

Comstech News



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OIC MINISTERIAL STANDING COMMITTEE ON SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION

From Coordinator General's Desk



Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary
H.I., S.I., T.I.
Mustafa Prize Laureate

This quarterly newsletter of the COMSTECH (OIC's Ministerial Standing Committee for Science and Technology) is issued to provide you, the readers, information about the key programs, ongoing and upcoming activities of the organization, and major S&T developments in member states.

During the last quarter (March-May), the COMSTECH has expanded its S&T capacity building programs, by initiating Fellowships for Women Researchers, LDC-OIC, and Technicians trainings. "Science in Exile" fellowship program, in collaboration with TWAS-UNESCO, was launched to support researchers, displaced due to conflicts in their countries.

To build member states capacity in advanced biotechnology and genetic engineering, a major initiative was launched with International Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) which includes research projects support, research fellowships, and training workshops in LDC-OIC member states. COMSTECH, in partnership with Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS), has announced a similar initiative in the fields of agriculture and livestock.

→ ON PAGE 2

Inside



COMSTECH Organizes
"Al-Farabi-Iqbal"
Forum in
Almaty

PAGE 2

OIC Institutions for
Science & Technology
Approve Joint Projects

PAGE 2

CG COMSTECH Calls
on WHO Representative

PAGE 2

CG COMSTECH Meets
Russian Representative
to OIC & Envoy in
Pakistan

PAGE 2

Workshop on
Scientific Writing

PAGE 3

Training on
Hospital Management

PAGE 4

COMSTECH Virtual Orientation Session on Palestine Program

COMSTECH organized a virtual orientation session on Palestine programme which includes offer of 500 fellowships and scholarships for Palestinian nationals by the Pakistani member universities of COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence.

The Coordinator General COMSTECH welcomed the participants of the session and said that I am absolutely pleased to have this session and delighted to have very prominent officials from Palestine along with the Ambassador of Palestine in Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Ahmed Jawad A.A. Rabei.

Prof. Choudhary said that this programme of scholarships and

research fellowships is indeed a culmination of lots of thoughts and work in which the Palestinian ambassador has played an extremely important role along with Mr. Murtaza Noor who is advising us on international relations and coordinating our efforts with the universities of Pakistan.

He said that the incident after incident, and atrocities after atrocities, the history is full of annoying and heart breaking events which we see in Palestine and that have made all of us sensitive to the needs of our brothers and sisters in Palestine. We have good understanding and appreciation of Palestinian cause, based on these feelings we decided to work closely

with many universities in Pakistan to help our brothers and sisters in Palestine to continue their education in different fields largely in science and technology and engineering so they can go back and server their country and contribute in furthering the cause of Palestine, and this is the best thing which we could do.

Prof. Choudhary said that we have the support of ministry of science and technology, ministry of foreign affairs and the excellency president of Pakistan, who is also the chairman of COMSTECH. The foreign minister of Palestine was informed by the President of Pakistan on the occasion of CFM about this

→ ON PAGE 3

COMSTECH Offers Host of Programs to Nigeria for S&T Development

Coordinator General COMSTECH, H. E. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary called on the High Commissioner of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, H.E. Mr. Mohammed Bello Abioye at the Nigerian High Commission in Islamabad.

The High Commissioner of Nigeria extended a warm welcome to the Coordinator General COMSTECH. Both the dignitaries discussed

avenues of mutual cooperation for the enhancement and application of science and technology to achieve optimum socio-economic development in Nigeria.

Prof. Choudhary invited top universities of Nigeria to join the COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence (CCoE) which comprises upon key science, technology and engineering

research and academic institutions of the OIC states. The objective of CCoE is to create science and technology interdependence, build S&T capacity and foster collaboration among the OIC member states.

Both the dignitaries agreed to launch the COMSTECH-Nigeria science and technology cooperation initiative

→ ON PAGE 3

COMSTECH LAUNCHES PROGRAM FOR YEMEN

COMSTECH in collaboration with Yemen embassy and Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Government of Yemen announced COMSTECH-CCoE Yemen Program in a press conference in Islamabad at COMSTECH Auditorium.

The press conference was addressed by the Minister of Science and Technology, H. E. Mr. Agha Hassan Baloch, the

Ambassador of Yemen, H. E. Mohammed Motahar Alashabi, the Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Vice Chancellor, Health Services Academy (HSA), Prof. Dr. Shahzad Ali Khan, Chairman Board of Governors, University of Lahore (UoL), Mr. Awais Raoof, Co-Director of the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), University of Karachi, and

→ ON PAGE 3



COMSTECH Launches Forum on Environment and Ecosystem Restoration

COMSTECH Launched Forum on Environment and Ecosystem Restoration and organized COMSTECH International Seminar on Land Degradation, and commemorated World Environment Day on June 6, at COMSTECH Secretariat.

The message of the Secretary General of OIC, H. E. Hissein Brahim Taha, was delivered by the Assistant Secretary General of S&T OIC, Ambassador Askar Musinov. Mr. Taha said that the world environment day is an important international day for world

environment. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) joins the international community in celebrating this day. He said This year's theme "Only one Earth" with the focus on "living sustainably in harmony with nature" gives us opportunity to protect our earth and

adopt green technologies. He said the developed countries must encourage and support developing countries to develop green technologies. He said the OIC attaches high importance to the concerns related to environment, climate change

→ ON PAGE 3

International Turkic Academy Honors Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary with Gold Medal

The President of the International Turkic Academy, Dr. Darkhan Kydyrali presented gold medal to Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General, COMSTECH on the occasion of international "Al-Farabi – Iqbal" forum held in Almaty, Kazakhstan on May 26-27.

The president of the Turkic Academy said that the Academy is awarding Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary with its prestigious award "Gold Medal" for his exceptional contribution to the development of cooperation in the Turkic world. ♦



CG COMSTECH Calls on Uzbek Ambassador



Coordinator General COMSTECH, H. E. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary visited the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Islamabad and had a meeting with the Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan, H.E. Mr. Oybek Arif Usmanov in Pakistan.

The dignitaries had a comprehensive discussion on exploring possible avenues of cooperation between COMSTECH and Uzbekistan in 2022, and 2023. The Ambassador appreciated the role of COMSTECH and the passion of Prof. Choudhary for the development of science and technology in OIC region.

Prof. Choudhary briefed the Uzbek Ambassador about COMSTECH programs' contribution to Uzbekistan and joint initiatives conducted in the past, and informed him

→ ON PAGE 3

COMSTECH Organizes "Al-Farabi-Iqbal" Forum in Almaty

Almaty hosted the International "Al-Farabi - Iqbal" forum organized jointly by the International Turkic Academy, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University and COMSTECH during May 26-27.

The forum was opened by the speeches of the President of the International Turkic Academy, Coordinator General of COMSTECH, Chairman-Rector of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Deputy Minister of Education and Science along with representatives of international organizations.

Several books such as proceedings of the “Al-Farabi Global Forum”, Allama Muhammad Iqbal's book “Reconstruction of Islamic Thought”, Al-Farabi's book "El-Farabi Kitabu'l Musika'l-Kebir" and “Encyclopedia of Iqbal” have been presented in the forum in English, Kazakh, Russian, Urdu and Azerbaijani languages.

The forum was attended by prominent experts from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Türkiye, Pakistan, Great Britain, Russia, Tajikistan and the OIC member states. ♦



OIC Institutions for S&T Approve Multiple Projects

On the sidelines of the recently concluded OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) meeting, the Steering Committee for implementation of the OIC-STI Agenda 2026 held a day-long meeting at the COMSTECH Secretariat in Islamabad on 24th March 2022. The purpose of the meeting was to review the progress and to plan S&T initiatives for the OIC states.

The meeting organized and chaired by COMSTECH was attended by all the leading institutions and specialized organizations of the OIC that focus on different areas of science, technology, innovation, and their application.

Besides COMSTECH, which is the OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation, hosted by Pakistan, the heads and

representatives of twelve OIC organizations participated physically, while two organizations participated online.

The Committee approved an extended Plan of Action based on joint initiatives involving various member organizations and partners in areas such as higher education and research, health, medicine, vaccine development, food security and water resources, emerging technologies, promoting innovation, and the organization of science competitions, etc. The special consideration of the meeting was the decision to focus strongly on the lessor developed African countries and to create programs for the development of their manpower and useful technologies. The meeting strongly endorsed the need not only to support projects that channelize science and technology

for development, but also to create programs that inculcate the spirit of inquiry and creativity in our youth.

The Coordinator General of COMSTech, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary welcomed the participants and reviewed the work of the Committee for the past few years and the plans for the future. He also presented to the Committee the prototypes of the ongoing COMSTech initiative on preparing STI reports for each of the OIC member state. The representative from SESRIC presented a detailed statistical report on the general development of STI in member states.

It was decided to constitute expert committees to review the progress in STI made by member states in the past few years and to prepare guidelines for future actions.

Assistant Secretary General (S&T) of the OIC, Ambassador Askar Mussinov addressed the meeting. He appraised the needs of African member states, as well as expectations of the OIC that the Steering Committee will play a leading role in steering the member states towards meaningful activities to fulfil the goals of the OIC-STI Agenda 2026, the Abu Dhabi Declaration, and the resolutions of the 1st and 2nd OIC S&T Summits.

The meeting ended with the resolve to initiate various joint efforts as presented in the approved Action Matrix and also to set in motion the evaluation process of the implementation of science and technology agenda based on the COMSTech and SESRIC reports. ♦

**From
Coordinator
General's Desk**

FROM PAGE 1

To meet the country specific needs, the COMSTech has launched S&T and health capacity building program with Yemen, while similar programs are finalized with Nigeria, Sudan, and Lebanon.

Africa, where most of our member states are located, is in need of urgent attention. Health, and climate change are areas where major interventions are required to help build local capacities to meet the emerging challenges.

In collaboration of IsDB, OIC-GS, and LRBT, a major ophthalmology program is underway in many countries. Similar training programs on neuro-critical care, public health, biomedical equipment, etc are also being launched.

We are very proud of the excellent support of our partners within the OIC system (IsDB, SMIIC, IOFS, WDO, etc) and beyond (IFS, NTD-GCRF, TWAS, UNESCO, etc) in this noble mission.

Special mention is of the support of the member institutions of COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence, located in Pakistan, Turkey, Iran, Malaysia, Kazakhstan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Uganda, Tatarastan (Russia), etc.

These are only a few of many programs of COMSTECH. We expect support and feedback from all of you, which will enable COMSTECH to serve even better in future. ♦

CG Meets Russian Representative to OIC & Envoy in Pakistan

Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary had a meeting with H.E. Mr. Ramazan Abdulatipov, the permanent representative of Russia to the OIC and H. E. Mr. Danila Ganich, the Ambassador of Russia to Pakistan. The dignitaries discussed and agreed to develop a 5-10-year cooperation program between

COMSTech and Russian Cooperation Agency for the development of science and technology in OIC states. This program would help develop linkages between Russian Cooperation Agency and the OIC member states. Scholars exchange program and signing of MoUs with top Russian universities would be

part of this program.

Russia would support enhancing capacity in artificial intelligence and exploring medical health care systems in OIC least developed countries particularly African member states.

COMSTECH would facilitate visits of scholars, scientists and technicians from OIC states to top

science and technology institutions and laboratories of Russia in basic sciences, engineering, biomedical sciences, and public health.

H.E. Mr. Ramazan Abdulatipov, appreciated the role of CG COMSTECH, for his efforts for the advancement of science and technology in OIC member states.♦

CG COMSTECH Calls on WHO Representative in Pakistan

Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary called on WHO country representative in Pakistan, Dr. Palitha Mahipala at WHO office in Islamabad.

Prof. Choudhary highlighted the role of COMSTech in health, science, technology, higher education and climate in OIC member states and informed that COMSTech is conducting about four training sessions monthly and has established a network of virology institutions.

He explored the avenues of joint initiatives in the areas of disaster management, training in health sector, and primary diagnostic surveillance.

Dr. Palitha Mahipala appreciated the efforts of Prof. Choudhry for capacity building in healthcare. He said that WHO and COMSTech can work together in telemedicine with respect to maternal and child health. Dr. Mahipala proposed that patient safety, research in primary healthcare and strengthening of operational research are the areas where both organizations can work together.

It was also discussed that WHO (Pakistan) will work towards recognition of COMSTECH as WHO collaborating center. Dr. Abdur Rashid, Consultant (Health Initiatives), COMSTECH was also present in meeting. ♦

36th Khwarizmi International Award (KIA)

Call for Participation




**Ministry of Science,
Research & Technology**
Iranian Research Organization
for Science & Technology (IROST)

Fields of Participation

- Aerospace
- Agriculture, Natural Resources, Animal Sciences and Veterinary Medicine
- Basic Sciences
- Biotechnology and Basic Medical Sciences
- Chemical Technology
- Civil Engineering
- Electrical and Computer Eng.
- Green Technology
- Industrial and Technology Management
- Information Technology
- Nanotechnology
- Materials Eng., Metallurgy and New Energies
- Mechanical Eng.
- Mechatronics
- Medical Sciences

Sponsors

-  Ministry of Science, Research & Technology
-  National Education Foundation
-  The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
-  United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNESCO)
-  Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)
-  Green Belt and Road Initiative (GBRI)
-  United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
-  United Nations Women (UN Women)
-  United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
-  United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
-  United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
-  United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)
-  United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR)
-  United Nations Development Group (UNDG)
-  United Nations Women's Empowerment Fund (UN Women's Empowerment Fund)
-  United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
-  United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
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- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)
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Workshop on Scientific Writing

COMSTech, International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), and Sindh Innovation Research and Education Network (SIREN) jointly organized a 3-day online workshop on scientific writing during March 17-19, 2022 at Latif Ebrahim Jamal National Science Information Center, University of Karachi.

The workshop consisted on lectures delivered by a renowned expert Prof. Dr. Rafat Ali Siddiqui, Senior Investigator at the Methodist Research Institute, and Professor of Cellular Biochemistry, Indiana University School of Medicine, USA. Each lecture followed by extensive exercises, tutorials, and discussion sessions. ♦

CG COMSTech Briefs CINVU Universities

Coordinator General COMSTech, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary briefed on COMSTech current programs and future plans by giving a detailed presentation to the delegates of COMSTech Inter-Islamic Network of Virtual Universities (CINVU) member

institutions. The briefing was attended by 30 Vice-chancellors of the member universities of CINVU along with their delegations. Prof. Choudhary gave a comprehensive presentation on the milestones achieved by COMSTech during the last two years. ♦

Webinar on Open Science

COMSTech and UNESCO organized webinar on open science Prof. Dr. Shahbaz Khan, Director and UNESCO representative to China, Korea, Japan, and Mongolia, Prof. Dr. Zabta Khan Shinwari, Pakistan Academy of Sciences, Islamabad, Pakistan, and Prof. Dr. Claudia Bauzer Medeiros,

Institute of Computing, University of Campinas, Brazil addressed the webinar by giving one-hour long talk each to more than 250 participants joined online from different OIC member states. Complete video of this webinar is available on “comstech-oic” youtube channel. ♦

Seasoned Diplomat of Pakistan Launches A Handbook on Economic Diplomacy

The launch ceremony of “A Handbook on Economic Diplomacy” written by Ambassador Mr. Ahmed Ali Sirohey, Pakistan envoy in Niger, held at COMSTech in collaboration with Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan. Ambassador Sirohey said that the aim of the diplomacy is to nurture good relations with other nations and if you are economically connected with other nations, relations would automatically go

better and strong. He said that the diplomats of advanced countries spend their 90% time to meet business communities to enhance the exports of their countries. He advised to make achievable time bound goals to get excellence in economic development. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, said that I found this book as a crash course to understand the economic diplomacy and it must be read by all particularly those who are in the foreign service. ♦

COMSTech Offers Host of Programs to Nigeria for S&T Development

FROM PAGE 1

jointly with the coordination of the ministry of foreign affairs. This flagship joint initiative includes launching of women scientist research fellowship program, creating institutional linkages between Nigeria and Pakistan, capacity building of Nigerian scholars, compilation of a book comprising of joint research publications and patents of Pakistani and Nigerian scientists, and industrial internship for Nigerian professionals in food processing and value addition. Prof. Choudhary proposed the visit of

ten young Pakistani scholars to Nigerian premier R&D and academic institutions to develop greater understanding and application of academic excellence in Nigeria. The Coordinator General also presented a report of activities of COMSTech focused on Nigeria. The High Commissioner of Nigeria thanked the Coordinator General for generous support and appreciated the new proposed initiatives and assured full support from his office to COMSTech initiatives for Nigeria. ♦

Nigerian Delegation Visits COMSTech

A nine-member delegation of Raw Material Research and Development Council, Abuja, Nigeria on Pakistan visit during June 19-25, 2022, visited COMSTech on June 20. Coordinator General COMSTech Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary briefed the delegation on COMSTech current programs and discussed the avenues of COMSTech collaborative

program in science and technology with Nigeria.

The visit was arranged by COMSTech under reverse linkages program of Islamic Development Bank. ♦



CG COMSTech Calls on Uzbek Ambassador

FROM PAGE 1

on current programs and future planned initiatives of cooperation between COMSTech and Uzbekistan.

The dignitaries discussed the organization of 2nd OIC robotics competition and Olympiad in mathematics in Uzbekistan. They also discussed conducting global celebrations of Mirza Muhammad Ulugh Beg — renowned astronomer and mathematician — by organizing

series of events including a large international conference, jointly by COMSTech, OIC General Secretariat and the Government of Uzbekistan in 2024. They exchanged ideas on the establishment of a center on information technology and artificial intelligence for OIC, and the training of managers of S&T parks in Uzbekistan. Both the dignitaries agreed to enhance cooperation and work together. ♦

COMSTech Launches Forum on Environment and Ecosystem Restoration

FROM PAGE 1

and biodiversity. He urged the integrated measures to reduce effects of climate change and natural disasters. The Secretary General OIC stressed the need of incorporating environmental concerns in the international strategies for sustainable development. He suggested that the international and regional cooperation needs to be strengthened in areas of climate change to protect the nature for wellbeing of future generations.

The Coordinator General, COMSTech, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary said that fast emerging environmental and ecosystem challenges and their impact on the livelihood of people in OIC region, we have decided to launch a permanent forum to deliberate upon collective actions to meet these ecological challenges. Prof. Choudhary said that the COMSTech Forum will work in the Framework of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2023, and the UN Framework on UN 2030 SDGs Agenda. He informed that the importance of the environment for sustainable social and economic development is well stipulated in the OIC-2025 Program of Action as well as STI agenda, which guides member countries to

protect and preserve the environment, promote sustainable production and consumption patterns and enhance capacities for disaster risk reduction as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Advisor Climate Change COMSTech, Ambassador Shahid Kamal said in his opening remarks that today's event is taking place in the backdrop of the World Environment Day which calls for collective global action to protect and restore our planet. He said today COMSTech is launching the forum on environment and ecosystem restoration to provide a collaborative platform to address challenges of climate change.

The inaugural session was also addressed by Dr. Dechen Tsering, regional director and representative for Asia and the Pacific, UN environment programme, Bangkok, Dr. Barron Joseph Orr, Lead scientist at United Nations convention to combat desertification, Bonn, and Dr. Djime Adoum, representative of the Sahel coalition, and Dr. Paul Ouedraogo, deputy executive secretary, CILSS-permanent interstate committee for drought control in the Sahel. ♦

COMSTech Launches Program for Yemen

FROM PAGE 1

Ms. Aala Mazhar Bukhari Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In his message, the Minister of Science and Technology appreciated the efforts of the Coordinator General COMSTech and the Ambassador of Yemen for their efforts to plan and launch this important capacity building program for the Yemeni nationals. He appreciated the generous offering of fully funded fellowships by University of Lahore, Health Services Academy and International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences. Mr. Baloch urged the launch of more such tailor made country specific programs for other OIC countries to cater their specific needs. He appreciated COMSTech programs and reiterated the full support by the Ministry of Science and Technology to COMSTech programs. The Ambassador of Yemen thanked COMSTech for launching this

program. He appreciated the leadership of Prof. Choudhary and his efforts for launching many capacity building programs for OIC states. He extended thanks from the people of Yemen to the Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the fellowships offering institutions. He offered full support of the Yemen embassy whenever required for coordination between COMSTech and the Government of Yemen.

Coordinator General COMSTech Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary welcomed the guests and appreciated the efforts of the Ambassador of Yemen for his interest and efforts in planning and launching this joint program. Prof. Choudhary thanked the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their full support to this and other programs of COMSTech. He said that this program aims to provide

opportunity to the Yemeni scholars and scientists to benefit from the excellence of the three top-class member institutions of the COMSTech Consortium of Excellence. He said under this program 50 fellowships will be given to Yemeni scientists to obtain training in public health and medical technologies. Prof. Choudhary thanked ICCBS, UoL, and HSA for their generous offering of fellowships to Yemeni nationals. Prof. Choudhary also offered two more programs to Yemen to take part and get benefit from them. These include, COMSTech Telemedicine Capacity Building Program, and COMSTech Neuro-critical Care Program.

The Vice Chancellor of HSA, the Co-Director ICCBS and the Chairman Board of Governors, University of Lahore were present at the occasion and spoke to the media. They provided details of the fellowships being

offered by their respective institutions. They appreciated COMSTech Consortium of Excellence for launching this program.

While talking to the media, Ms. Aala Mazhar Bukhari Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs appreciated this COMSTech initiative. She said that this program will not only help build capacity of the Yemeni people in the health technologies but also will help nurturing science diplomacy. She said Ministry of Foreign Affairs fully supports such international programs of COMSTech that help build and nurture diplomatic relations along with the capacity building of science and technology for the socio-economic development.

National and International media from OIC member states attended the press conference. ♦

Virtual Orientation Session on Palestine Program

FROM PAGE 1

programme. He informed that there will be a ceremonial launching of this programme. Host institutions are eagerly waiting Palestinian scholars to provide them an excellent environment and opportunity of learning in different fields of science and technology and engineering.

Dr. Basri Saleh, Deputy Minister for Higher Education, conveyed his best regards to all from Palestine. On behalf of Palestinian Scientific Research, we are grateful for initiative of the President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi to provide research fellowships and scholarships opportunities to Palestinian researchers and extend thanks to all brothers in Pakistan and the government for supporting Palestine. Thanks to COMSTech for establishing COMSTech Consortium of Excellence to offer fellowships and scholarships for scientific research and development. The minister encourages this programme which creates research opportunities for students. We hope this programme will help in increasing the number of researchers. He extended thanks to the ministry of foreign affairs and ministry of science and technology Pakistan and COMSTech.

H.E. Mr. Ahmed Jawad A.A. Rabei, Ambassador of Palestine in Pakistan thanked the President of Pakistan, the Coordinator General COMSTech and the Minister of Science and Technology for taking this initiative of scholarships and fellowships for the people of Palestine. He said the people of Palestine and the government extend heart-felt thanks to the people and government of Pakistan. He said that we are grateful to Pakistan for unwavering support on all areas and fronts. The Ambassador also informed the participants of the session from Palestine about the efforts made to launch this programme and encouraged the Palestinian researchers to actively participate in the programme.

Mr. Kamran Akhtar, Director General (ACDIS & Science Diplomacy), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said we always supported the cause of the state of Palestine and we have been steadfast in our support. This programme is the one of the practical manifestation of our support to build the capacity and make them partner in the field of higher education. We are grateful to COMSTech for making this possible as well as the higher education institutes in Pakistan which have agreed to join this programme. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to coordinate with COMSTech in assessing the programme progress and finding further avenues of building up relations with the government and people of Palestine. This continues to be the one of the priorities of ministry of foreign affairs.

Mr. Murtaza Noor, Advisor Media to Coordinator General COMSTech, said that this is a large scholarship programme which has been launched by the Pakistani universities for Palestinian people. This programme offers 500 scholarships. ♦



Training on Hospital Management

COMSTech organized a two-day training course on health and hospital management on June 21-22 at COMSTech. The representative of the World Health Organization in Pakistan, Dr. Palitha Gunarathna Mahipala was the chief guest of the inaugural session. The keynote speaker of the session, was Professor & Executive Director, Institute of Global Public Health, University of Manitoba, Canada,

Dr. James Blanchard. Vice Chancellor, Health Services Academy, Prof. Dr. Shahzad Ali Khan addressed the session and Coordinator General COMSTech, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary welcomed the participants. All the speakers stressed the need of health and hospital managers proper training in the management so that the optimum healthcare delivery services can be achieved. ♦

Training on GIS and Remote Sensing

COMSTech organized two weeks long comprehensive virtual training on Geographical Information System (GIS) and Satellite Remote Sensing: Application for Natural Hazards, Land Cover and Water Resources. The training was organized in collaboration with International Islamic University in Uganda, National Centre of Excellence in Geology, University of Peshawar and Department of Forestry, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Dir Upper.

The objective was to develop the participants' basic knowledge of space technology and GIS and to be

able to acquire free resources of satellite data and open access software to further enhance the capacity and apply that in their field of interest. Prof. Dr. Ismail, Rector Islamic University, Uganda, The Coordinator General COMSTech, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary and Prof. Dr. Mohammad Shafiq from the National Center of Excellence in Geology, University of Peshawar addressed the inaugural session.

Above 100 students, researchers and scientists from around the OIC member states particularly from African region attended the training. ♦

Webinar on Energy Consumption by ICTs

COMSTech organized an online webinar on energy consumption by information and communication technologies: facts and challenges. The webinar was delivered by Prof. Sami Erol Gelenbe, Turkish computer scientist, electronic engineer and applied mathematician currently serving Polish Academy of Science, Institute of Theoretical and Applied Informatics in Gliwice, Poland. Coordinator General COMSTech, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, said in his introductory remarks that Prof. Dr. Sami Erol Gelenbe is a very eminent scholar and hoped that this lecture will lay the foundation of collaboration.

Prof. Sami mentioned that information and communication technologies impact the amount of energy and the CO₂ or other emissions that are influencing global warming. He said having online meetings we save travel energy but at the same time we consume energy of electrical power in megawatts because we could not possibly operate online conversation if we don't have in the background, some very large data centers, and the millions of routers and fiber optics lines and copper connections for the digital interfaces. His full lecture is available on "comstech-oic" youtube channel. ♦

Lab on Metabolic Disorders in Neonatals

COMSTech organized a virtual innovation lab on detection of metabolic disorders in new born babies. The lab was conducted by Prof. Dr. Farzad Kobarfad, Professor of medicinal and pharmaceutical chemistry at

Shaheed Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran. The session included a comprehensive presentation followed by practical lab session of implementation of techniques discussed in the presentation. ♦

International Workshop and Exhibition on Research Commercialization

COMSTech organized international workshop and exhibition on research commercialization: challenges and opportunities.

The inaugural session was addressed by The Coordinator General COMSTech, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Prof. Zakri Abdul Hamid the Chairman of Atri Advisory and Science Advisor to the Campaign for Nature initiative in the ASEAN, Prof. Dr. Orkun Hasekioğlu, the Vice President at TENMAK, the Energy, Nuclear and Mining Research Agency and advisor to the President of TUBITAK, Prof. Dr. Mustafa Guzel, the Director of Discovery and Development Center at Istanbul Medipol University. Vice Chancellor,

Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Dr. Nadeem ul Haque, and Dr. Syed Khurshid Hasnain, Adviser Science COMSTech.

Chief Executive Officer of Ignite, Mr. Asim Shahryar Husain was the chief guest of the session.

More than 200 people participated in-person from Turkey, Malaysia, Berkina Faso, Cameroon, Nigeria and Pakistan, while 300 people joined online from different OIC member states.

International and national world renowned experts delivered lectures in the workshop while fifteen companies showcased their products in the exhibition. ♦

Webinar on Wilson's Disease

COMSTech organized webinar on neurocase Wilson's disease trials: chemical, gene, and organ/cell treatments, delivered by Prof. Xiao-Ping Wang, Director, Department of Neurology, Shanghai TongRen Hospital, Shanghai Jiao-tong University Medical School, Shanghai.

The Patron-in-Chief of the International Center for Biological and Chemical Sciences, (ICCBS) University of Karachi, and former federal minister for science and technology, Pakistan, Prof. Dr. Atta-ur-Rahman introduced the speaker and said it is a real pleasure to introduce Prof. Xiao-Ping Wang and we are very fortunate to have him in Karachi at ICCBS. Prof. Atta said, Prof. Wang is a very distinguished scientist.

Prof. Wang talked about the history

of Wilson's disease and the modern neurology. He shed light on the discovery and research work of different scientists on this disease. Prof. Wang also talked about Pakistan-China research exchange initiatives. He said it can mostly be cured, early diagnosis and treatment is very helpful in managing and treating this disease. Coordinator General COMSTech Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary in his concluding comment appreciated the work, contribution to the science, and the presentation of Dr. Wang. He appreciated the work of Dr. Wang in the tradition medicine and expressed hope to work with him both in clinical trials and research.

The webinar was attended by more than 130 researchers from OIC member states. ♦

Workshop on Cancer Genetics

A 3-day online workshop on Cancer Genetics organized jointly by COMSTech, International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), and Sindh Innovation Research and Education Network during March 21, 22, and 24, 2022 at Latif Ebrahim Jamal National Science Information

Center (ICCBS) University of Karachi. The workshop consists upon lectures by renowned expert Prof. Dr. Rafat Ali Siddiqui Senior Investigator at the Methodist Research Institute, and Professor of Cellular Biochemistry, Indiana University School of Medicine, USA. ♦

CG COMSTech Briefs Media

Coordinator General COMSTech, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary briefed media persons by giving a comprehensive presentation on the milestones achieved by COMSTech during the last two years. He informed the media on the flagship programs of COMSTech, research grants program with International Foundation for Science, Sweden, The World Academy of Sciences, Italy, and the International Center of Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, Italy.

He said that COMSTech has established Consortium of Excellence comprising upon key academic, science, technology and engineering research institutions of OIC member states with the objective to build capacity in key areas of S&T, build linkages, provide enabling environment to increase investment, and trade through technology-based projects and build an ecosystem of collaboration and enable knowledge-based economic growth in OIC region. He said that COMSTech has started fellowship program for scientists in exile, virology and vaccine technologies, scholarships for Palestine nationals, and fellowships for Yemen.

He said that COMSTech has started compiling science, technology and innovation profiles of OIC member states, launched OIC technology and innovation portal to provide a digital platform to innovators and scientists of Muslim countries to showcase their innovative products. Prof. Choudhary said that COMSTech has started Africa program in health sciences and technology innovation and in collaboration with LRBT has conducted eye camps in Gambia and Niger that performed more than 500 cataract surgeries and fixed the out of order medical equipment, along with holding training workshops to train eye surgeons. Similar programs now planned for Chad, Uganda, Benin, and Nigeria ♦

News from OIC Member States

ARAB WORLD

ACG Launchs Food Security Action With US\$10 Billion Package

Vienna (UNA-OIC) - The Arab Coordination Group (ACG) is taking action in response to the global food supply crisis. As a first step, the group is providing an initial US\$10 billion for immediate relief and long-term support. According to the latest estimates by the United Nations, about 49 million people worldwide are at risk of falling into famine conditions in the months ahead.

The ACG comprises 10 national, regional, and international institutions: the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa,

the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Arab Gulf Programme for Development, the Arab Monetary Fund, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, the OPEC Fund for International Development, the Qatar Fund for Development and the Saudi Fund for Development. The Group coordinates actions, co-finances projects and in many cases pools resources towards key initiatives with the goal of providing effective and impactful development support through projects and specific programs. ♦

UGANDA

Govt Widens Plan to Mechanise Agriculture

The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries of Uganda has rolled out a plan to mechanize the agricultural sector through the provision of tractors to replace ox-ploughs. The tractors will be accessed by all farmers to increase land under cultivation. This will significantly improve land under cultivation, increase production, timely service delivery and allow access to other agricultural mechanization equipment," Mr. Frank Tumwebaze, the Minister of Agriculture, said. ♦

TOGO

Togo Holds Africa's First Cybersecurity Summit

Africa is growing exponentially in terms of internet connectivity but at the same time lags behind on cybersecurity. This is a major concern and was the main theme of the first Africa's cybersecurity summit organized in Togo's capital Lomé.

"We get phishing, for instance, ransomware. We have cybercrime," explained Gbota Gwaliba, Director National Agency of Cybercrime of Togo.

The African cybersecurity market continues to grow and is estimated to have grown from \$1.45 billion to over \$2.54 billion between 2017 and 2020.

The Lome Declaration is a policy document that commits to establish a specific legal and regulatory framework and strengthen Africa's cooperation in cybersecurity. ♦

GAMBIA

New Clinical Trials Facility Inaugurated at Banjulinding Health Centre

The Medical Research Council Unit The Gambia at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (MRCG at LSHTM) officially inaugurated a new Clinical Trial facility at the Banjulinding Health Centre on Tuesday 24th May, 2022.

The new facility funded by PATH, was constructed for the implementation of the phase 3, double blinded, randomized, controlled trial to assess the safety of the novel type 2 oral polio vaccine (nOPV2) in infants and young children, and lot-to-lot consistency of the immune response to nOPV2 infants in The Gambia. ♦



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