



COMSTECH News

August-2021

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.

Developing world, including OIC region, is inflicted with regional conflicts, civil unrest, and political instability. As a result, displacement of people for safety, and better life opportunities is common. Such mass migration is effecting the

communities of scientists and academicians as well.

In recent times, we are witnessing institutional collapsing, and academic and scientific communities migrating internally and externally. We witnessed that in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Libya, Rohingya Muslims in Bangladesh, and most recently in Afghanistan, some members of scientific community displaced, and thus had to abandon their research and development projects.

It is timely and important that international organizations initiate programs to productively engage refugee scientists, and scientists in exile till they return back to their countries with normalization of conditions. Support to scientists in exile may include their temporary placement in relevant R&D institutions and universities in host countries, as well special support for the resettlement, when conditions allow them to return to their home institutions.

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COMSTECH and LRBT Join Hands to Conduct Eye Camps, Training Workshops in Niger and Gambia

OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) and Layton Rahmatulla Benevolent Trust (LRBT) entered into an agreement to carry out wide-spread outreach programs for the prevention of blindness in the African region of OIC member states.

Both organizations agreed to organize eye camps to conduct about 200 surgeries in Banjul, Gambia and 400 surgeries in Niamey, Niger.

LRBT will select a team of highly qualified and experienced eye surgeons to conduct the eye camps, whereas COMSTECH will help in coordination

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COMSTECH and ICGEB Enter into MoU to Advance S&T in Member States

COMSTECH signed memorandum of understanding with the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB), desiring to enhance mutual collaboration as well as cultural, scientific and operational interaction that may lead to significant improvements of the activities of both institutions.

Both institutions have agreed to establish a general framework for cooperation in science, education and technology, to facilitate and strengthen collaboration in the fields of common interest such as emerging technologies, advanced genomics, biotechnology and life sciences.

COMSTECH and ICGEB will cooperate to develop joint fellowship schemes, grants schemes, and encourage

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COMSTECH Course on Basic Plant Tissue Culture Techniques

COMSTECH in collaboration with International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences, University of Karachi and Pakistan Biotechnology Information Center, Karachi organized online certificate course on "Basic plant tissue culture techniques".

The course was designed to address the interest of scientists and research scholars working in various fields of plant biotechnology, genetics, and molecular biology.

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COMSTECH under its research fellowships and technicians training programs have selected 13 research fellows and 11 technicians for training in Pakistan from Indonesia, Sudan, Azerbaijan, Nigeria, Uzbekistan, Egypt, Bangladesh, Gambia, Gabon, Yemen, Egypt, Pakistan. Applications are accepted round the year, and it takes about two months from application submission to induction.

International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), University of Karachi, University of Lahore, Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering Sciences and Technology (GIKI), Government College University (GCU), Lahore, National University of Science and Technology (NUST), Rawalpindi, University of Punjab (PU), Lahore and COMSATS University, Islamabad offered fellowships and training to these scholars.

COMSTECH offers trainings to technicians in developing OIC countries by enabling them to spend 4-6 weeks at a

center of excellence/ university in OIC member states, to learn the operation, trouble shooting and related details of state-of-the-art instruments. The purpose of this training program is to enhance the capacity of technical manpower in effective and optimal use of expensive and sophisticated research equipment, and to foster links for further collaboration.

COMSTECH and member Institutions of COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence (CCoE) jointly offer research fellowships to young researchers in OIC countries to enable them to spend 6-12 months at center of excellence in OIC member states. The purpose of these fellowships is to enhance the research and development capacity of researchers and engineers, especially those at the beginning of their research career, and helping them to foster linkages for further collaboration in their fields. ■

Polypill Reduces Cardiovascular Disease Burden, Expert

Prof. Reza proposed a fixed-dose combination therapy - polypill strategy - as an approach to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease, especially in low-income and middle-income countries. It is a low cost early and sustainable intervention needed to prevent cardiovascular disease burden, he said while addressing COMSTECH webinar on "Polypill and life style of primary prevention of cardiovascular disease" online, on Aug., 4, 2021. Prof. Dr. Reza Malekzadeh is a Professor of medicine, Director digestive disease research institute, Tehran university of medical sciences, Iran.

Prof. Reza suggested change in lifestyle by stopping smoking, increasing physical activity, decreasing weight and eating

healthier foods to prevent cardiovascular disease.

To give the remedy he suggested to the governments of low and middle income countries, to screen everyone at age 35-40 for risk factors at fixed intervals, treat risk factors when incidentally found and check everyone for risk factors at regular intervals.

He said a fixed-dose combination therapy—the so-called polypill—was proposed more than 15 years ago as an acceptable and cost-saving approach to reduce cardiovascular disease risk. Since then, different formulations of polypill have been used in several studies worldwide, he mentioned. ■

COMSTECH Webinar on Ovarian Cancer

COMSTECH webinar on "In search of improving outcomes across the continuum of ovarian cancer" delivered online by Dr. Ikram Burney, Senior Consultant in Medical Oncology at the Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, Muscat, Oman, and a Visiting Faculty at the Panjwani Center for Molecular Medicine and Drug Research, International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences, Karachi University, Pakistan on July 30, 2021.

Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General, COMSTECH welcomed and introduced the speaker. He said, Dr. Ikram Burney is a clinician par excellence and a researcher

of a very high quality and caliber.

In his presentation, Dr. Burney discussed different areas across the continuum of ovarian cancer management, from early detection to overcoming resistance to cisplatin treatment. Dr. Burney also discussed the role of naturally occurring compounds, such as Frankincense extract, Acetyl-keto-beta boswellic acid (AKBA), and natural marine products such as Hymenialdisine, Gallic acid and Malformin A1. The complete video lecture is available on COMSTECH Youtube channel "comstech-oic". ■

COMSTECH Event on Recent Developments in Drug Discovery

A 2-day online meeting on Recent Developments in Drug Discovery and Medicinal Chemistry organized by COMSTECH in collaboration with H.E.J. Research Institute of Chemistry, and International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences, University of Karachi, Karachi, on July 26-27, 2021.

The event consisted upon eleven an hour long lectures that were given by experts from USA, China, Turkey and Pakistan on recent development of drug discovery and medicinal chemistry.

Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTECH said in his inaugural address that this event is a continuation of various activities of COMSTECH that has been conducted for last one and half year. Prof. Choudhary said that capacity building is a very important aspect and we need to develop it to absorb technologies to use them.

He said medicinal chemistry has been the very important subject throughout the history, it started from development of drugs from natural products.

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News from OIC Member States

Islamic Development Bank Launches New Resilience Index, President IsDB

Tashkent (UNA-OIC) – The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) has launched a new Resilience Index in order to help policymakers create mechanisms that support economic resilience.

The new index was launched during a special session of the 2021 IsDB Group Annual Meetings, in Tashkent.

IsDB President Dr. Muhammad Sulaiman Al Jasser explained how the Bank was spurred to create the index in the aftermath of the COVID-19. "We have developed this index to help policymakers of member countries to track their progress in creating more resilient economies," he said. ■

Palestine to 'Soon' Get 4G Services

Ramallah (UNA-OIC) – Palestine will soon get the long-awaited Fourth Generation (4G) Mobile Networks, a Palestinian official announced Tuesday.

He announced that Palestine would soon move beyond the third-generation (3G) to the fourth-generation (4G) mobile capabilities. ■

Saudi Arabia Announces Biggest Tech Launch Programs Worth SAR 4 Billion

Riyadh (UNA-OIC) – The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia announced a package of qualitative initiatives and technological programs with a total value of nearly SAR 4 billion, the biggest technological launch of its kind in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

The move, done in cooperation with 10 of the world's key technology giants, aims to enhance digital capabilities and is designed to create one

programmer out of every 100 Saudi nationals by 2030, in addition to encouraging innovation and creativity and achieving global leadership.

This comes as a translation of the directives of the Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, deputy premier and minister of defense, in order to achieve the goals of the Kingdom's vision to seize the opportunities of the digital economy. ■

UAE Announces Treatment Results of COVID-19 Medicine - Sotrovimab

Abu Dhabi (UNA-OIC) – The UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention (MoHAP), in collaboration with the Department of Health - Abu Dhabi (DoH) - and Dubai Health Authority (DHA), has announced the treatment results for anti-viral medicine Sotrovimab in treating mild to moderate COVID-19 cases among high-risk patients including adults, pregnant women and children aged 12 and above who are at risk of progressing to severe symptoms and meet other relevant criteria.

Between 30 June and 13 July, Sotrovimab was administered to 6,175 patients with COVID-19 in Abu Dhabi. About 52 percent of the patients were aged 50 or above, and almost all recipients had multiple comorbidities including obesity,

cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

Ninety-seven percent of recipients fully recovered within 14 days. The medication also resulted in 100 percent prevention of death among recipients and 99 percent prevention of admission to ICU.

Sotrovimab is a monoclonal antibody treatment delivered through intravenous therapy in accordance with protocols developed by the National Scientific Committee.

The MoHAP has approved the use of Sotrovimab, which is produced by global biopharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), after conducting a local evaluation. It has also been approved for emergency use by the US Food and Drug Administration. ■



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