

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

by

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**22nd Meeting of COMSATS Coordinating Council, Tianjin, China
16-17 April 2019**

- Hon. Laiying Yao, Deputy Mayor, Tianjin Municipal People's Government (Chief Guest)
- Hon. Prof. Dr. Ashraf Shaalan, Chairperson COMSATS Coordinating Council
- Hon. Prof. Dr. Yanhe Ma, Director General, Tianjin Institute of Industrial Biotechnology (TIB), China
- Hon. Mr. Linhao Chen, Deputy Director-General, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Science and Technology, China
- Hon. Prof. Yin Li, Deputy Director-General, Bureau of International Cooperation, Chinese Academy of Sciences, China
- Hon. Members of COMSATS Coordinating Council, Diplomatic Community of COMSATS Member States, Representatives of International Partner Organizations
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentleman

Good Morning!

On behalf of the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS), I am pleased and honoured to welcome you all to the inaugural ceremony of the 22nd meeting of COMSATS Coordinating Council. This year's Council meeting is being hosted by the Tianjin Institute of Industrial Biotechnology (TIB), China, which is a Centre of Excellence of COMSATS and among the top research centres of the world. We are grateful to TIB for making excellent arrangements and extending warm hospitality to all participants. I would like to extend my special gratitude to the honourable Director General and Deputy Director General of TIB for the cooperation and support they extended for the organization of this meeting.

The commitment of the People's Republic of China, and its two Centres affiliated with COMSATS' Network, TIB and ICCES, towards COMSATS is indeed appreciable.

I am immensely thankful to the Council members and other foreign participants for travelling long distances for this meeting. I am also grateful to the diplomatic community of COMSATS Member States; representatives of R&D organizations, academic institutions, government organizations based in China as well as the officials and scientists of TIB who have all gathered here, which reflects their commitment towards the objectives of COMSATS.

Ladies and Gentleman!

The countries of the South are faced with various challenges that are hampering their socio-economic progress. These include poverty, unemployment, food insecurity, energy crisis, deficiency in healthcare sector, climate change, etc. Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) is the key for finding solutions to these challenges. The UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, also known as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), has been able to unite all countries to collectively address their common socio-economic challenges. However, SDGs cannot be achieved without effective South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the fields of science and technology.

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which is one of its kind mega-project, has provided tremendous opportunities for regional and inter-regional cooperation in various fields. 13 out of 27 Member States of COMSATS are part of this initiative. We are fortunate to have today the representatives of the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology and the Chinese Academy of Sciences, who would introduce the key activities and action plan of the Chinese government under BRI as well as the associated opportunities of collaboration and funding. It is hoped that the participating Centres of Excellence would make the best use of these opportunities.

Ladies and Gentleman!

COMSATS is committed to facilitate the countries of the South in the exchange of resources, technology, and knowledge for collectively addressing their common challenges. The 22 Centres of Excellence of COMSATS are the major resource-base for the Organization to meet its objectives. The Coordinating Council, comprising the heads of these Centres of Excellence, is an effective forum for South-South cooperation in science and technology. It is hoped that the current meeting will result in the initiation of joint projects and programmes capable of addressing the socio-economic challenges of the Member States as well as the developing world, in general.

I would like to appreciate the hard work of the officials of TIB and COMSATS Headquarters for organizing this meeting and providing maximum facilitation to the delegates. I would once again like to thank the local organizing committee, especially Ms. Qianqian Chai, for making excellent arrangements for the event. I wish you all meaningful and productive deliberations during the next two days as well as the much anticipated visit to TIB's laboratories which would facilitate collaboration of other Centres with TIB.

Thank you for your kind attention!
