

CONCLUDING REMARKS

H.E. Mr. Awad Mohamed Hasan

Ambassador of the Republic of Sudan to Pakistan

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Distinguished guests and participants,

Assalam-o-Alaikum.

I would like to thank Dr. Hameed Ahmed Khan, Executive Director COMSATS, for the invitation extended to me to address this august gathering. It is really a pleasure and indeed an honour for me to address the scientists of our nations in the concluding session of the meeting on S&T capacity-building.

I have to confess that I am not a scientist; so as a very common and ordinary man I would like to give some suggestions and present my views. I am glad that my turn as speaker came after Dr. Hameed Ahmed Khan, who delivered a lengthy speech, which summarized the works of the last two days, and gave his comments and conclusions. Therefore, I dont have to say anything in detail; however, I would like to highlight three main points.

My first point, which my colleague H.E. the Ambassador of Bosnia would agree with, is that if we want to write a comprehensive report—a reliable report—I don't think we can accomplish it, unless we take a quick glance at our computer. One day I was here at COMSATS and saw a demonstration in which a doctor from Islamabad was diagnosing a patient from a very remote area in a village. He analyzed and gave the prescription to the patient, with whom he was interacting via tele-health services. I believe the use of science and technology is as important for us diplomats, engineers, in fact all professionals, as it is for medical practitioners. This is not only true for those professions whom we call white-collar

professions, but is also true for all other professions. I also attended a session in which there was a demonstration of a system that Pakistan had developed, through which a farmer who could not read or write can gain access to Internet and get the information that he requires i.e. information about weather, markets, middlemen, etc.

So, even the layman needs science and technology to do his work. Not only that, but also if we simply talk of watching television in our leisure time, we cannot entertain ourselves without making use of science and modern technology. Even the toys of our children work with technology. I want to conclude this point by saying that we need S&T in all walks of life of the modern age of today.

But there is another point that I would like to highlight. Countries like Japan, Belgium and the Netherlands do not have substantial natural resources. Infact they have virtually nothing compared to the natural resources that countries like Pakistan and Sudan have. Yet, these countries are far more developed than us. The cutting edge that these countries have is that they groom, invest and utilize their human resources effectively, while, on the other hand, we do not make such efforts. It is a sorry state of affairs that, so far, we have been unable to capitalize on our human resources; however we have initiated the process and there is some hope.

I also listened carefully to one of the presentations delivered by H.E. Dr. Atta ur Rehman, when he was the Minister for Science and Technology. Dr. Rehman presented a vary startling comparison. He said that all the GDP of the comity of Islamic nations is less than the GDP of Belgium. Correct me if I am wrong, Dr. Khan, but I believe he said something more or less like that. My point in quoting this example is to emphasize that the future wealth and economic prosperity of a country is exactly determined by its ability to utilize and access the information of science and technology.

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The third point that I would like to highlight is that it is understood that attaining prowess in science and technology requires the help of governments. I hope that politicians and relevant policy-makers adopt and implement the related recommendations made during this meeting, and I am sure they will. As I see here, with the Grace of God, Pakistan is a force which can lead the developing countries, especially ones from the comity of Muslim nations, by guiding them through the era of information technology.

COMSATS has been very keen in facilitating capacity-building in its member countries. Many projects with

Sudan have already been initiated, such as the Industrial Information Network (IIN), establishment of an IT Centre and Tele-Health Centre, while many projects are in the pipeline. I am sure COMSATS also has a plan of action for developing indigenous capacities with other member countries.

In the end, I would like to thank Dr. Hameed Ahmed Khan and his colleagues, who have assumed a pioneering and guiding role and are steadfastly taking us through the era of science and technology. With these remarks I would like to thank you.