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# THE NEWS

## Gilani proposes \$10m Comsats Endowment Fund

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani Monday said that members of the COMSATS countries need to ensure the long-term availability of sufficient funds for COMSATS to implement its enhanced programme for our common benefit and for this purpose he 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 and if this is agreed in principle during this meeting, his government is ready to contribute US \$1 million towards the COMSATS Endowment Fund.

Addressing the second meeting of the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South, the PM said that twenty-first century was 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," the PM maintained.

He particularly thanked members of the Commission representing their Heads of State or Governments for accepting his invitation and travelling long distances to come to Islamabad from all over the world. He was also grateful to representatives of the international organizations for attending this meeting as observers. He said that he was very confident that the Commission would be able to draw wisdom and knowledge from consultations and deliberations during the course of the meeting.

Gilani said he was very

pleased to inaugurate the second meeting of the Commission. "The first meeting was held in 1994 which proved to be an historic occasion for Pakistan and 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," he added. He said 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.

He said he was 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), 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," he proudly added.

He said such far-sighted decisions, which reflect the aspirations of the people, could 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 and he was 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," the PM maintained.

He further said that still higher challenge would 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 and it was 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 added.

He said that was why the South-South cooperation was 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," he continued.

The PM further said that transfer of technology and economic resources from the developed to the developing countries would 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. He called upon the United Nations Organization to step 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," he added.

He said that such initiatives

have to be more aligned to the needs of the poor countries through closer dialogue with the local communities and they will have an opportunity to reiterate their 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. He advised 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 doorsteps.

He said he would like to take this opportunity to felicitate COMSATS on the achievements during the last seventeen years and 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," he continued.

He said that he was 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.

The PM appreciated the timely launching of this useful programme as it was 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. He said that he was looking forward to see the positive results of this praiseworthy endeavour.