



COMSTech News

June-2020



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.

Never in the history of humanity, science and technology have been deployed so promptly and effectively as in case of global fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

While it took years to develop even testing methods for HIV-AIDS, it was only a few weeks, PCR based tests were developed and used globally for testing and tracking of SARS-COV-2 infected patients. Global lockdown and complete failure of interdependency regime have forced all nations, small or big, to quickly employ institutional and human resources for indigenization of much needed items (PPEs, ventilators, disinfectants, etc) to handle unfolding health crises.

Most pleasantly many of the nations have achieved significant success in these endeavors. This not only boost their national confidence on indigenous science capacity, but also pave the way for post-COVID socioeconomic developments.

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OIC General Secretariat Interacts with the New Coordinator General COMSTech to Discuss Various Activities

In the framework of coordination between the various OIC organs and institutions, the OIC General Secretariat and COMSTech Secretariat held a video-conference on 16 June 2020 to interact with the new Coordinator General of COMSTech and review the activities being carried by the two organs in the field of Science & Technology in the context of the prevailing circumstances. H.E. Askar Mussinov, Assistant Secretary General for Science & Technology represented the OIC General Secretariat while H.E. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTech, represented COMSTech Secretariat.

In his remarks, Ambassador Askar Mussinov congratulated Prof. Choudhary upon his appointment as the new Coordinator General of COMSTech. He underlined the role of COMSTech in promoting scientific and technical cooperation among the Member States and commended the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the support and the conducive environment it provides to COMSTech. He pointed out that in the face of unprecedented challenges posed by COVID-19, all efforts of the OIC and its institutions ought to be on helping Member

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OIC, WHO and COMSTech Discusses Formation of Regional Working Group on Health

Officials of WHO-EMRO-OIC Working Group, and COMSTech held a video meeting on 1st July 2020 to discuss the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic in the OIC countries of the region. The immediate focus of the planned Working Group would be to build institutional capacity of the OIC member states to combat the virus, including training of health workers, standardization of indigenous medical technology and clinical trials etc. In the longer run, the group would address other pressing and widespread public health issues of OIC member states.

The Coordinator General COMSTech, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary expressed the full support of COMSTech for realizing the goals of the planned Working Group and offered to host its activities with the support of OIC and WHO. The meeting was attended by Dr Jaffar Hussain Syed, Chef

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Inside Coordinator General COMSTech Meets President of AJK

COMSTech and TUBITAK Join Hands for Capacity Building of OIC Member States



Coordinator General COMSTech Meets President of AJK

Coordinator General COMSTech, H. E. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary had a meeting with the President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), H. E. Sardar Masood Khan at Kashmir House, Islamabad, on Thursday, July 1, 2020. The implementation of various Inter-Islamic initiatives, including training programs in future sciences by engaging leading experts from the OIC region and beyond were part of discussions. The Coordinator General invited the President AJK to visit COMSTech headquarters which was generously accepted by the President. Coordinator General also presented the COMSTech shield to the President. ■



COMSTech Networks OIC Labs to Develop Diagnostic Kits for COVID-19

To network OIC institutions for the development of diagnostic kits for COVID-19, the Coordinator General COMSTech, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary had a virtual meeting with 22 scientists and heads of the virology diagnostic laboratories in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Azerbaijan, Gambia, Sénégal, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Egypt, and Azerbaijan. The meeting was aimed at exploring avenues of intra-OIC collaboration for capacity building of the laboratories.

The participants of the meeting emphasized the need of assessing the current available facilities, resources and workforce, equipping the labs with minimum standards, supporting technology transfer, training of technicians and ensuring the availability of skilled manpower, and initiating collaborative projects. All participants offered their full support to COMSTech intra-OIC cooperation initiative for coping with the current and any future pandemics.

Responding to the suggestions of the participants Dr. Choudhary offered two online training courses in

collaboration with the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences, Karachi, and National University of Science and Technology, Islamabad, this year for building capacities of the scientists in testing and developing diagnostic kits for COVID-19.

To further enhance testing capacities of OIC member states, COMSTech has submitted a proposal to Islamic Development Bank which aims to enhance testing capacities of the targeted countries by developing RT Loop-mediated Isothermal Amplification (LAMP) and Antibodies (IgG/IgM) based detection kits for the SARS-CoV-2 diagnosis. These kits can be used without sophisticated diagnostic infrastructure. COMSTech in collaboration with the International Centre for Chemical and Biological Sciences, Karachi, Pakistan is planning to help the OIC institutions in developing the mentioned kits. Seventeen OIC institutions have already shared their interest in benefiting from this opportunity. ■

H.E. Ambassador of Uzbekistan Visits COMSTech

His Excellency Lt. Col. Saadulla Tashmatov, Acting Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan visited COMSTech on Monday, July 06, 2020 and met with the Senior Officials of COMSTech.

Prof. Dr. Khurshid Hasanain, Adviser COMSTech shared with the Ambassador, some previous activities organized jointly including the "First OIC Robotics Challenge" organized in October 2019 at Tashkent, Uzbekistan and new proposal of developing Technology Parks.

Mr. Aftab H. Zaidi, Director HR & Administration COMSTech apprised the Ambassador about new initiatives and programs undertaken by COMSTech and shared a list of programmes and activities.

H.E. Lt. Col. Saadulla Tashmatov informed that the Deputy Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan would like to have an online meeting with H.E. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTech with the coordination of Uzbekistan Embassy in Islamabad. ■



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OIC, WHO and COMSTech Discusses Formation of Regional Working Group on Health

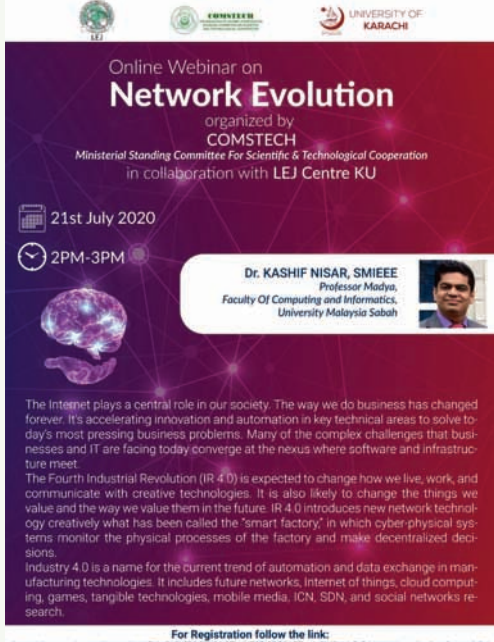
De Cabinet, World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Office, EMR, Cairo, Egypt, and Dr. Yagob Yousef Al-Mazrou, Secretary General, the Saudi Health Council and Chairman, Islamic Advisory Group on Polio Eradication, Dr. S. Khurshid

Hasanain, Adviser COMSTech, Mr. Ifran Shaukat, Director General (S&T), OIC General Secretariat, Mr. Abdunur M. Sekindi, Professional Officer, Science & Technology Affairs Department, OIC General Secretariat. ■



COMSTech Webinars

UPCOMING



For Registration:
<http://www.comstech.org/online-eval-flyer.aspx>

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From Coordinator General's Desk

From S&T applications I regard this “transforming the calamity into opportunity”.

COMSTech working with its massive network of institutions, and distinguished scholars has initiated a large number of initiatives to accelerate this science based transformation through capacity building programmes. (www.comstech.org).

COMSTech is also stocktaking best practices in OIC countries against the pandemic. In my humble understanding our achievements of today will prepare us for future health challenges and help us to contribute in global health security initiative as equal partners. COMSTech is here to help you, and to help the Ummah.■

FOREGONE



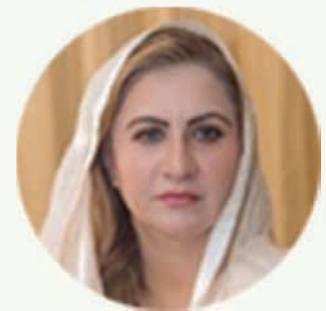
Webinar on **Status of STI in the OIC Region**
By H.E. Prof. Dr. Adnan Badran
Former Prime Minister of Jordan
Chancellor, University of Petra

Watch complete lecture on:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqTbnJfHXUY>

Webinar on **Pakistan Randomized and Observational Trial to Evaluate Coronavirus Treatment (PROTECT)**

By Prof. Dr. Ghazna Khalid
MNA and Member Task Force of MoST,
Pakistan on COVID-19

Watch complete lecture on:
<http://www.comstech.org/seminar-covid-19.aspx>



Webinar on **COVID-19 Epidemiology Evidence Based Policy and Prospects for Vaccine**

By Prof. Dr. Saad B. Omer
Director of the Yale Institute for Global Health, and Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology at the Yale University

Watch complete lecture on:
<http://www.comstech.org/seminar-covid-19.aspx>



Webinar on **COVID-19 Pandemic and Related Health Issues**

By Prof. Dr. Wasim Jafri
Professor of Medicine, Consultant Gastroenterologist & Hepatologist
Aga Khan University of Health Sciences, Pakistan

Watch complete lecture on:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3nSgl10HSQ>





H.E. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary called on the Chairman HEC, Dr. Tariq Banuri on 2nd July 2020. He thanked Dr. Banuri for leading COMSTech with excellence and dedication during the interim period and shared current activities and future plans. During the meeting, several joint initiatives between COMSTech and HEC were discussed.



H.E. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTech met with Mr. Muhammad Naeem, Chairman Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission on Monday, 29th June, 2020 and deliberated on several collaborative projects for capacity building of OIC Member States in S&T.



Dr. Abdur Rashid, Director, DRAP and Dr. Ghazna Khalid Siddiqui MNA and Member, Task Force of Ministry of Science and Technology of Pakistan on COVID-19 had meeting with Coordinator General COMSTech Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, in his office.



Coordinator General COMSTech met with H. E. Mr. Muhammad Azam Khan Swati Minister for Narcotics Control.



Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTech met with the honourable Lt. Gen. Naweed Zaman, Rector of National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Islamabad, Pakistan on 16th June 2020. The dignitaries discussed opportunities of mutual interest, and agreed to extend cooperation to build a strong collaboration mechanism to deal with emerging challenges of the post-COVID-19 world.



H.E. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTech met with H.E. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Foreign Secretary of Pakistan on Thursday, 4th June, 2020. Mr. Muhammad Kamran Akhtar, Director General (ACDIS) and Mr. Tariq Karim, Director General (EC & OCI), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) were also present in the meeting.

On July 9, 2020, Coordinator General COMSTech Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary and Dr. Khurshid Hasanain, Adviser COMSTech held a video-conference with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Mr. Furkat Sidikov, the state and prospects of strengthening Uzbekistan's cooperation with COMSTech in science and technology amid the COVID-19 pandemic were discussed during the conversation.



H.E. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTech met with Mr. Shoaib Ahmed Siddiqui, Federal Secretary, Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications of Pakistan on Thursday, 4th June, 2020.



H.E. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTech met with Maj. Gen. Amer Ikram, Executive Director, National Institute of Health (NIH), Islamabad, Pakistan on Thursday, 4th June, 2020. The matters related to joint collaboration between COMSTech and NIH were discussed in detail and agreed to start various joint activities.





Government of Pakistan
MoST & MoITT



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1st COMSTech Showcasing of Artificial Intelligence and IoT Products & Services: AI & IoT for Pakistan

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COMSTech, Islamabad



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