

Virtual High-Level Forum on **Quantum Science and Technology:** **Strategic Pathways for the Global South**



Wednesday, August 20, 2025



09:00 – 10:35 (GMT)

Speakers' Profiles



Amb. Dr. M. Nafees Zakaria

Executive Director COMSATS

Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria is the Executive Director of COMSATS, an intergovernmental organization that fosters South-South cooperation in Science and Technology among 27 member states. He also serves as Pro Chancellor-II of COMSATS University Islamabad and Chairman of COMSATS Internet Services. A seasoned civil servant, Dr. Zakaria joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1988. His distinguished diplomatic career includes serving as High Commissioner to the UK (2019–20) and Malaysia (2017–19), with previous postings in London, Toronto, Abu Dhabi, Jakarta, and Bangkok, where he was Pakistan's Representative to UNESCAP. In Islamabad, he has held significant roles such as Additional Foreign Secretary/Spokesperson, Director General for South Asia and SAARC, and Director General for Europe. Additionally, he was a Member of the Federal Public Service Commission (2020–2022).



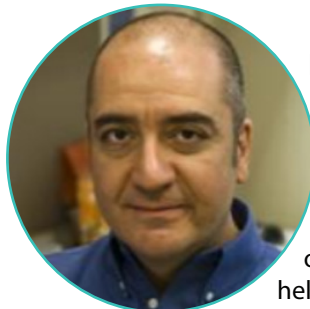
Prof. Dr. Marcelo Knobel

Executive Director

The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS), Italy

Prof. Dr. Marcelo Knobel is the Executive Director of The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS), Italy, and a distinguished physicist of international repute, acclaimed for seminal contributions to magnetism with applications ranging from magnetic recording systems to nanomedicine. Formerly the 12th Rector of the University of Campinas (Unicamp), Brazil, he spearheaded transformative initiatives in research, higher education, and institutional development. A passionate advocate of science communication, he established Unicamp's Science Exploratory Museum and advanced scholarship on the societal perception of science.

Prof. Knobel is a Fellow of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Sciences of São Paulo State (ACIESP), and laureate of numerous prestigious distinctions, including the José Reis Prize for Science Popularization, the CBMM Prize for Science and Technology, and the Brazilian Commander of the Order of Scientific Merit.



Prof. Dr. Zafer Gedik

Professor, Faculty of Engineering and Natural Sciences

Sabancı University, Türkiye

Prof. Dr. Zafer Gedik is a distinguished theoretical physicist whose expertise spans quantum information theory, quantum computation, and the foundational principles of quantum mechanics. With more than three decades of academic distinction, he has held positions at leading global institutions, including IBM Zurich Research Laboratory, Switzerland; the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP), Italy; the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), USA; and the CNR Istituto di Cibernetica, Italy. He earned his Ph.D. and M.S. from Bilkent University and his B.S. from Middle East Technical University (METU).

Prof. Gedik has received numerous accolades, notably the TÜBİTAK Incentive Award, the TÜBA Young Scientist Award, and the prestigious Scientia Europaea recognition of the Institut de France. A member of the Turkish Physical Society, he also serves on the editorial boards of Nature Scientific Reports and Frontiers in Quantum Science and Technology, advancing quantum science nationally and internationally.



Prof. Galileo Violini

Director Emeritus,
Centro Internacional de Física (CIF), Colombia

Prof. Galileo Violini is an eminent theoretical physicist and an influential proponent of international scientific cooperation, higher education, and science diplomacy. As a founding leader of the Centro Internacional de Física (CIF), Colombia—an institution established under the vision of Nobel Laureate, Prof. Dr. Abdus Salam—he has been central to advancing synchrotron science, education, and regional scientific capacity, notably supporting the establishment of a synchrotron light source in the Greater Caribbean.

His distinguished service has earned him the 2024 Joseph A. Burton Forum Award and the 2023 John Wheatley Award, alongside the Abdus Salam Spirit Award (2016) and honorary membership in the Colombian Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences. He is a Fellow of the World Academy of Art and Science and recipient of the Outstanding Salvadoran Recognition. His tenure as UNESCO Representative to the Islamic Republic of Iran underscores his enduring impact at the nexus of science, policy, and diplomacy.



Prof. Özgür E. Müstecaplıoğlu

Professor of Physics,
Koç University, Türkiye

Prof. Özgür E. Müstecaplıoğlu is an internationally recognized physicist and Professor at Koç University, Türkiye, whose interdisciplinary scholarship encompasses molecular and optical physics, photonics, atomic and quantum optics. His pioneering work has significantly advanced quantum information, ultracold atoms, quantum thermodynamics, nanophotonics, plasmonics, and cavity quantum electrodynamics (QED).

A member of the Turkish Science Academy, he has received numerous prestigious honors, including the TÜBİTAK Research Encouragement Award, the Mustafa Parlar Research Award, and the Turkish Academy of Sciences Young Scientist Award. In 2012, he was distinguished as an Outstanding Referee by the American Physical Society.

Prof. Müstecaplıoğlu has authored over 100 peer-reviewed publications and has successfully secured more than €1.3 million in competitive research grants from national and international agencies, reinforcing his leadership at the frontiers of quantum science and technology.



Dr. Hamidreza Mohammadi Khoshoei

Associate Professor of Physics, Center for Quantum Science and Technology
University of Isfahan, Iran

Dr. Hamidreza Mohammadi Khoshoei is an Associate Professor at the University of Isfahan, affiliated with the Quantum Optics Research Group and the Center for Quantum Science and Technology. His research focuses on experimental quantum optics, quantum metrology, quantum imaging, and quantum information theory, with additional expertise in entanglement theory, quantum spectroscopy, laser–plasma interactions, and quantum electronics.

He earned his Ph.D. in Physics from the University of Isfahan in 2010, and since then has contributed extensively to both experimental and theoretical investigations in quantum sciences. His scholarly work, disseminated through leading international journals, underscores his role in advancing precision measurement and applied quantum technologies.