From Coordinator General’s Desk

CG COMSTECH Calls on the President of Pakistan

Coordinator General COMSTECH, H. E. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary called on the President of Pakistan, H. E. Dr. Arif Alvi at the President Secretariat, Islamabad. The President of Pakistan who is the Chairman of COMSTECH appreciated COMSTECH programs and mentioned that today COMSTECH is one of the most active institutions in OIC system. Dr. Alvi appreciated COMSTECH Health Program for Africa and suggested to enhance it further to address the health issues being faced by the African and other OIC member states in crises. Dr. Alvi advised the Coordinator General, Prof. Choudhary to start digital skills program for OIC member states, so that the benefits support our issue.

Secretary General OIC Visits COMSTECH

The Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, H. E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, visited COMSTECH along with his ten-member delegation. Senior officials of Ministry of Foreign Affairs accompanied the OIC delegation.

The Coordinator General COMSTECH, H. E. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, along with his team extended a very warm reception to the Secretary General and his team. Prof. Choudhary briefed the Secretary General about COMSTECH establishment, vision and mission, past achievements, current programs and future plans. He also conducted an orientation visit of the delegation to the COMSTECH facility and briefed on the state of the art training facilities available at COMSTECH for the capacity building of OIC states. During the presentation of the COMSTECH report by the Coordinator General, the Secretary General of OIC discussed different COMSTECH programs and their impact on the development of the science and technology collaboration among the OIC member states. He also shared insightful thoughts and recommendations for the inclusion in COMSTECH future plans.

Mr. Taha appreciated the current COMSTECH programs. COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence, Palestine program, Yemen program, Africa program in health, fellowships program, COMSTECH-IFS research grants program, COMSTECH-ICGEB cooperation program, COMSTECH-TWAS Science in exile program, Research fellowships for OIC LDCs program, and capacity building webinars, workshops, conferences and exhibitions.
OIC Countries Endorse the OIC-15 S&T Platform

Representatives of 17 OIC member states endorsed the proposal for establishing a Ministerial platform for jointly undertaking science, technology and innovation initiatives. This platform which is an initiative of the Republic of Kazakhstan is identified as the OIC-15 Dialogue Platform and constitutes fifteen plus countries of the OIC that are leading the others in science and technology. The Senior Official’s Meeting of OIC-15 was of hybrid nature and was attended physically by the representatives of the OIC General Secretariat, COMSTECH, Iran, Qatar, Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, and Morocco. The meeting was an opportunity for the COMSTECH Standing Committee on Scientific and technological cooperation that was hosted by Pakistan.

The meeting was jointly organized by the Republic of Kazakhstan, COMSTECH and the OIC General Secretariat. Speaking on the occasion, the Assistant Secretary General OIC for S&T lauded the outcome of the meeting as the first step towards a very important initiative for scientific uplift and cooperation. The Coordinator General COMSTECH emphasized that his organization will make every effort to practically realize the initiatives endorsed by the member states and looking forward to them sharing the human and material resources required for major initiatives.

The representative of the Government of Kazakhstan thanked all the participants for their attendance and contribution to the meeting and announced that Kazakhstan will hold the first Ministerial Meeting of the OIC-15 Dialogue Platform in Astana, Kazakhstan in the first half of 2023.

Afghan Envoy Calls on Coordinator General, COMSTECH

Ambassador of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Sardar Ahmed Khan Shafeek, met with Coordinator General, COMSTECH. Prof. M. Iqbal Chaudhary, at COMSTECH Secretariat. Prof. Chaudhary highlighted the role of COMSTECH to strengthen the science and technology in 57 Muslim Countries. He informed about the ongoing joint programs with Palestine, Yemen, and Somalia. Coordinator General highlighted that the President of Pakistan, who is chairman of COMSTECH, has emphasized the need of supporting high education and skill development in Afghanistan. In this regard various programs for the academic and research training of Afghan students and researchers in CoE universities of Pakistan will be started.

COMSTECH Funds Rupees 50 Million Science Projects

OIC ministerial standing committee on scientific and technological cooperation (COMSTECH), Islamabad and International Foundation for Science (IFS), Stockholm, Sweden have selected 18 research projects from 12 OIC member states – Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Togo, Tunisia, and Uganda for the session 2022. A total funding of US$ 221,762 has been granted to projects in the fields of Biological Sciences, Environmental Sciences, Agricultural Sciences, Natural Sciences, Biomedical Sciences, Physical Sciences, Genetic Engineering, and Health Sciences. Project funding granted in this session ranges from US$ 10,000 to 15,000 each project. Two Pakistani scientists have won grants worth Rs. 6,60 million for their research projects.

COMSTECH Invites Applications for Awards 2023

COMSTECH bestows biennial awards to distinguished researchers of OIC member states for their scientific contributions. The lifetime achievement awards are given in the fields of Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics. This year nominations are being sought for the awards in the fields of Physics and Mathematics. In this category each award consists of a certificate, shield, and US$8000.

The Awards for Excellence in Science & Technology are classified into four categories: COMSTECH Young Researcher Award (under 40 years), Best Scientific Book (Authorship) - published by an international publisher during the past five years (2016-22), Best Research Paper and Patents. Each award carries a certificate, shield, and US$2500. The Best Research Paper awards are given for the best paper published in an impact factor international journal during the last two years (2021 & 2022) in the fields of Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Physics. Each award carries a certificate, shield and US$500.

The deadline is 31st March 2023, citizens of all OIC states are eligible.

Two Fellows Complete Training Under COMSTECH Fellowships Program

Two Indonesian fellows from Airlangga University, Surabaya, Indonesia, Ms. Rizkyah Dewi and Ms. Yuli Handayani completed 6 weeks COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence (CCoE) - Technicians Training Fellowship from School of Chemical and Materials Engineering, National University of Science and Technology, Surabaya.

The fellowship completion certificate award ceremony was held at COMSTECH. Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary extended gratitude to the National University of Science and Technology for kind participation in the CCoE and generous offer of fellowships to the scholars from OIC member states and hosted the visits of international delegations. Prof. Chaudhary highlighted the future joint activities with the National University of Science and Technology. NUST has so far trained four fellows and hosted two distinguished international scholars to negotiate and explore joint avenues.

COMSTECH (OIC ministerial standing committee on scientific and technological cooperation) has initiated several new programs to build the STI capacity of OIC member states and promote interior Islamic cooperation.

From Coordinator General’s Desk

However, to harness the benefits of these new opportunities for sustainable growth, nations have to invest into high quality education at all levels, skill development of youth, creating ecosystem for innovation, and focusing on high technology based production sector. Globally all such opportuni ties should be available to the citizens of all countries without any prejudice.

COMSTECH (OIC ministerial standing committee on scientific and technological cooperation) has
The closing ceremony of COMSTECH-Virology Fellowships Closing ceremony held in Surabaya.

COMSTECH Launches S&T Cooperation Program with Nigeria

Prof. Choudhary said that the High Commission of Nigeria, H. E. Mr. Mohammed Bello Abioye appreciated the efforts of Coordinator General COMSTECH for taking large number of activities for S&T and healthcare capacity building and for fostering international linkages, specially Palestine, Yemen, Sudan.

The representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pakistan Mr. Mohammad Adeel appreciated the efforts of COMSTECH for the promotion of science diplomacy in OIC region and assured full cooperation for such capacity development program.

COMSTECH Organizes Foundation Meeting of the Alliance of Islamic Universities of Africa

The closing ceremony of such a program under joint efforts of COMSTECH & Ministry of Health, Indonesia, Biofarm and Universitas Airlangga. He said that this program does not only develop technical capacities of scientists but also promotes science diplomacy which eliminates cultural, sectoral, and knowledge barriers between different actors such as policy-makers, research- ers, diplomatic bodies and civil society.

COMSTECH, (COMSTECH) Consortium of Excellence CCoE), IUFRO and American Institute of Pakistan Studies, and The Hollings Centre for International Dialogue organized an International Symposium on Post COVID Higher Education Challenges and Way Forward at COMSTECH. Vice Chancellors/Rectors of Muslim Universities from Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Pakistan, and Afghanistan participated in the symposium. The Coordinator General COMS TECCH, Prof. M. Iqbal Choudhary said in his welcome speech that the International Symposium is both relevant and important.

Prof. Choudhary said that the education has been given least importance. We are technologically illiterate and our competency in the use of technologies is not at par. The Pro-Rector Superior University, Prof. Dr. Mohammad Nizamuddin said in his keynote address that we need to conduct study to find how higher education sector responded to the pandemic. Prof. Nizamuddin recommended to strive for more building of community centers and making access to higher education easy for everyone.

The chief guest of the concluding session of the symposium was the chairperson standing committee on science diplomacy which eliminates cultural, sectoral, and knowledge barriers between different actors such as policy-makers, research- ers, diplomatic bodies and civil society. The Coordination General COMSTEC, Prof. Choudhary thanked the Ministry of Health, Indonesia for generous support towards this program. He said that many OIC countries are totally dependent on selected countries for every health care need, be it diagnostic equipment, kits, ventilators or PPEs. He said in the context of this situation, the program was started with the objective to prepare next generation of scientists of OIC nations to meet the challenges of current and future pandemics.

The President of Pakistan advised to continue these excellent initiatives and offered his full support to the COMSTECH programs focused towards the socioeconomic uplift of the Ummah.

CG COMSTECH Calls on President of Pakistan

Afghan Envoy Calls on CG COMSTECH

The second part of the program will incorporate Afghanistan and it is the dire need of the community. The Islamic organization for Security and Resilience (IORS) Kazakhstan and Pakistan Agriculture Research Council, Afghanistan is organizing a workshop during February 20-21. The joint IORS-COMSTECH-PARC workshop on “Climate Resilient Wheat Crop Improvement and Food Security” will dedicate one day for the problems of wheat growing in drought conditions and under the theme of “Afghanistan Wheat Issue: Breeding Nutritious, Disease Resistant Wheat”.

Sardar Ahmad Khan Shabek, Ambassador of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan thanked Prof. M. Iqbal Choudhary and appreciated the outstanding work of COMSTECH-PARC and COMSTECH. He said that there are strong indications, from leadership of Afghanistan government for people and government of Pakistan and OIC member states and COMSTECH, of close liaison. Mr. Shabek said that the Afghanistan students desire to study in Pakistan and other OIC states and avail the opportunities. He assured that the embassy of Afghanistan is strongly committed to follow up proposals, programs and initiatives for the benefit of Afghan students.

Consultant Health initiatives COMSTECH, Dr. Abdur Rashid and Head of Political, Cultural and Educational Embassy of Afghanistan, Mr. Ali Mansoor Khaliqyar, were also present at this occasion.
OIC States Need to Change Attitude, Adopt New Technologies to Achieve Success, Urges Dr. Alvi

Dr. Alvi said that biotechnology is a landmark development, without this technology the green revolution could not have happened. He said that the scientific instruments guide the humanity to find the truth.

The President mentioned that new technologies like gene therapy and CRISPR techniques help the humanity to make tailor made specific changes in the genome to develop new traits of any living being. The President mentioned many examples from the past like human and societal problems, the printing press innovation and said we adopted these technologies many centuries late which is the reason of our lacking behind from the advanced world.

Dr. Alvi urged the young scientists to work hard and come up with novel and innovative ethical and moral solutions for the humanity and quick adoption of the new technologies for the rapid growth of the developing world. He asked COMSTECH to take the lead in the prompt adaptation of emerging technologies in OIC region.

Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary welcomed the participants of the forum. He said that this forum is significant to address the challenge of food security. He urged the need of the introduction and use of new technologies and better management to tackle the issue of food security faced by OIC states. He said that agricultural biotechnology will help in producing enough food to feed the hunger.

Director IOFS, Dr. Ismail Hamid said that the biotechnology is critical for the human development and achieving food security. He said that this forum will help in exploring new avenues, generate novel ideas and methodologies to understand the biotechnology and its use to address the issue of food security. Dr. Hamid presented a brief review of IOFS program and projects.

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COMSTECH Kazakhstan Alumni Forum Held

Those who are ahead in OIC states come forward and provide leadership for changing attitude towards the development of new technologies to achieve success in all spheres of life, said the President of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi while addressing the inaugural session of “Youth Forum on Biotechnology” organized by COMSTECH in collaboration with Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum, Turkey and Islamic Organization for Food Security, Kazakhstan.

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COMSTECH Organizes Seminar on Food Insecurity in the Science Summit of 77th Session of UNGA

COMSTECH Forum on Environment and Ecosystem Restoration (COMFER) organized an international virtual seminar on "solutions to combat food insecurity and malnutrition in the Sahel". The Seminar was hosted by COMSTECH Forum on Environment and Ecosystem Restoration (COMFER) in cooperation with the Sahel Coalition based in Brussels (Belgium), Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control (CILSS) based in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), Regional Climate Centre for West Africa and Sahel -AGHYMET.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) on bilateral cooperation signed between OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) and Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS). The purpose of the MoU is to define the framework as well as the pathways of scientific and technological cooperation between OIC and COMSTECH in areas of mutual interest, with particular focus on food and nutritional security, natural resource and water management, population, gender, climate change, and conservation and restoration of ecosystems.

Both organizations will cooperate to implement joint programs of scientific and technical nature to promote and strengthen cooperation to provide a platform for collaborative activities in the fields of mutual interest and encourage mobility and cooperation. It will include sharing experiences and best practices, development of methodologies, and mobility of experts.

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COMSTECH and CILSS Enter into MoU

China’s highest award for “foreign experts who have made outstanding contributions to the country’s economic and social progress”. The award consists upon a medal and an award certificate.

Prof. Choudhary has played a key China-Pakistan cooperation in the field of S&T, including establishment of Sino-Pakistan centers in various fields, including the national institute of virology at the PCMD, in collaboration with Wuhan Institute of Virology, China.

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COMSTECH Kazakhstan Alumni Forum Held

A meeting of graduates of Kazakhstani universities was held at the headquarters of COMSTECH chaired by Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTECH.

The event was attended by Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTECH, journalists, as well as other guests of the event.

In his welcome speech, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTECH, emphasized the importance of leadership for changing attitude towards the development of new technologies to achieve success in all spheres of life.

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"Kazakhstan is my second homeland" Graduate Association and appoint Prof. Choudhary as a President was made. The members of the Association agreed to hold the next event in February 2023, during which they are going to approve the action plan and determine the main activity directions.

The President of Kazakhstan expresses its gratitude to Prof. Choudhary and his team.