd COMSATS Commission Meeting
16 – 17 April 2012, Islamabad, Pakistan**

**Introductory Remarks
by
Dr. Imtinan Elahi Qureshi
Executive Director COMSATS
(Inaugural Session, 16 April 2012)**

- Honourable Prime Minister of Pakistan, H.E. Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani
- Honourable Minister for Science and Technology, Government of Pakistan
- Secretary Ministry of Science and Technology
- Chairperson COMSATS' Coordinating Council
- Honourable Ministers from COMSATS Member States
- Distinguished Delegates
- Excellencies
- Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my honour and privilege to welcome all of you on behalf of COMSATS to participate in this inaugural session of the 2nd Commission Meeting, which has been kindly convened by the honourable Prime Minister of Pakistan, in his capacity as the current Chairperson of COMSATS. We are indeed indebted to him for sparing time from his onerous engagements to be here with us this morning. My very special gratitude is for the honourable Science Ministers and other high level delegates who have come to Islamabad from three continents to deliberate upon the common issues confronting developing countries, and to steer COMSATS for playing a strong role in addressing these issues. Your presence in Islamabad for the Commission meeting is a manifestation of your resolve to seek scientific and technological solutions to meet socio-economic development needs of your nations, through a process that is based on cooperation, primarily, within the countries of the South but also with the support of developed countries. We are indeed very honoured by your kind participation and look forward to your sagacious advice concerning the objectives of this meeting.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In modern times, the acquiring of knowledge about material world is called 'science' and the mechanism to convert this knowledge into practical gadgets and services is called 'technology'. Now, equal attention is required for both these elements, because the creators of knowledge are usually the owners of technology and hence beneficiaries of its economic returns.

The developing countries comprise the overwhelming majority of mankind. As the scientific leaders of these countries, it is in our hands to see to it that we are allocating sufficient resources for enhancing our scientific capacity and utilizing the solutions

offered by existing technology to solve the enormous problems faced by our populations in the sectors of clean water, food, energy, sanitation, housing and health. Failing to do so runs the risk of being subjected to economic colonialism and intellectual slavery.

I strongly believe that we should not shy away from indulging in cutting-edge research under the pretext that we do not have the necessary facilities. In fact, research creates technologies that can lead to opportunities of leap-frogging. For example, investment in nanotechnology research which is still an emerging field, can give dividends, far in excess of the initial investment by helping to create devices that are environment friendly. On the other hand, at the level of low-end and well-known technologies, there are hundreds of different ways that can make the lives of our people easy or help us use our indigenous resources more efficiently. We can do all that at our national levels, but more importantly we must help each other and learn from each other to solve our common developmental problems.

In this regard, organizations like COMSATS are a blessing for the Member States, because an organized infrastructure with people having world-view of S&T landscape are there to give advice, to assist in necessary training and in general, to provide a platform for undertaking cooperative projects. COMSATS, in particular, is specially geared towards this role with generous funding by the Government of Pakistan. Amid the noises of political controversies, no one has taken note that the Prime Minister of Pakistan doubled the grant to COMSATS in 2009. This was done with the sole purpose of enhancing the ability of the organization to become more useful for its member countries. Not surprisingly in the last 3 years, we have been able to organize about 40 capacity-building events in our Member States, which is about 1/3 of all activities during the previous 14 years. We are now poised to launch new initiatives aimed at creating international research groups, with specific targets of seeking scientific solutions to our needs for environmental preservation, improving ICT infrastructure, enhancing agricultural produce and generating renewable energy. A comprehensive strategy has been chalked out for this purpose which will be presented for approval in the 15th Coordinating Council meeting to be held next month in TUBITAK Marmara Research Centre in Turkey.

In many ways, COMSATS is a very unique and potent organization. First of all, it is the organization of developing countries, created by the developing countries themselves, for the benefit of developing countries irrespective of their geographic location or politico-religious affiliation. We are fully autonomous and free to choose our policies and programmes, without external advice or control. The second important distinction is its affiliated R&D organizations constituting a world-wide network of seventeen Centres of Excellence. These Centres, which are reputed organizations in their own national capacity, are available to Member States for exchange of knowledge and expertise. The Heads of these organizations meet every year in COMSATS Coordinating Council meetings to exchange views about each other's research programmes and facilities. This alone constitutes a superb mechanism of triggering South-South cooperation. Thirdly, COMSATS is the only organization, apart from UN itself, which has an attached University. The COMSATS Institute of Information

Technology (CIIT) is one of the top ten universities of Pakistan and top-most University of the Country in IT education. The enormous technical resources available in our Centres of Excellence and COMSATS University are accessible to Member States. A generous offer of 100 scholarships for graduate students from Member Countries has been made by the Honourable Rector of CIIT. 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 sincerely hope that the sagacious leadership of developing countries gathered here today would resolve to make COMSATS a real force for change in their respective countries through a proactive process of mutual help and coordination. I assure you, Excellencies, that you will not find COMSATS administration failing in its duties to fulfil your desires, if called upon to do so. 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. The objectives of the Commission meeting being inaugurated today are, primarily to reaffirm the commitment of Member Countries to support the programmes and activities of COMSATS. We need to decide how we can re-invigorate the international role and impact of the organization through enhanced financial inputs and the endorsement of the objectives of COMSATS' Five Year Strategy. Also this occasion of the meeting will be a good opportunity to reiterate the importance accorded to S&T in national development agenda of Member Countries and to strive for a 2% GDP spending on R&D. For practical reasons, amendments in the 1994 International Agreement to Establish COMSATS would be necessary through mutual consultations. Finally, we will elect a new Chairperson of COMSATS for the next three years, hopefully by consensus.

In the end, I would like to thank the honourable Chief Guest once again for his consistent patronage of COMSATS and his presence today in the inaugural session, the Ministry of Science and Technology for its strong support for COMSATS, in general, and for holding this meeting, in particular. The organizing committee, comprising of officials from COMSATS and other S&T organizations of the country, is doing a superb job. I hope all delegates will find a conducive atmosphere for their official work and enjoy the hospitality of Pakistan in this beautiful city of Islamabad. I sincerely wish that your deliberations in the meeting would lead to a successful and productive outcome.

Thank you.

2nd COMSATS Commission Meeting 16 – 17 April 2012, Islamabad, Pakistan

Remarks

by

**Dr. Eduardo Posada Flórez
Chairperson of COMSATS' Coordinating Council
(Inaugural Session, 16 April 2012)**

- Honourable Prime Minister of Pakistan, H.E. Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani
- Honourable Minister for Science and Technology, Government of Pakistan
- Secretary Ministry of Science and Technology
- Executive Director COMSATS
- Honourable Ministers from COMSATS Member States
- Distinguished Delegates
- Excellencies
- Ladies and Gentlemen

I am glad to be present here in Islamabad for the 2nd COMSATS Commission meeting after a long journey from Bogota (Colombia). COMSATS and many other institutions such as ICTP, TWAS, or my own research Center in Colombia, the International Center of Physics, CIF, have been created under the initiative of Prof. Abdus Salam, who was one of the main promoters of science as a key element for the development of the countries of the South. Although the initial initiatives of Prof. Salam were oriented to support the development of physics, very soon his efforts extended to other sciences. Thanks to him, science has acquired a political status in our countries and it has become evident that a substantial increase of the financing for this sector is urgent in order to reach the levels of economic and social development that we need.

It is clear for everyone that science has been an essential factor for the creation of modern world in any aspect that you may analyze. There is no doubt that without the basic experiments carried out by Ampère or Faraday in the XIXth century the electric industry couldn't exist, in the same way that without quantum mechanics we wouldn't have cellular phones or PCs. It is good to remember that Internet, in its actual version, the www protocol, was developed only 23 years ago at CERN, a basic research laboratory in Geneva with close links to Prof. Salam. The fantastic progress of medicine, that has brought life expectancy from 48 years in the XIXth century to nearly 80 years today in industrialized countries, wouldn't have been possible without the fundamental discoveries of Semmelweiss or Pasteur 120 years ago.

The importance of science in the modern world is increasing, not only as a key factor for industrial development but in connection with the preservation of the environment and the survival of mankind. In this respect it is essential to promote a very close cooperation between natural and social sciences as a powerful tool for understanding the evolution of society and establishing the appropriate strategies for

development. The benefits of modern scientific knowledge through relevant technologies have the potential of changing the destinies of nations by reinvigorating economies, improving the health and nutrition of populations and providing means for decent living. This role of science is very well understood by industrialized countries as was summarized by President Obama during his speech to the National Academy of sciences in 2009:

“Science is more essential for our prosperity, our security, our health, our environment and our quality of life than it has ever been before”, And he adds later “I am here today to set this goal: we will devote more than 3% of our GDP to research and development”.

In our countries, however, this idea is not yet clear as shown by the basic indicator mentioned in the above statement. The average percentage devoted to science is around 0.5% in most cases, while in developed nations it reaches more than 2.5%. The lack of scientific and technical capacity derived from the above situation, leads to wastage of natural resources, economic stagnation, social instability, political unrest and foreign interference.

COMSATS is an excellent platform for South-South cooperation. Its membership is not too large but the infrastructure provided by the generous support of Pakistan opens vast opportunities of undertaking capacity-building activities.

In this respect, there are several urgent actions that South countries must consider and that can be actively promoted by COMSATS. Among them I can mention:

- To establish long term policies for science, technology and innovation, guaranteed, if necessary, by laws that include generous and stable financing and mechanisms to attract private investment for research. A minimum short term goal should be a national investment of at least 1% of GNP.
- To increase the number of PhDs in science and engineering, to reach a minimum of two per thousand of the population, giving a special support to national graduate programs in the fields where high quality can be guaranteed.
- To promote programs aimed at improving the quality of science and technology education at all school levels and to support the activities related to the social appropriation of science and technology.
- To improve the cooperation of universities and research centers with industry through government financing and tax reductions, and to establish incentives for the creation of new High-Tec industries.
- To provide efficient mechanisms for the administration of resources even if this should require changes in the current legislation.

In addition to the promotion of science policy instruments, another essential role of COMSATS is to support the interaction among scientists and international S&T organizations and the cooperation between two or more countries in specific research projects. Our social, climatic, topographic conditions are very different from those in

industrialized nations and need, therefore, the development of original solutions well adapted to our particular characteristics. Tropical diseases, knowledge and use of biodiversity, analysis of climatic changes in our regions and their influence on desertification processes or floods, are good examples of fields which have a high interest for our countries and that are already being studied by different COMSATS Centers of Excellence worldwide. The Heads of the Centers of excellence meet every year in the Coordinating Council meeting to discuss technical aspects of collaborative programs.

An enhanced cooperation between us can offer innovative solutions of great common interest that can be transferred to the productive sector. We all know that our institutions are producing science and technology of a very high level. However, only in very few cases this generates solutions or products of social or economic impact. Traditionally our governments and our industry buy most of the soft and hard technology, ignoring locally generated solutions which are often much better adapted to our particular conditions.

The real asset of COMSATS is its Network of Centers of Excellence, of which I am currently the Chairperson, that includes members from three continents. Our purpose for the near future must be to increase the number of affiliated centers, in my particular case from other Latin-American countries, and to strengthen the links with institutions that share similar purposes. In this way, we can guarantee a much wider impact of our activities.

COMSATS is an extremely useful instrument to promote scientific cooperation in science and technology and therefore to contribute to the economic and social development of our nations. 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. COMSATS is ever ready to act in response to the requirements of Member Countries and our strategy for the next five years is ready for adoption by the Council. I am particularly impressed and grateful by the efforts of the Government of Pakistan to support COMSATS and provide administrative and financial sources for the success of its mission and I sincerely hope that other member countries follow this excellent example.

I want to express my deepest thanks and admiration to the team of COMSATS that under Dr. Qureshi, its dynamic Executive Director, has worked tirelessly to make the best use of available resources for benefiting the scientific communities of Member Countries.

This meeting is a wonderful opportunity to address together the challenge of constructing roads to progress, by strengthening the bonds between our institutions for the benefit of our scientists, our countries and finally, of the planet.

Thank you.

**2nd COMSATS Commission Meeting
16 – 17 April 2012, Islamabad, Pakistan**

**Welcome Address
by
H.E. Mir Changez Khan Jamali
Minister for Science and Technology
Government of Pakistan
(Inaugural Session, 16 April 2012)**

- Honourable Prime Minister of Pakistan & Chairperson COMSATS, H.E. Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani
- Secretary Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of Pakistan, Mr. Akhlaq Ahmad Tarar
- Executive Director COMSATS, Dr. Imtihan Elahi Qureshi
- Chairperson of the COMSATS' Coordinating Council, Dr. Eduardo Posada
- Honourable representatives of the members of the Commission
- Distinguished representatives of the International Organizations
- Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

Assalam-o-Alaikum and Good Morning!

First of all I would like to thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for taking time out from your very busy schedule of state engagements to chair the inaugural session of this international meeting. Your presence here shows your deep interest and commitment to the mission of COMSATS as its current Chairperson. We are grateful to you for this gracious gesture.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my profound pleasure and honour to welcome you all on behalf of the Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of Pakistan and on my own behalf, to this second meeting of the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South. My special thanks are due to the foreign delegates representing the membership of the Commission who have so kindly taken their valuable time out from their busy and pressing schedules to come to Islamabad for participating in this important meeting. I will be failing in my duty if I do not thank the Chairperson of the COMSATS' Coordinating Council, Prof. Eduardo Posada and the distinguished Heads and representatives of the International Organizations for their interest and participation in the Commissions' meeting as observers. I also wish to thank all the diplomats of the COMSATS' member countries posted in Islamabad and other worthy guests for gracing this auspicious occasion.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

We, the developing countries face similar problems in many sectors such as energy, education, health and nutrition, safe drinking water and sanitation which adversely affect the living standards of our people. Similarly, the effects of climate change on the environment, water resources and weather conditions leading to natural disasters in the form of severe floods, droughts etc. , impact the developing countries disproportionately more than the developed ones. However with the judicious use of science and simple technologies these problems can be resolved and solutions can be found. It is in our collective interest to share our experiences, pool our resources – human as well as material – and actively collaborate in research to address our common problems. We have to build our capacity to benefit from the use of new technologies such as biotechnology, nanotechnology etc, because without such capacity building we will not be in a position to claim our ‘right to development’ as enshrined in the UN General Assembly Resolution 41/28 of 4th December 1986. COMSATS is striving to assist its member countries in building these capacities through its diverse programmes. 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.

As the Focal Point of COMSATS, the Ministry of Science and Technology has been closely associated with the COMSATS’ Secretariat right from its inception in 1994. In fact, the first meeting of the Commission which led to the creation of COMSATS, was organized by the Ministry of Science and Technology. The Ministry is helping COMSATS in its functions and responsibilities by acting as a liaising body between the Secretariat and the Chairpersons’ office and also with other relevant Ministries and Government departments. In April 2009, the Ministry convened the meeting of COMSATS’ Consultative Committee in Abuja, graciously hosted by the Government of Nigeria. This was the first meeting in fifteen years since the inception of COMSATS where twenty member countries sent their representatives. The Consultative Committee deliberated upon the policies regarding the relationships between Centres of Excellence and the offices of the Focal Points, synergies among Focal Points in different countries and other issues of interactivity.

In addition to this, the Ministry provides technical support to COMSATS’ efforts through its science and technology organizations. The technical and professional expertise available in different fields of science and technology in the 15 organizations of the Ministry is at the disposal of COMSATS. These organizations have provided considerable technical assistance for various programmes of COMSATS in the past and will continue to do so in the future. We welcome this collaboration and want to continue it on more firm grounds in the future. We understand that the programmes of COMSATS are set to grow further in the areas of international thematic research, capacity building and international outreach. This will involve enhanced participation of the Ministry of Science and Technology in these activities. Let me assure you that the Ministry is committed to play its due role in the future extended activities of COMSATS.

This strong liaison between the Ministry and COMSATS' Secretariat as well as COMSATS' Centres of Excellence in Pakistan has not only proved to be extremely useful for the efficient functioning of COMSATS but has also provided tangible benefits for the people of the country. To cite just one example, the COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, which started as a COMSATS project in 1998, was supported by the Ministry. It was awarded its charter in August 2000 and has within a time span of just over a decade already achieved recognition as one of the top ten institutions of higher education in the country. It is ranked 6th among the 132 universities of the country in terms of scientific publications and at the first position in the category of Computer Science and Information Technology education. Currently, it is providing high quality education to about 20,000 students with 2,000 highly qualified Faculty Members, and over 3,000 administrative and support staff. This demonstrates quite amply that supporting the various initiatives of COMSATS can yield considerable dividends. I am sure there will be similar examples in other member countries.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The Commission has an important twelve-point agenda before it, which will be covered in three plenary sessions and one concluding session over the next two days. It is sincerely hoped that with the active participation of all delegations, a sound road-map will be chalked out for the future course of action, for our collective benefit. You are visiting Islamabad in beautiful weather which, I very much hope, will make your stay worth remembering. The meeting is coinciding with another event being organized by COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, namely the 'Pak-China Business Forum' which will also include an S&T exhibition. We expect this event to be of considerable interest to the participants of the meeting. We have tried to make your stay as comfortable and enjoyable as possible. The organizers of the meeting will, however, be more than happy to provide you any assistance that you might need.

Finally I would like to place on record my sincere gratitude to all those in my Ministry, its R&D organizations and other Ministries and Government Agencies that have helped us in making satisfactory arrangements for the Commissions' Meeting.

I thank you for your attention.

**2nd COMSATS Commission Meeting
16 – 17 April 2012, Islamabad, Pakistan**

**Inaugural Speech
by
H.E. Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani
Prime Minister of Pakistan
(Inaugural Session, 16 April 2012)**

- Mir Changez Khan Jamali
- Minister for Science and Technology
- Ministers/ Deputy Ministers from COMSATS' Member States
- Executive Director COMSATS
- Chairperson COMSATS' Coordinating Council
- Chairperson COMSATS' Consultative Committee
- Excellencies distinguished guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalam-o-Alaikum!

First of all, I would like to express my profound thanks to all of you for attending the 2nd meeting of the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South. I am particularly thankful to the members of the Commission representing their Heads of State or Governments for accepting my invitation and travelling long distances to come to Islamabad from all over the world. We are also grateful to the representatives of the international organizations for attending this Meeting as observers. I am confident that the Commission will be able to draw wisdom and knowledge from consultations and deliberations during the course of the meeting.

It is my great pleasure to inaugurate the second meeting of the Commission. The first meeting was held in 1994 which proved to be an historic occasion for Pakistan. It provided us with an opportunity to create a prestigious international organization in the form of COMSATS for assisting the developing world in its quest for socio-economic uplift of the masses. We were fortunate to adopt the vision and passion of our great scientific genius, Late Prof. Dr. Abdus Salam, the Nobel Laureate in Physics, who worked all his life to promote the use of science and technology in third world countries for solution to their problems of poverty, ignorance and backwardness.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am glad that COMSATS has strived hard to carry out this noble mission for the past seventeen years and has succeeded in achieving commendable results. The credit of realizing the great dream of Prof. Salam and other distinguished founding fathers of COMSATS also goes squarely to Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto (Shaheed), the then Prime

Minister of Pakistan, who not only welcomed the idea of establishing COMSATS but also provided solid political and financial support to host the COMSATS' Secretariat in Islamabad on a permanent basis.

Such far-sighted decisions, which reflect the aspirations of the people, can only be taken by democratically elected governments. 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. I am confident that all other member countries will stand by us in extending their full support to the future efforts of COMSATS to bring peace, prosperity and socio-economic well-being to the poor segments of our societies.

Distinguished audience,

The twenty-first century is going to be a decisive century in defining the shape of the new World Order. Uncontrolled population increases in the developing countries, dilemmas of energy and industrial growth versus climate hazards, weaknesses in global economic management system, mindless global conflicts, rising costs of food, health and education, widening gaps of trust and confidence between the South and the North are some of the major challenges which will influence the course of our destinies and those of our coming generations.

A still higher challenge will be the ever widening knowledge gap between the advanced countries and the developing countries, especially in their different S&T capacities. The negative effects of this gap will be borne mainly by the populations of developing countries. 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.

That is why the South-South cooperation is indispensable for the sustainable progress of the developing world in the present century. The shrinking of our world into a small global village due to the strong impact of Information and Communication Technologies has brought forth unprecedented opportunities for the developing countries for stronger South-South and North-South cooperation in several areas like climate change, food and water supplies and exploitation of renewable energy resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Transfer of technology and economic resources from the developed to the developing countries will have to be ensured in an effective manner if the world as a whole has to escape from the horrible consequences of natural disasters and energy crises. I call upon the United Nations Organization to come forward and play a more proactive role in facilitating the afore-mentioned opportunities to reach the developing

countries. The world body needs to revisit the effectiveness of its international initiatives like the Millennium Development Goals for which effective mechanisms to assist the developing nations for achieving these goals have yet to be put in place.

Such initiatives have to be more aligned to the needs of the poor countries through closer dialogue with the local communities. We will have an opportunity to reiterate our point of view at the Rio+20 summit later this year. New strategies will have to be devised to increase the potential of science and technology in the developing countries to address their immediate economic needs. I would advise COMSATS to initiate new projects to bring its member countries closer to the relevant organs of the United Nations so that the opportunities meant for the developing countries in the international agreements such as climate change and socio-economic development are easily brought to their door-steps.

I would like to take this opportunity to felicitate COMSATS on the achievements during the last seventeen years. In this respect 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. I am confident that the Network will now be fully prepared to successfully undertake the newly launched programme of International Thematic Research for socio-economic development by COMSATS.

I appreciate the timely launching of this useful programme as it is going to create stronger bonds of South-South cooperation among the COMSATS member countries that will further help them in enhancing their indigenous scientific capacities in a cost-effective manner. I shall be looking forward to see the positive results of this praiseworthy endeavour.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let us resolve that our Governments will significantly enhance the importance of science and technology in the social fabric of our nations. Let this resolve be seen through our efforts of further strengthening the COMSATS in coming years. COMSATS has charted out its strategy and action plan for the next five years that will be considered by its Coordinating Council next month. We need to ensure the long-term availability of sufficient funds for COMSATS to implement its enhanced programme for our common benefit. For this purpose I would like to propose for your consideration, the establishment of an Endowment Fund of US \$ 10 Million with input from the member countries and international donor organizations. If this is agreed in principle during this meeting, my government is ready to contribute US \$ One million towards the COMSATS Endowment Fund.

In the end, I would like to place on record my sincere appreciation of Mr. Changez Khan Jamali, the Minister of Science and Technology, and his Ministry for

hosting the Commissions' meeting and for extending his help and support to COMSATS as its Focal Point in Pakistan.

In the end, I would like to express my sincere wish that the meeting elects its next Chairperson with a unanimous vote. In anticipation, I am pleased to extend my cordial congratulations to my successor. I wish all the distinguished members of the Commission and representatives of the international organizations a very happy and enjoyable stay in Islamabad.

I extend you my best wishes and hope that you will succeed in your efforts to transform the science and technology landscape in the member countries to make them prosperous.

Pakistan Painsdaabad!

**2nd COMSATS Commission Meeting
16 – 17 April 2012, Islamabad, Pakistan**

**Dinner Speech
by
H.E. Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani
Prime Minister of Pakistan
(April 16, 2012)**

- Mir Changez Khan Jamali, Minister for Science and Technology
- Ministers/ Deputy Ministers from COMSATS Member States
- Excellencies, dignitaries
- Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my profound privilege to welcome the Ministers and other dignitaries from the COMSATS member countries this evening in the beautiful city of Islamabad, especially during this cool spring weather. I am sure that your hosts would be affording all of you an opportunity to find some time to visit the city and its various parks and scenic spots, besides, of course, doing shopping in the local markets.

I would also like to acknowledge and appreciate your time and effort to have travelled long distances from your home countries to come to Islamabad to participate in the COMSATS' Commission meeting for reviewing its many good initiatives and programs so far completed since its establishment in 1994. It will also provide an opportunity to deliberate upon different ways to further strengthen the mutual cooperation among the member states, as well as to set the future direction for this cooperation.

It goes without saying that our nations' prosperous future is tied to meaningful investments in science and technology-led education and human resource development. Indeed, today's life style is characterized by the modern day technologies, which a few decades back was not even imaginable. The mobile phones in our hands remind us all of the time how technological advances have brought about a revolution of sorts in the ways people think and spend their lives.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me take this opportunity to apprise you that our democratic government, in spite of all the financial constraints, still has been successful in conceiving, planning and executing a number of scientific and technological projects in accordance with the national priorities, through the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST). This Ministry is the national focal point and enabling arm of the Government on matters pertaining to science and technology.

The Ministry of Science and Technology has prepared the National Science, Technology & Innovation (ST & I) policy, in consultation with all stakeholders, which has been approved in principle by the Government and the Council for Common Interests (CCI). The ST&I Policy in line with the new Economic Growth Strategy aims at making science, technology and innovation major vehicles of sustainable progress and development through coordinated actions of S&T organizations, academia and industry.

Furthermore, the democratic government through the Ministry of Science and Technology and the organizations working under its administrative control, has also performed quite well in establishing on a sustainable basis international co-operation in S&T, human resource development, promotion of research and development (R&D), renewable energy technologies, water sector, to name a few. Special efforts are now being made on the trade related inventions and innovations as well as commercialization of technologies, products, processes and goods and services.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A hall mark achievement in science and technology field, where Pakistan took the lead, was to establish a 'Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS),' for whose meeting we have all gathered together here this evening. This 'COMSATS' is every member's COMSATS. Its ownership truly belongs to all of you.

I have given instructions to the Executive Director to elect a new Chairperson from another member country, to whom I would gladly pass on the leadership of this office. The Headquarters, as per the international agreement, will of course continue to remain in Islamabad and the Government of Pakistan will continue to take care of all of its recurring expenses.

Personally, for me COMSATS has an emotional appeal as well, because it was the leader of my Party, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, who had the foresight and vision to create this platform, so that our country would be able to play a leadership role for the developing countries to help them in their quest to create the needed S&T capacity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me a great deal of satisfaction to see that COMSATS has given due attention to promotion of education especially in the newly emerging and economically important fields. The establishment of the COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT) in 1998 is one such glowing example. Recently CIIT, in spite of its young age, has been able to earn for itself the proud privilege of having been placed among the top ten universities of Pakistan, while at the same time also having been ranked as the number one IT institute in the country.

I would, therefore, urge you to consider sending your students for graduate studies in CIIT as well as in other educational institutions of the country in different fields of science and engineering.

Please enjoy the rest of your stay in Islamabad, and have productive interactions, in which, I am sure you would be focusing on the state of Science and Technology development in your respective countries and to suggest ways and means to further improve and strengthen the S&T capacity, especially through the platform of COMSATS. I hope your two-day deliberations would result in practical proposals to strengthen the role of COMSATS for the collective good of all its member countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the end let me conclude by wishing that you would definitely fall in love with the fine Pakistani cuisine and melodious music, especially after tonight's dinner and performance. I wish you success and safe journey back to your countries after the conclusion of the meeting.



COMSATS' MEMBER COUNTRIES



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