

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

WELCOME ADDRESS

PROF. DR. ASHRAF SHAALAN, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE (NRC)

(20th Meeting of COMSATS Coordinating Council
Cairo, Egypt, 14-15 May 2017)

Prof. Khaled Kassem`, Senior Assistant – Minister for Strategic Plans and Supporting Systems, on behalf of H. E. Prof. Khaled Abdel Ghaffar, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research;

Ambassador Hala El-Beshlawy, representing H. E. Mr. Sameh Shoukry, Minister of Foreign Affairs;

Prof. Mahmoud Sakr, President of the Egyptian Academy of Scientific Research and Technology;

Prof. Junaid Zaidi, Executive Director of COMSATS,

Ambassadors of the represented countries,

My colleagues Presidents of Universities and research institutions, Formers and Ex-Presidents and Vice Presidents of the National Research Centre and Academy of Scientific Research and Technology, distinguished guests.

On behalf of the 24 member states of COMSATS as well as their affiliated 20 centres of excellence as well as the research staff of the National Research Centre in Cairo, I would like to congratulate Prof. Junaid Zaidi for his new mission as the COMSATS' executive director. We believe that he will be successful in enhancing collaboration between the COMSATS member states. We highly support you to achieve our goals within near future Inshaaa Allah.

The COMSATS Coordinating Council comprises 20 Centres of Excellence, from which 14 centres of excellence shares with us the 20th meeting from Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria, Kazakhstan, Pakistan (represented by two centres), Senegal, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, and Turkey. This is in addition to Iran which will be

presented by Mr. Tajammul Hussain. We also pleased to have two important observers from the TWAS and UNESCO.

In this occasion, we would like to welcome our new proposed member as a centre of excellence. Al-Quds University from Palestine who shares with us this meeting for the first time.

It is my great pleasure and honor to welcome you all at the opening of the 20th Meeting of COMSATS Coordinating Council; the event which is organized through fruitful collaboration between the National Research Centre in Cairo and the Commission of Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South in Islamabad. Special thanks and gratitude are extended to all our guests and attendees that have come from different parts of the world in order to take part in this important event.

The National Research Centre in Cairo has the honour and pleasure to be the only research institution that hosted the COMSATS Coordinating Council three times in the years 1997 and 2007, and 2017. It seems that the NRC of Egypt will host this important event every 10 years.

Distinguished guests. The current trend of globalization is taking place precisely because it is part of the beginning of a Knowledge-Based era, in which Science and Technology is the only evocative factor of production; other factors are secondary and can be obtained easily, provided there is knowledge.

Dearest panelist, ladies and gentlemen

Our global competitiveness depends on our ability to ***create, develop*** and make practical use of new scientific discoveries. In brief: ***our capacity to innovate.***

As we consider the big challenges facing most of our societies today – climate change, energy crisis, health problems and shortage of water, just to mention a few – innovation

is at the heart of our ability to find solutions that are economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable.

We shall expect the outcome of the meetings to be more than just articulating the position of Science and Technology as the prime mover of all sectors of the economy but also to make sure that our recommendation to COMSATS Council, were able to key into the COMSATS mandates, of technology transfer and enhancing the cooperation among COMSATS' member states, among others.

I sincerely appreciate the efforts of enthusiastic and hard-working staffs belonging to COMSATS headquarter in Pakistan and the NRC in Egypt to achieve this event in the present form.

I would like to close my speech with John Richardson's very interesting quote: ***"When it comes to the future, there are three kinds of people: those who let it happen, those who make it happen, and those who wonder what happened"***, let's hope that we succeed of being classified as ***"those who make it happens"***.

Thank You