



COMSTech News

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ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION STANDING COMMITTEE ON SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION

From Coordinator General's Desk



Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary
H.I., S.I., T. I.

The COVID-19 pandemic is undoubtedly the greatest challenge the world has faced since the World War II. The disease is affecting all of us without any discrimination. We are certainly going through the toughest time of the human history. The

deployment of science and technology is the most important strategy against the disease. Medical professionals are taking care of the patients suffering from COVID-19 at the risk of their own safety and health, Government officials are working on tracking the virus and maintain social distancing and lockdown. Researchers around the world are engaged in the development of diagnostic, treatments, and vaccines.

There are multiple issues which are making the situation worse in the developing region of the world, such as limited or no access to clean water to wash hands, maintaining social distancing in over populated or overcrowded areas, and lack of capacity to conduct large scale testing, and tracking. How the economic consequences of pandemic will be tackled? These and many other alarming issues are the major challenges in front of us and will remain there even after the end of the pandemic, if the global authorities will not sit together, and take collective efforts.

It has been established scientifically that malnourished refugees, living in overcrowded and unhygienic conditions are especially vulnerable to infections.

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Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary Assumes Charge as Coordinator General, COMSTech

The President of Pakistan, Chairman COMSTech has appointed Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary (H.I., S.I., T. I.) the Coordinator General of COMSTech. COMSTech is the only OIC institution chaired by Pakistan.

Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary is a Distinguished National Meritorious Professor and Director at International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (H. E. J. Research Institute of Chemistry and Dr. Panjwani Center for Molecular Medicine and Drug Research). He is among the most prominent scientists of Pakistan, recognized for his original contributions in the fields of natural products and bioorganic chemistry. He has written and edited 76 books, most of which have been published in USA and Europe. He is also the author of over 1,175 research papers and chapters in top international science journals of the West, as well as 40 US patents. This is by far the largest number of quality publications from any scientist in Pakistan. He has been among the most cited scientists of Pakistan in last five years with citations exceeding 27,407 (h-Index: 68). He has served as a visiting faculty in many prestigious universities of the world, including Cornell University (New York), Purdue University (Indiana), Pennsylvania

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Coordinator General, COMSTech Meets Minister of Science and Technology

The newly appointed Coordinator General Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary (H.I., S.I., T. I.) soon after taking the charge of the organization, met with the Minister of Science and Technology, Mr. Fawad Chaudhary in his office. He briefed the minister on COMSTech existing program, such as collaborative programs with IFS, TWAS, Lindau Nobel Laureates Meetings, financial assistance for Inter-Islamic Networks, assistance for conferences, workshops, and seminars, COMSTech awards, preparation of OIC science profile and COMSTech research publication program.

To highlight the future plans, he mentioned COMSTech capacity building initiative in infectious diseases ("preparing for the next pandemics"), artificial intelligence initiative for health and agriculture, science diplomacy and university-industry initiative. He emphasized the revival of the Science Technology and Innovation Organization (STIO) approved by OIC, and obtained contributions from Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, and Malaysia. Prof.

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No Huge Delay in Vaccine Development for COVID-19

There is no huge delay in the vaccine development for COVID-19, said by leading American expert Prof. Dr. Saad B. Omer while delivering his online seminar arranged by COMSTech today for OIC countries. He described the vaccine development process in detail by discussing all technical aspects involved in process. He informed that the fast-track vaccine development is currently underway. Human trials have been started and there is no huge delay in vaccine development for COVID-19. He provided a detailed account of various vaccines which are in the process of development against COVID-19, and explained how vaccines work against the viral pathogens.

At the outset of his lecture, Prof. Dr. Saad B. Omer said that it is not to stigmatized any disease any country or nation and there is a need of empowering the scientists to lead in making critical decisions, avoid fake news and false assurances. Despite lockdown, social distancing is not possible or practical at home, many of the infections are of familial origin - originate between the family.

To cope with the pandemic he suggested to test, trace contact, quarantine asymptomatic carriers, reduce household transmission and practice social distancing. He informed that the outbreak in South Asia is slower than the

Europe, and the doubling time of cases is 7 days.

By answering a question seeking his opinion on complete lockdown or smart lockdown, he stressed that nations should be pre-emptive, don't wait for cases to rise. Countries that reacted quickly, proactively succeeded in slowing down the spread, whereas those countries which were not proactive saw exponential rise in cases. He suggested go early, test, trace contacts and ease lockdown slowly, smartly and sector wise.

Is it wise to ease lockdown while there is no therapy, no vaccine? He replied that it depends on the rate of cases, if cases are rising rapidly then nations have appropriate strategy to cope with the situation. He suggested to ease lockdown carefully by implementing all suggested safety measures.

Participants from various cities of Pakistan, and other OIC countries such as Nigeria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh and Egypt joined the session.

To watch complete lecture please browse: <http://www.comstech.org/seminar-covid-19.aspx> ■



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Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary Assumes Charge as Coordinator General, COMSTech

State University (Pennsylvania), Scripps Institution of Oceanography (San Diego, California), The University Rhode Island (Rhode Island) and various top Universities of UK, China, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Kazakhstan, and Iran.

Prof. Choudhary has won several national and international awards, such as Hilal-e-Imtiaz, Sitara-e-Imtiaz and Tamgha-e-Imtiaz by the President of Pakistan, Pakistan Academy of Sciences Gold Medal, National Book Foundation Prize on best book and the Third World Academy of Sciences Young Scientist Prize. He received the prestigious title of "Distinguished National Professor" from the Higher Education Commission in 2004 and Meritorious Professor by the

University of Karachi 2013. He is a member and fellow of many prestigious societies including Fellow of The Academy of Sciences for the Developing World, Islamic Academy of Sciences, Chemical Society of Pakistan, Royal Society of Chemistry (London) and LEAD-International. He is also the recipient of the 1st Khawarizmi International Award and Prize from the President of Islamic Republic of Iran, Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Award in Education by the President of Azerbaijan, COMSTech Award in Chemistry by the Prime Minister of Pakistan and more recently Chinese Academy of Sciences Distinguished Foreign Scientist Award. ■

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Coordinator General, COMSTech Meets Minister of Science and Technology

Choudhary mentioned that the programs and activities planned for 2020-21 are from a working paper, prepared on the instruction of the President of Pakistan who is the Chairman COMSTech as well.

The Minister assured him the fullest support of his Ministry in fulfilling the mission of COMSTech for science and technology cooperation in OIC member states. He has shown confidence that through COMSTech, Pakistan will also be able to build its capacity in future fields of science and technology through bilateral and multilateral cooperation with leading institutions in OIC countries.

COMSTech is the Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation of the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) which was established by the Third Islamic Summit of OIC held at Makkah, Saudi Arabia in January 1981. COMSTech is composed of all the member states of the organization represented by their ministers of science and technology or nominated representatives. The President of Pakistan is the chairman, Prime Minister of Pakistan is the co-chairman and the Coordinator General is the Chief Executive of COMSTech which is the only OIC organization chaired by Pakistan. ■

