

FOREWORD

In a world increasingly challenged by economic, social and environmental problems that spill across political, cultural and demarcated boundaries, concrete and implementable solutions are the need of the hour. In the wake of such urgency, sustainable development is perhaps the most sought-after concept, envisaged to be the true remedy for global predicaments.

Today, sustainable development endorses a much deeper and expanded meaning than it had ever before and the first and foremost question with respect to this terminology remains: how to pursue development, both in terms of setting the developmental objectives and the means and methods of achieving them. History suggests that nations who simply copied the developmental objectives and methodology blue-print of the developed countries could not achieve the same development-standards as originally perceived by them. On the contrary, countries that banked on their internal capacities and focused on nourishing and enhancing their existing capabilities, alongside building new ones, gained the crucial advantage.

Science and technology capacity-building lies at the heart of a nation's journey towards achieving sustainable development. It is about time that nations of the Third World realize the need of this important concept and gain maximum benefit from the true implementation of such measures. Realizing this, COMSATS organized a three day 'Meeting on Science and Technology Capacity-Building for Sustainable Development', which was held from the 19th to 21st February, 2003. The meeting was a gathering of various eminent scholars, leading scientists, heads of research and S&T Institutes, representatives of local and foreign donor/development agencies and technologists from various fields.

The meeting comprised five technical sessions, namely, Industry and Engineering; Geology & Energy; Human Resource; Information Technology and Agriculture. The topics that came under discussion extensively scrutinized the current state of S&T Capacity-Building in Pakistan, with special reference to the developing countries, and put forth concrete

recommendations for implementable measures in this respect.

The gathering unanimously agreed that sustainability is an issue that must be addressed through the implementable application of science and technology. Capacity-building and development should be a participatory and empowering process, in which ownership must be a central element. The speakers emphasized the need for identifying and using local expertise, which should work from the grass-root level. All in all, the gathering stressed the need for S&T capacity-building through a participatory process and through the active involvement of all direct and indirect stake-holders. COMSATS values the constructive comments and recommendations generated through this Meeting and plans to follow-up, by convening a discussion-session of the top-level policy makers and planners of the country next year, to analyze the possible implementation of suggested recommendations.

With specific reference to the august gathering, I would like to express deep gratitude for the participation of our foreign participants, from and beyond our member-countries, as well as our local speakers and participants, who definitely added to the significance of this event through their active and contributing involvement. In addition, I also extend my sincere appreciation to the COMSATS team, who have yet again managed to organize an event of great significance with such success.

In the end, I must commend the contributions of Ms. Zainab Hussain Siddiqui, Mr. Irfan Hayee, Mr. Imran Chaudhry and others for their untiring efforts in compiling this publication.

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