

WELCOME ADDRESS

Dr. Hameed Ahmed Khan
Executive Director
Commission on Science and Technology
for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS)

The Chief Guest, Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad,
Excellency, Mr. Lu Shulin,
Ambassador Peoples Republic of China,
Excellency General C. S. Weerasooriya,
High Commissioner,
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka,
Fellow Scientists,
Participants of the Meeting,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

With great pleasure, I welcome you all to the COMSATS "1st Meeting on Water-Resources in the South: Present Scenario and Future Prospects". The Meeting has been organized to take stock of water-related problems and issues that our region faces today and to work out strategies for better management, utilization and sustainability of water-resources in the South.

Water resources and water management have, of late, emerged as burning issues all over the world, following the changes in regional and global climatic patterns. They have assumed special significance in our region, due to a drought-like situation that has made considerable impact on various sectors of our countries. Water Management involves every person on the planet ---- from the simple act of how water is used by individuals, to the more direct involvement of everybody in how water is used in the industry. Therefore, all of us will have to play a role in our respective capacities and should strive to listen to expert opinion on this subject.

In view of the scarcity of water and its attendant problems, COMSATS decided to hold this two-day meeting of eminent scientists, engineers and experts on this important issue. A technical committee shall look into the research/review papers to be presented here and pass recommendations at the conclusion of the meeting. It is hoped that this conference will contribute significantly to the water-management field in the COMSATS countries.

The participants of the meeting include eminent environmentalists, reservoir engineers, climate scientists, power experts

and government representatives. The meeting will have more than 20 speakers and a large number of participants.

Before I proceed further, I wish to acknowledge the role of our respected Chief Guest, Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad Sahib, in bringing the critical issue of water-resources to light and in the organization of this conference today. It was his initiative and drive that convinced COMSATS to take up this topic, which no doubt has great implications for sustainable development in the South. I am really grateful to you Dr. Sahib, for your timely advice and guidance in this regard. I believe it is high time that institutions like COMSATS come forward and contribute to the development and sustenance of regional water-resources and provide solutions for related problems.

Being the first initiative of COMSATS in this field, the current workshop carries special significance for the Commission's mandate and strategic plan. The outputs of the meeting will help us define our future initiatives and strategy in this critically important field. The meeting is one of COMSATS' several initiatives that have been taken for accomplishing the goal of sustainable development in the less advantaged regions. For the benefit of the participants of today's meeting and for those of us who are new to the scene, I would like to, very briefly, touch upon some other programmes and activities of COMSATS.

As you may be aware, COMSATS stands for 'Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South', having 21 countries as its members. We have been engaged in a number of local as well as international programs. Two of our most important local projects are COMSATS Internet Services (CIS) and COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT). I take pride in CIS as one of the top ISPs of the country providing Internet services in 7 cities, and CIIT as a progressing high-quality IT institution. Another important project is the Syrian-COMSATS-COMSTECH Information Technology Center at Damascus, which was

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established in collaboration with COMSTECH and Syrian Ministry of Higher Education. It was jointly inaugurated by H.E. the Chief Executive General Pervez Musharraf, and the Syrian President Bashar-al-Asad during January this year. Another similar center, again with COMSTECH's collaboration, is being set up at Karachi. These are a few prime examples of the projects whereby the concept of Sustainability at COMSATS can be seen in practice.

In addition to the national-level scientific activities, COMSATS has also been involved in a number of projects with International Agencies. These include IDRC (Canada), ICIMOD, APCTT, TWAS/TWNSO, UNESCO, and UNIDO. Besides this, we have organized a number of workshops, scientific visits, scholarships and participation in conferences in COMSATS member countries. Our 1st Meeting on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development and Workshop on Non-Destructive Testing that were held here last month were the latest of such efforts.

One of our strengths is COMSATS Network of International Science and Technology Centres in the South. We are lucky to have 13 highly reputed world-renowned institutions in Bolivia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Egypt, Ghana, Jamaica, Jordan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Syria, Tanzania and Turkey, as our network members and resource-centres. These centers, in their areas of specialization, are playing a leading role in promoting cooperation and exchange for achieving a science and technology revolution in the South.

COMSATS feels proud of being one of the few institutions, which have achieved great milestones in a short period of seven years. Carrying on in the same spirit, we are planning some more programmes in the near future, which include a Workshop on Economic

Impact of Bio-technology in Lebanon, on 10-11 November, 2001, an International Workshop on Networking Essentials and ICND, Islamabad, January 4-11, 2002, and Workshop on Plasma Physics Laser-Induced Plasma Spectroscopy and Applications, Tunisia, January 11-13, 2002.

COMSATS owes its achievements to the member countries, their diplomatic representatives, its dedicated team and the support of people like you. We hope to achieve more with your cooperation and guidance.

Before closing, I wish to thank Dr. Ishfaq Sahib for emphasizing the importance of a very vital issue concerning all of us. It is particularly a matter of survival for the countries of the South. I would also like to thank Dr. Sahib for taking time out of his very busy and important schedule to be with us this morning. I am particularly grateful to all the participants and speakers for their valued inputs. I must express my gratitude to their Excellencies the Ambassadors of our member countries, for their valuable contribution and for gracing the occasion today. I am particularly grateful to H.E. Lu Shulin and H.E. General C.S. Weerasooriya. Their views on the subject have made our resolve even stronger.

I would also like to mention those of our foreign friends, who made all their efforts to participate in the meeting but could not do so due to unavoidable circumstances. I may also thank my team members who worked hard for the successful implementation of this meeting. In this regard, the names of Mr. Tajammul Hussain and Mr. Salman Malik are especially worth mentioning for their untiring efforts.

I thank you all once again, and God bless you all.