

## 'UNESCO chair' set up at CIIT campus on water research

ISLAMABAD - UNESCO & COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT) on Thursday inked an agreement to establish the UNESCO Chair on 'Knowledge Systems for Integrated Water Resources Management' at the Institute's Wah Campus.

The signing ceremony, held at the Ministry of Science and Technology, was presided over by Minister for Science and Technology Zahid Hamid.



Director General UNESCO, Dr. Irina Bokova, and the Rector CIIT, Dr. S.M. Junaid Zaidi, signed the agreement on behalf of their organizations. The ceremony was witnessed by the Secretary S&T Kamran Ali Qureshi; Executive Director COMSATS, Dr. Imtinan Elahi Qureshi, Resident Director UNESCO to Pakistan, Dr. Kozue Kay Nagata, Secretary-General Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO, Amna Imran. In his remarks, the minister highlighted the role his ministry is playing for the promotion of science and technology in the country. He noted his ministry's recent initiatives on enhancing technical cooperative activities and viewed the recently adopted National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (2012) of Pakistan as a step in the right direction for national development. In his brief remarks on the occasion, the Executive Director COMSATS expressed his organization's desire to have long-term partnership with UNESCO based on synergy, complementarity and willingness.

He noted that COMSATS advocates S&T related South-South Cooperation as means to socio-economic development. He informed that COMSATS has 18 S&T Centres of Excellence, including a full-fledged university, CIIT, affiliated to the organization giving it leverage to play an important international role.

Dr. Qureshi recounted his recent visit to UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, in connection with the 37th Session of General Conference, and meeting with the UNESCO Assistant Secretary General for Natural Sciences, Prof. Gretchen Kalonji. It was informed that Prof. Kalonji had endorsed

having stronger ties with COMSATS and recognized its important role as an inter-government organization.

Sharing her views on the occasion, Dr. Bokova reiterated UNESCO's pledge to work with the Government of Pakistan to elevate the level of knowledge and expertise in the country. UNESCO supports initiatives that aim at S&T advocacy, knowledge sharing and excellence in higher education, she said.

She also pledged support to COMSATS, especially for activities related to science, technology and innovation, which she considered pivotal for the future development frameworks. She said that this signing ceremony is a testimony of the importance UNESCO gives to science, technology and innovation.

The establishment of UNESCO Chair is a milestone in the history of CIIT since it can now be ranked among a select group of institutions focusing on water resources management. The purpose of the Chair would be to promote an integrated system of research, training, information and documentation on water resources management, facilitating high-level international collaboration for researchers and teaching staff of the university and other institutions in Pakistan with those in other parts of the world.

**Source:** <http://www.nation.com.pk/islamabad/07-Feb-2014/unesco-chair-set-up-at-ciit-campus-on-water-research>