

Rapporteurs Report
2nd Meeting of COMSATS Consultative Committee
1st May 2013

The 2nd meeting of COMSATS Consultative Committee was held on 1st May 2013 in Accra, Ghana, under the chairmanship of Mr. Akhlaq Ahmad Tarar, Federal Secretary, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of Pakistan. The meeting was held in conjunction with the 16th meeting of COMSATS Coordinating Council, and was jointly hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Government of Ghana, and COMSATS' Centre of Excellence in Ghana, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). In addition to the senior officials of COMSATS Secretariat, the meeting was attended by representatives from Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Iran, Nigeria, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Sudan, and Uganda. The one-day meeting deliberated upon a nine-point agenda during its two technical sessions and resolved to expand COMSATS' international role and programmes for S&T-led development of Member States. The following recommendations and observations were made during the meeting:

- (1) The organization of the 2nd Commission Meeting at the level of representatives of Heads of State/Government in April 2012 is a welcome development. Especially the long over- due rotation of the Chairperson is a good step forward.
- (2) Members of the Consultative Committee express their confidence in the new Chairperson, H.E. John Dramani Mahama, President of Ghana. It is hoped that Ghana's leadership will strengthen the organization, especially in the African region.
- (3) One of the decisions of the Commission Meeting, regarding the establishment of the Endowment Fund is expected to stabilize the financial position of COMSATS. It is in the interest of Member States to contribute towards this fund, which will be utilized for their collective benefit.
- (4) The Annual Membership Contribution of COMSATS is, in principle, voluntary. However, in order to fulfil national financial procedures, it is strongly advised that Member States should conclude bilateral protocols with COMSATS for regular annual payments.
- (5) The Committee appreciates efforts of COMSATS Secretariat to get nominations for the membership of Centres of Excellence from two States, which did not previously have such a Centre. The remaining Member States without a Centre of Excellence are urged to nominate a Centre each.
- (6) The Technical Advisory Group proposed in the 1st Consultative Committee meeting shall comprise of five members from amongst the focal points of Member Countries, from the following four regions: Asia, Middle East, Africa and Latin America. The focal points of the following countries have been elected as members.

- i) China
- ii) Colombia
- iii) Egypt
- iv) Iran
- v) Nigeria

(7) The COMSATS' Future Strategy as outlined in the Working Paper of the 2nd Consultative Committee meeting is vital for conducting technical cooperation programmes. The Strategy of COMSATS, already approved by Coordinating Council, is formally endorsed. The Strategy Document is expected to serve as a useful set of guidelines for conducting COMSATS' technical cooperation programmes in future.

(8) The Consultative Committee considers Capacity-building programmes, bilateral and multilateral cooperative research, and the consultancy/advocacy for the promotion of Science and Technology as a primary objective of COMSATS. In this regard, it is appreciated that COMSATS has successfully launched three International Thematic Research Groups (ITRGs) on: 'Information and Communication Technologies' (April 19, 2011); 'Natural Products Sciences' (November 26, 2010), and 'Climate Change and Environmental Protection' (November 20, 2010). Dedicated efforts should be made by the designated Lead Centres to launch the remaining ITRGs on a priority basis.

(9) The role of Focal Points is critical for COMSATS to get full political support of their respective governments. Also, Focal Points are responsible for strengthening their coordination with COMSATS' Centres of Excellence (COE) and ensure that sufficient funds are allocated for respective COEs to maintain international standards. All Focal Persons along with the designated Liaison Officers in each Member State of COMSATS shall work proactively in order to gain full support of their Governments towards COMSATS' projects and programmes.

(10) COMSATS has invited nominations from prominent academics having vast experience in their respective areas of research to be included in a panel of 'COMSATS Distinguished Professors'. These Distinguished Professors shall be available for delivering lectures in their areas of specialization, in any Member Country on invitation.

(11) The proposal of Iran to host the next Coordinating Council meeting in Tehran was noted with appreciation and recommended for the consideration in the 16th Coordinating Council meeting.

(12) The Consultative Committee proposes that the honourable Chairperson of COMSATS, H.E. John Dramani Mahama, the President of the Republic of Ghana, may kindly send a letter to all Commission Members of COMSATS, to extend technical and financial support for the programmes and activities of COMSATS aimed at S&T capacity building in Member States through mutual cooperation.