

**ADDRESS BY CHAIRMAN COMSATS COORDINATING COUNCIL, PROF. DR.  
EDUARDO POSADA**

**(15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of COMSATS Coordinating Council, TÜBİTAK Marmara  
Research Center (MAM), 24 – 25 May 2012, Gebze, Kocaeli, Turkey)**

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As Chairman of the Coordinating Council of COMSATS, I first of all want to express my sincere gratitude to TÜBİTAK Marmara Research Center (MAM) for its support in organizing the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Coordinating Council and for the wonderful hospitality of this beautiful country full of fascinating art and history.

I would also like to congratulate our Executive Director, Dr. I. E. Qureshi and his team for the excellent preparation of the meeting and for their permanent contribution to the consolidation of COMSATS. Thanks to their work, our Institution is playing an increasingly important role in the four continents that are represented here today.

Last month, the Second Commission Meeting of COMSATS took place in Islamabad with the participation of 17 countries at ministerial level. That event marked a major milestone for our Organization since Member States clearly committed to increase their contribution to COMSATS, both through a direct financing and through their support to the development of joint research programmes. In this respect, I want to emphasize the commitment of the Government of Pakistan, expressed by the Prime Minister, to continue to host the Headquarters of the institution in Islamabad. Additionally, he proposed to establish an endowment fund of 10 million dollars with an initial contribution of Pakistan of one million dollars.

As far as I am concerned, I should mention that in the case of my own country, Colombia, we are carrying out the process of passing a law that will guarantee a long-term financial support for COMSATS. As far as I understand, a similar initiative is taking place in Brazil.

In this opportunity, we have the hospitality of TÜBİTAK Marmara Research Center, whose many activities and achievements should inspire all of us. At this point I want to mention that, in addition to the scientific cooperation between our Centres, we can learn a lot from each other in aspects such as organization, incentives for scientific production, financing and marketing strategies and intellectual property policies.

From my personal point of view, which is shared by my co-workers at CIF, our participation in COMSATS has had an enormous importance in making us aware of the great challenges that the world faces today, which can only be successfully solved if we are able to work together. Research and development projects must be defined in the field, based on the diagnosis of problems, not on symptoms. The construction of sustainable solutions involves interdisciplinary work using local resources and international experiences, especially from countries of similar levels of development. As an example, the climate changes that affect all our countries in ways that vary from an accelerated desertification to floods and landslides need particular solutions that we must build jointly.

In this respect, our nations, which represent four continents and nearly a third of the world population, must play a major role not only in the scientific but also in science policy aspects.

In order to guarantee the success of this kind of initiatives there are several urgent actions that should be undertaken with an active participation of COMSATS.

Among them I can mention:

- To promote science policies for science, technology and innovation that include generous and stable financing mechanisms and incentives to attract private investment for research. A minimum short-term goal should be a national investment of at least 1% of GNP. As a particular example of this kind of action, Colombian Congress recently approved a constitutional reform, thanks to which 10% of the mining and petroleum royalties would be invested in science, technology and innovation. For this year, this represents about 800 million dollars. Additionally, the government established tax incentives according to which private companies doing R&D can deduct 175% of their investment from their net income. Practically, this means that more than half of the cost of a project is covered by the government. Similar incentives have been undertaken in Latin America by countries like Chile and Brazil.
- To promote programs aimed at improving the quality of science and technology education at all levels and to support the activities related to the social appropriation of science and technology. A special support must be given to national PhD programs where a sufficient quality can be guaranteed.
- To promote the cooperation of our research centres with the productive sector. Our institutions are producing science and technology of a very high level. However, only in very few cases this production generates solutions or products of a high social or economic impact. Traditionally our governments and our industry buy most of the soft and hard technologies ignoring locally generated solutions, which are much better adapted to local conditions.
- In connection with the previous point, we must promote an urgent modernization of the existing productive sector based essentially on locally generated or adapted technology and we must establish the conditions to stimulate the creation of new industries of a much higher technological level.

We all have an enormous capital of young and talented people that can deeply change our future if they are given the opportunity. We should be able to innovate in the creation of models of sustainable development and generate products that meet international market requirements in the framework of environmental consciousness and responsibility.

Before concluding, I want to urge our Centres to strengthen the joint cooperation projects that are already being developed and to establish new initiatives in strategic matters. In particular, I suggest that we organize a couple of COMSATS' activities in Latin America this year or at the beginning of 2013, on subjects of common interest like climate change, sustainable development, popularization of

science, comparison of science policies, research organization or intellectual property. One of them could be associated with a Coordinating Council meeting hosted in the region.

We must clearly understand that, thanks to its unique composition, COMSATS has an enormous potential for generating change in the developing world. Our role is to set up the mechanisms for making this goal a concrete reality.