



# COMSATS Newsletter

Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS)

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Group photo of participants following the signing of the agreement between COMSATS and FSEL, witnessed by Ambassadors of Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Morocco, Syria, as well as representatives of Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. Read more on page 04.

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## From the Executive Director's Desk

The bimonthly Newsletter serves as a means to reflect on the continued and unwavering commitment to leveraging science, technology, and innovation (STI) as enablers of sustainable development and equitable growth across the Global South.

Commemoration of **10th International Day of Women and Girls in Science**, marked the beginning of the current year. The deliberations dismantling of the systemic barriers that hinder women's participation in STEM fields. Our high-level webinar, "Unpacking STEM Careers: Her Voice in Science," brought on board leading scientists, policymakers, and advocates to explore inclusive policy frameworks and leadership pathways. The discussions emphasized that gender parity in STEM is not only a moral imperative but a developmental necessity. I was especially proud to see COMSATS' own initiatives—such as our Telehealth Program and Centre for Climate and Sustainability—recognized as platforms where women are driving innovation and creating impact.

In line with COMSATS' commitment to environmental stewardship, tangible steps were taken by entering into an agreement with Foundation Solar Energy (FSEL) to install a solar energy system at COMSATS' Secretariat Building in Islamabad. This milestone aligns

with SDG 7 and reflects COMSATS' resolve to model practical, renewable energy solutions. The initiative was well received as manifested in the participation of the Ambassadors Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary of Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Morocco, Syria, as well as representatives of Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. The initiative signaled our collective futuristic investment and contribution in the adaptation of Green technologies.

Another key development was COMSATS' growing collaboration with the Alliance of National and International Science Organizations (ANSO). In February, we contributed to the launch of the 9<sup>th</sup> term of the ANSO-BIDI School, nominating 63 emerging leaders and researchers from our Member States. The training modules, which cover topics ranging from Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) and sustainable finance to environmental engineering and innovation policy, are emblematic of our efforts to equip future scientific leaders with the tools needed to address complex global challenges.

COMSATS supported the prestigious 38th Khwarizmi International Award and the 26th Khwarizmi Youth Award organized by IROST, Iran—one of COMSATS' active Centres of Excellence. This long-standing collaboration reaffirms our dedication to recognizing

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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM COMSATS SECRETARIAT

### COMSATS Celebrates International Day of Women and Girls in Science

COMSATS marked the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science (IDWGS) on February 11, 2025, with a high-level webinar that underscored the critical role of women in STEM and the need for an inclusive and equitable scientific landscape. The event was held under the theme *"Unpacking STEM Careers: Her Voice in Science,"* the event served as a platform to celebrate the contributions of women in STEM while addressing the systemic barriers that hinder their full participation.

Executive Director COMSATS, Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, reaffirmed the organization's commitment to gender equality in science and technology, emphasizing that sustainable development hinges on the full engagement of women in STEM. He highlighted COMSATS' initiatives, including the Telehealth Program and the COMSATS Centre for Climate and Sustainability (CCCS), as examples of women's leadership in driving impactful scientific solutions. Recalling the advocacy of COMSATS' founding patron, Prof. Abdus Salam, for gender inclusivity in science, he called for intensified global efforts, particularly in developing nations, to bridge the gender gap in STEM.

The webinar brought together distinguished speakers, including H.E. Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Minister of State for IT & Telecommunications, Pakistan; Prof. Dr. Quarraisha Abdool Karim, President of The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS); and Ms. Aban Marker Kabraji, Senior Regional Advisor for Climate and Environment, UNEP Asia-Pacific Region.

On behalf of the Minister of State for IT



and Telecommunications, Government of Pakistan, H.E. Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Dr. Mehwish Durani, Head of CCCS, delivered her message on the occasion. H.E. Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja highlighted the urgency of addressing gender disparities in STEM and emerging technologies, noting that women account for only 34% of the global STEM workforce and a mere 11% of leadership roles in technology-driven fields. She underscored that gender parity in STEM is not only a moral imperative but an economic necessity, essential for fostering innovation and sustainable growth. She further elaborated on Pakistan's initiatives, including the Digital Gender Inclusion Strategy and the Digital Nation Pakistan Bill 2025, as well as targeted programs to enhance digital literacy, technology access, and women-led entrepreneurship. Stressing the importance of international collaboration, she called for gender-responsive policies to advance women's representation in science and technology.

Prof. Dr. Quarraisha Abdool Karim

emphasized the enduring vision of Nobel Laureate, Prof. Abdus Salam, whose commitment to leveraging science for sustainable development in low- and middle-income countries led to the founding of TWAS. She highlighted TWAS' dedication to global collaboration, scientific excellence, and gender equity, noting that women now constitute 50% of its governing council and that significant investments have been made in capacity-building initiatives such as the Young Affiliates Network. As the first woman president of TWAS, she underscored the need for sustained support for women in science, particularly through leadership and mentorship programs at the national level. Drawing from her personal journey as a scientist in South Africa, she highlighted the transformative power of science in empowering communities and addressing critical health challenges.

Ms. Aban Marker Kabraji addressed the intersection of gender, science, and climate resilience, emphasizing that while women disproportionately bear the brunt of climate change





and socio-economic barriers, they are also powerful agents of change. She advocated for stronger policies to promote women's participation in scientific leadership, flexible work arrangements, and mentorship programs to foster inclusivity in science and innovation. Additionally, she called for enhanced investment in education, equitable access to climate finance, and policy frameworks that support women-led technological solutions as essential components of a sustainable and resilient future.

A dedicated panel discussion provided further insights into the challenges, opportunities, and strategic interventions necessary to foster gender inclusivity in STEM. The panel featured esteemed scientists and academicians, including Prof. Arafat Awajan from the Royal Scientific Society (RSS), Jordan; Prof. Dr. Haseena Khan from the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh; Prof. Dr. Erdoğan Orhan Ilkay from Lokman Hakim University, Türkiye; and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rosminaazuin Bt. Ab. Rahim from the International Islamic University Malaysia.

Prof. Awajan highlighted the paradox of high female STEM enrollment in Jordan versus their low workforce participation, emphasizing the need for policy reforms, AI-driven inclusivity, and leadership representation.

Prof. Dr. Haseena Khan underscored the equal intellectual potential of women and men, while noting that societal norms and structural biases continue to impede women's career progression in STEM. She called for mentorship programs, strong female role models, and awareness campaigns to shift societal perceptions.

Prof. Dr. Erdoğan Orhan Ilkay examined women's representation in R&D across OIC countries and recommended workplace policies that provide equal opportunities, childcare facilities, career re-entry mechanisms, and gender-balanced leadership roles to close the gender gap.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rosminaazuin Bt. Ab. Rahim emphasized the importance of STEM education awareness and sustainable engineering policies,

advocating for increased mentorship, professional networking opportunities, and flexible work policies to retain and advance women in STEM careers.

The session concluded with a collective call for systemic reforms

### *...continued from page 1*

and fostering scientific achievement throughout the Global South.

COMSATS' also had the honor of welcoming His Highness Prince Tengku Fahad Mua'adzam Shah of Malaysia to the COMSATS Secretariat. Proudly, I have served in Malaysia as Pakistan High Commissioner. Malaysia's rise in the field of S&T made her a natural partner of COMSATS. Our discussions reaffirmed the shared aspirations of COMSATS and Malaysian institutions in advancing renewable energy, climate technologies, and scientific collaboration. I also had the opportunity to meet with the Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. İrfan Neziroğlu, to discuss expanding academic and research cooperation with Türkiye, particularly in areas such as Electric Mobility and Nanotechnology.

The success of the 16th International Symposium on Natural Product Chemistry (ISNPC-16), hosted by ICCBS-Pakistan with COMSATS' support, showcased the strength of global scientific partnerships. With over 400 participants from 29 countries, the event provided an invaluable forum for collaboration in natural sciences and innovation.

As we look to the future, COMSATS remains resolute in its mission to promote inclusive, science-led progress. The accomplishments of early 2025 provide a strong foundation, but much remains to be done. It is an imperative that COMSATS Member States, Partners, and Scientific Institutions should continue working with us as we strive to harness the power of STI for a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable world. We look forward to our reader's valuable feedback in improving the presentation of this newsletter



and cross-sector collaborations to create an equitable STEM ecosystem. The key recommendations included strengthening gender-inclusive policies, investing in targeted STEM education and capacity-building programs, introducing workplace flexibility and support mechanisms, bridging the digital divide, and fostering global partnerships to advance gender-responsive innovation and sustainable development.

COMSATS reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to championing gender equality in science and technology, recognizing that the empowerment of women in STEM is indispensable for driving scientific progress, economic resilience, and long-term sustainability. The event underscored the necessity of collective action to ensure that women are not only participants but leaders in shaping the future of science, technology, and innovation.

### Adopting Green Technology, COMSATS and FSEL Sign Agreement

COMSATS and Foundation Solar Energy (Pvt.) Limited (FSEL) signed a contractual agreement on February 12, 2025, for commissioning Solar System at COMSATS Technology Park, Islamabad, in pursuit of adopting Green Technology.

The signing ceremony was graced by the Ambassadors/High Commissioners of Jordan, Kyrgyz Republic, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Somalia, Syria, Sudan and Yemen with their attendance.

The Executive Director COMSATS, Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, briefed the Ambassadors on the initiative of Solar System. He said that it was in line with the SDG-7 of the United Nations. The renewable energy system will not only save electricity bill

but it serves the purpose of reducing pressure on energy demand vis-à-vis the shortfall in the supply resources. He appreciated FSEL/Fauji Foundation for their share in fulfilling the Corporate Sector Responsibility (CSR) along with COMSATS.

The dignitaries appreciated the activities undertaken at COMSATS under Ambassador Zakaria's leadership.

Ambassador Zakaria also briefed the dignitaries on his upcoming initiative of establishment of a Nanotechnology Laboratory at the Secretariat for capacity building and research activities of Ph.D. students and for other applications.

### 9th Term of ANSO-BIDI School Inaugurated

The opening ceremony of the 9<sup>th</sup> term of ANSO-BIDI School for Innovation, Sustainable Development and Leadership Enhancement was held on February 26, 2025. The Centre for Environmental Economics of the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences (CEE-UCAS), in cooperation with the Alliance of National and International Science Organizations for the Belt and Road Regions (ANSO), COMSATS and other members of ANSO Belt & Road International Innovation Development Institute Network (ANSO-BIDI Institute Network), is organizing the online training course from 26th February 2025 to 30th April 2025.

The opening ceremony included remarks by Prof. Desheng Wu, Director of the Research Centre for Environmental Economics of UCAS, followed by speeches of Heads of collaborating organizations, including Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, Executive Director COMSATS; Prof. Ljupco Kocarev, President of the Academy of Sciences and Arts,





North Macedonia; Prof. Orhan Aydin, President of the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBİTAK), Türkiye; Academician Avid Budeebazar, General Secretary of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, Mongolia; and Prof. Luis Seco, Professor at the University of Toronto, Canada.

In his address, Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, Executive Director COMSATS, emphasized the significance of leveraging emerging technologies to address global challenges. He highlighted COMSATS' commitment to facilitating its 27 Member States in achieving sustainable development. He noted that COMSATS has been actively organizing capacity-building programs, fostering R&D collaboration, and providing technology-based solutions to its Member States.

He highlighted the recent initiatives of COMSATS in the fields of Artificial Intelligence, Precision Agriculture, Genomic Sequencing, Renewable Energy, and Electric Vehicles, which reflect COMSATS' dedication to promoting ST&I-led development. The Executive Director underscored COMSATS' long-standing collaboration

and commitment to ANSO. He appreciated the regular organizing of the ANSO-BIDI School that is contributing to capacity building of scientific leadership in the developing countries.

For the 9<sup>th</sup> term of the ANSO-BIDI School, COMSATS has nominated 63 scientists and leaders from its Member States, including Bangladesh, Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Sudan, as well as COMSATS Secretariat.

The training course comprises of 10 weekly training modules. The

topics being covered by the training course, inter alia, include Supply Chain and Sustainable Development; Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) and Green Finance; Computer Science and Engineering; and Innovation, Environment and Sustainability.

The resource persons/experts, belonging to Australia, USA, Sweden, Belgium, Brazil, Poland, Denmark, Canada, Thailand, Switzerland and Germany, are conducting the training course.

### Pahang Royal Family Member Visits COMSATS Secretariat

His Royal Highness Prince Tengku Fahad Mua'adzam Shah, an esteemed member of the Royal Family of Pahang, Malaysia, paid an official visit to the COMSATS Secretariat on February 7, 2025, Islamabad, Pakistan. His Royal Highness was received with high regard by His Excellency Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, Executive Director of COMSATS, accompanied by senior officials of the organization.

During the meeting, Ambassador Zakaria provided a comprehensive briefing on COMSATS' foundational mandate and its nearly thirty-year journey of advancing science, technology, and innovation as enablers





of socio-economic progress across its Member States. The Executive Director outlined COMSATS' strategic focus on sustainable development, with particular emphasis on renewable energy and climate technologies.

Ambassador Zakaria further highlighted COMSATS' active engagement in the global climate arena, particularly through its participation as an Observer Intergovernmental Organization at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). He detailed the organization's contributions to COP27 (Egypt), COP28 (UAE), and its exclusive representation at COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan. The discussion encompassed COMSATS' key thematic areas of engagement, including renewable energy transition, climate-resilient agriculture, decarbonization of transport, carbon market mechanisms, youth engagement, climate diplomacy, development of bankable climate projects, and the growing concern of antimicrobial resistance.

His Royal Highness acknowledged COMSATS' dynamic and strategic role in shaping the global discourse on climate and sustainability, noting its alignment with the priorities and aspirations of the Global South. He expressed interest in fostering closer cooperation with COMSATS, including potential engagements at future

sessions of the UNFCCC and other multilateral forums.

The meeting also recalled the historic collaboration between COMSATS and Malaysian institutions, particularly in the areas of nanotechnology and renewable energy through capacity-building initiatives. Ambassador Zakaria, who previously served as Pakistan's High Commissioner to Malaysia, reaffirmed his strong personal and institutional commitment to deepening COMSATS' scientific partnerships with Malaysia. He informed His Royal Highness of ongoing liaison with the High Commission of Malaysia in Islamabad and shared that Malaysia has been extended an invitation to consider accession to COMSATS as a Member State. His Royal Highness Prince Tengku Fahad Mua'adzam Shah expressed appreciation for COMSATS' enduring contributions to scientific advancement and sustainable development across developing nations. He pledged his support for exploring new

avenues of collaboration, reaffirming his interest in facilitating expanded bilateral and multilateral engagement between Malaysia and COMSATS.

The visit concluded with a mutual commitment to reinforcing scientific and technological cooperation for shared progress and sustainable development in the Global South.

## COMSATS and Allen Manza Inc. Explore Collaboration on EVs, Carbon Credits, and Green Finance

Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, Executive Director COMSATS, held a virtual meeting with Mr. Javier Manzanares Allen, Chief Executive Officer of Allen Manza Inc., on 6 January 2025, to explore strategic cooperation in the areas of electric mobility, carbon credit generation, and sustainable finance.

The meeting was also attended by Dr. Mehwish Qayyum Durani, Head of the COMSATS Centre for Climate and Sustainability (CCCS), Dr. Huma Balouch, Deputy Director (International Partner Organizations), and Mr. Hamid Abbasi from the Food Security and Agriculture Centre of Excellence (FACE), a COMSATS partner organization in Pakistan.



Amb. Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria  
Executive Director COMSATS



Mr. Javier Allen  
CEO, ALLEN MANZA INC.





Discussions centered on leveraging electric vehicle (EV) retrofitting as a scalable mitigation strategy to reduce transport-sector emissions, with the potential to generate carbon credits under voluntary carbon market mechanisms. The parties also explored opportunities for financing climate-smart initiatives through green finance instruments and blended financing models.

Key agenda items included the potential of bio-carbon projects, and structuring proposals to align with internationally recognized standards such as Verra and Gold Standard. A draft concept titled "Zero-Emission Indigenous EV: COMSATS' Socio-Economic and Environmental Project" was shared with Mr. Allen for expert feedback and consultative input. To facilitate continued technical consultation and collaboration, both parties discussed the necessary frameworks to ensure

confidentiality and strategic alignment for joint initiatives.

### COMSATS Consults Carbon Market Watch Expert on Carbon Credit Potential of EV Retrofitting Project

In follow-up to interactions during COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, COMSATS held a virtual consultation with Ms. Isa Mulder, Policy Expert on Carbon Markets at Carbon Market Watch, on 6 January 2025.

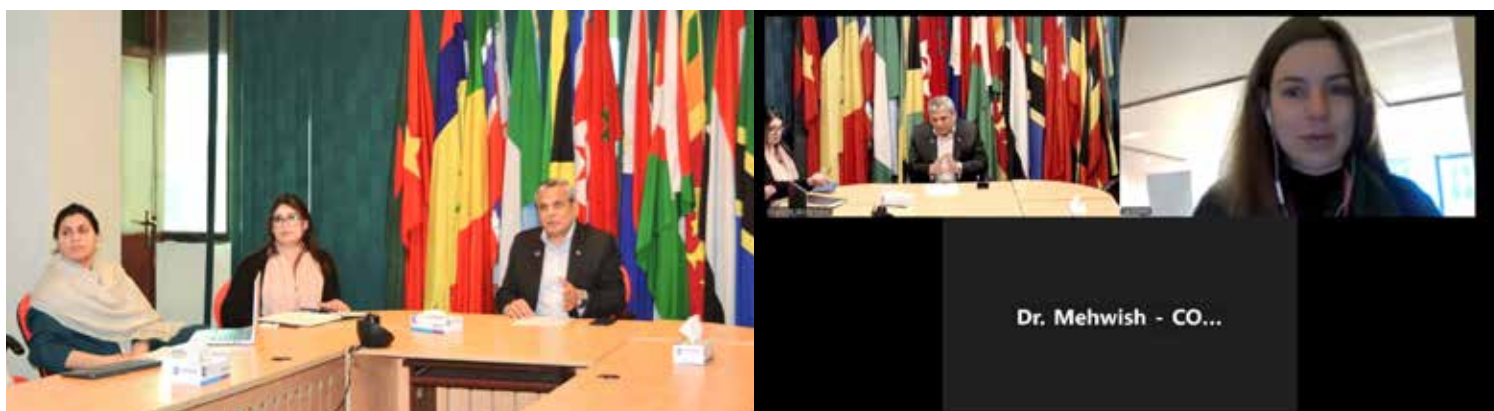
The meeting was convened by Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, Executive Director COMSATS, to seek expert guidance on integrating COMSATS' electric vehicle (EV) retrofitting initiative within the framework of carbon credit generation under international carbon market mechanisms.

Ms. Mulder, a policy expert at Carbon Market Watch and a close observer of Article 6 negotiations under the Paris Agreement, clarified that her focus lies in advocating for inclusive and equitable carbon market structures that prioritize meaningful social and environmental outcomes. While she did not provide technical input on methodologies such as emission reduction protocols or MRV frameworks, she expressed willingness to connect COMSATS with appropriate technical experts to support the alignment of the EV retrofitting proposal with carbon credit generation mechanisms.

COMSATS' EV retrofitting initiative, implemented in partnership with AGECO, has developed fully indigenous EV conversion kits aimed at reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the transport sector. The project is currently under evaluation for its potential to qualify for carbon credits as a scalable mitigation action.

The consultation was organized under the guidance of Dr. Mehwish Qayyum Durani, Head of COMSATS Centre for Climate and Sustainability (CCCS), and attended by Dr. Huma Balouch, Deputy Director (International Partner Organizations).

This engagement builds on Ms. Mulder's participation in COMSATS' co-hosted COP29 panel discussion with the Ministry of Climate Change





and Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC), titled "High-Level Dialogue on Strengthening Governance Frameworks for Carbon Markets in the Global South."

The consultation reflects COMSATS' continued commitment to advancing climate innovation, strengthening institutional capacity, and aligning national initiatives with global carbon market frameworks.

### COMSATS Hosts Virtual Consultation on Water Scarcity and Resilience

COMSATS convened a virtual consultation focused on addressing the growing challenge of water scarcity, particularly in the context of Pakistan,

on 15 January 2025.

The session was chaired by COMSATS' Executive Director, Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, and attended by Mr. Minhaj Khokhar, CEO of PK2100; Prof. Amir Haider Malik, a hydrology expert; Dr. Mehwish Qayyum Durani, Head of the COMSATS Centre for Climate and Sustainability (CCCS); and Dr. Huma Balouch, Deputy Director (International Partner Organizations) at COMSATS Secretariat.

The meeting centered on identifying sustainable approaches for improving water resilience. Prof. Malik highlighted Pakistan's vulnerability to both water scarcity and extreme flood events, citing the 2022 floods as a case where significant water resources were lost

despite widespread damage. He suggested that effective floodwater management and storage could help meet national water demands while reducing disaster-related impacts.

Participants discussed the need for coordinated, technology-supported efforts to capture and utilize excess water. Both Mr. Khokhar and Prof. Malik shared practical recommendations to inform future project planning in this area.

Ambassador Dr. Zakaria expressed COMSATS' commitment to facilitating expert-driven collaboration and emphasized the importance of cross-sector partnerships in advancing water resilience. The meeting concluded with an agreement to jointly explore a project proposal with technical input from relevant stakeholders.

### Former Advisor to ED COMSATS, Visits COMSATS Secretariat

The Executive Director of COMSATS, Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, welcomed Major General (R) Muhammad Tahir, former Advisor to the Executive Director on the China Desk, on 15 January 2025, during his courtesy visit to the COMSATS Secretariat.

Ambassador Zakaria commended General (R) Tahir for his pivotal role in advancing COMSATS' strategic engagement with China, particularly through the initiation of institutional linkages with the Alliance of International Science Organizations (ANSO), the establishment of the COMSATS Centre for Industrial Biotechnology (CCIB), and enhanced collaboration with China's Ministry of Science and Technology during his tenure.

General Tahir was briefed on COMSATS' recent initiatives and progress in key





January 20 to 23, 2025.

Led by two distinguished diplomats—Ambassador Nadeem Riyaz and Ambassador Mazhar Javed—the program provided COMSATS personnel with critical skills for navigating international diplomatic environments. The curriculum focused on enhancing cross-cultural awareness, diplomatic etiquette, negotiation strategy, and professional communication in multilateral settings.

Ambassador Nadeem Riyaz's sessions focused on cultural intelligence and protocol management, equipping participants with the ability to engage effectively across diverse cultural and political contexts. Key competencies included managing diplomatic sensitivities, conducting high-level negotiations, and maintaining composure and professionalism during official engagements.

Ambassador Mazhar Javed delivered in-depth modules on diplomatic communication and correspondence, emphasizing the nuances of tone, terminology, and structure in official writing. Participants developed expertise in crafting culturally appropriate and impactful diplomatic documents and statements—vital for representing COMSATS in international fora.

The training significantly enhanced

programmatic areas. Ambassador Zakaria conveyed his deep appreciation for General Tahir's enduring contributions to COMSATS and his broader service to the nation.

The visit also included an engaging discussion on General Tahir's published works, which reflect his depth of knowledge and strategic insight across disciplines. His books — including *Books That Changed My Life – Life and Life Lessons* (catalogued in the U.S. Library of Congress), *The Rising and Setting Sun*, and *Pearls of Wisdom* — were acknowledged for their thought leadership and philosophical reflection.

A decorated officer of the Pakistan Army, General Tahir served with distinction for 35 years and was awarded the Hilal-e-Imtiaz (Military) for his

exemplary service. In addition to his military credentials, he holds advanced academic qualifications in English Literature, War Studies, and Defence & Strategic Studies from prestigious national and international institutions.

### COMSATS Officials Receive Advanced Diplomatic Training at Pakistan's Foreign Service Academy

In recognition of the strategic role of diplomacy in advancing South-South cooperation and global engagement, senior officials from COMSATS participated in an intensive training program on diplomatic conduct and communication. The specialized training was organized by the Foreign Service Academy (FSA), Islamabad, from





the diplomatic readiness of COMSATS officials, strengthening their capacity to represent the organization in global platforms, foster international partnerships, and advance COMSATS' mission of collaborative science and technology development through informed, strategic diplomacy.

### COMSATS and NADRA Explore Avenues for Digital Collaboration

The Executive Director of COMSATS, Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, met with the Chairman of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), Lt. Gen. Muhammad Munir Afsar, on January 24, 2025, to discuss potential areas of cooperation in digital transformation.

The meeting focused on leveraging NADRA's expertise in digital systems to support COMSATS' regional initiatives, particularly in developing centralized data frameworks for its affiliated institutions. Both sides acknowledged the growing importance of digital tools in improving institutional processes, data management, and service delivery.

Discussions also covered areas such as secure data systems, identity verification, and e-governance mechanisms relevant to COMSATS'

work in science and sustainable development. It was agreed to explore a cooperative framework for the exchange of technical knowledge and digital solutions.

### COMSATS Explores Strategic Collaboration with Kyrgyz Embassy to Expand Regional Engagement

On January 28, 2025, H.E. Avazbek Atakhanov, Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to Pakistan, visited the COMSATS Secretariat in Islamabad and met with Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, Executive Director of COMSATS. The meeting aimed to explore opportunities for bilateral

cooperation in science, technology, and higher education, as well as to discuss potential avenues for Kyrgyzstan's accession to COMSATS.

During the engagement, Ambassador Zakaria provided a detailed overview of COMSATS' mission, strategic priorities, and its role in promoting South-South cooperation through science and technology. He emphasized the significance of Central Asian participation in the organization's multilateral framework and sought the Ambassador's support in facilitating Kyrgyzstan's accession to COMSATS as a Member State.

Ambassador Atakhanov welcomed the initiative and assured his support, expressing willingness to liaise with relevant Kyrgyz governmental bodies and academic institutions to explore formal engagement with COMSATS. Both parties also discussed the potential for joint programs in capacity building, research collaboration, and technological innovation.

The meeting concluded with a mutual commitment to strengthen ties and initiate follow-up actions aimed at fostering sustainable partnerships between COMSATS and institutions in Kyrgyzstan, thereby advancing regional cooperation in science and technology.







## Executive Director COMSATS Meets President ECOSF

On February 3, 2025, Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, Executive Director of COMSATS, paid a courtesy visit to the ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) headquarters in Islamabad. He was received by Prof. Komail Tayebi, President of ECOSF. The visit aimed to reinforce ongoing collaboration and explore strategic initiatives under the existing COMSATS–ECOSF cooperation framework, formalized through the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2024.

Discussions centered on advancing joint activities for 2025, with particular focus on ECONEX—ECOSF’s flagship Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) Conference—scheduled to be held

in first quarter of the year. Ambassador Dr. Zakaria has been officially invited to participate as a distinguished panelist at ECONEX 2025, which is expected to convene thought leaders, policymakers, and scientists to foster regional STI cooperation.

Both leaders reiterated their commitment to promoting collaborative research, knowledge exchange, and capacity-building programs across ECO and COMSATS member states. They also agreed to identify synergies in priority areas such as climate resilience, digital transformation, and innovation policy.

The meeting concluded with a shared resolve to deepen institutional linkages and leverage science and technology for sustainable development and regional integration.

## COMSATS’ Centre of Excellence, IROST successfully holds the 38th KIA and 26th KYA

The COMSATS Centre of Excellence in Iran, the Iranian Research Organization for Science and Technology (IROST), with support from COMSATS and other partner organizations, successfully organized the 38th Khwarizmi International Award (KIA) and the 26th Khwarizmi Youth Award (KYA) in Tehran on February 17, 2025. The ceremony was graced with the presence of Hon. President of Islamic Republic of Iran, the Iranian Minister for Science, Research and Technology, and other prominent officials and renowned scientists. The event celebrated exceptional achievements of distinguished scientists as well as promising young





researchers in the areas of health, water management, agriculture, food resources, environment, engineering, communications, and information technology.

The Khwarizmi International Award was initiated in 1987, which is Iran's most prestigious scientific award. KIA ceremony is annually held and presided over by the Hon. President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who presents the awards to the outstanding scientists, researchers, and innovators for their groundbreaking research providing solutions to global developmental challenges.

The Khwarizmi Youth Award has been recognizing exceptional young Iranian scientists/researchers, encouraging them to advance their research endeavors since 1999. These prestigious awards are named after Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi, a renowned Iranian mathematician, astronomer, and geographer, often regarded as the "Father of Algebra." His seminal work laid the foundations for Algebra and introduced systematic solutions to linear and quadratic equations. The KIA & KYA comprise trophy, certificate and handsome cash prize.

As part of its longstanding relationship with IROST-Iran, COMSATS has been supporting the Khwarizmi International

Award since the year 2000. It is a testament of COMSATS' commitment to foster science, technology and innovation in its Member States.

This year, COMSATS presented Certificates to Mr. Sasan Mohammadi (2nd KYA laureate in the category of Mechatronics) and Dr. Parvaneh Asgarinia (3rd KIA laureate in the category of Water Management, Agriculture and Natural Resources), as per the recommendation of the grand jury. The Executive Director COMSATS' Message for 38th Khwarizmi International Award and the 26th Khwarizmi Youth Award has been featured in the Bulletin.

### **16th International Symposium on Natural Product Chemistry (ISNPC-16) – A Resounding Success with COMSATS Support**

Supported by COMSATS, the International Symposium on Natural Product Chemistry (ISNPC-16) concluded in Karachi, Pakistan, on February 20, 2025. The Symposium, 16th of the series in the field of natural product sciences, was organized by International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS) at its campus that enriched the learning of over 400 scientists, including

60 researchers from 29 countries. Commenced on February 17, 2025, the event was one of the largest scientific gatherings in the field of natural product sciences.

ISNPC-16 was inaugurated by Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, who emphasized the role of science in serving humanity and highlighted HEC's initiatives to equip higher education institutions with cutting-edge technologies. Participants benefited from the technical sessions of the Symposium, including plenary lectures, keynote addresses, invited presentations, and poster exhibitions by young researchers showcasing their work on natural product chemistry.

COMSATS, as partner organization for the event, played its due role in fostering international collaboration and knowledge exchange. The objectives of the Symposium aligned with COMSATS' mission to promote S&T cooperation, and resulted in signing of a number of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) between ICCBS and leading international institutions, further strengthening global scientific partnerships.

In his address at the concluding ceremony, the globally acclaimed scientist and Founding Chairman of





HEC, Prof. Dr. Atta-ur-Rahman, lauded Pakistan's rising global research ranking and the need for increased investment in science and technology.

The session was chaired by the Director ICCBS, Prof. Dr. Farzana Shaheen, who emphasized the urgent need to protect medicinal plants from overexploitation and develop plant-based drugs to combat major diseases. She reassured her Centre's support to international collaborations being the Center of Excellence of not only COMSATS, OIC and UNESCO but also the WHO Collaborating Center.

The arrangements made for holding the Symposium and hosting the foreign participants during the symposium earned words of praise by all. The

symposium was viewed as an important forum fostering global scientific collaboration.

COMSATS remains committed for supporting initiatives that provide advance scientific research and promote sustainable development. The success of ISNPC-16 reflects the power of international collaboration in addressing global challenges through science and innovation.

### **Turkish Ambassador vows to Strengthen Bilateral Cooperation during visit to COMSATS Secretariat**

The Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan, His Excellency İrfan Neziroğlu, called on the Executive Director of COMSATS, Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, at the COMSATS Secretariat, Islamabad on February 26, 2025.

During the meeting, the two discussed avenues of cooperation between COMSATS and the Republic of Türkiye and agreed to enhance collaboration in science, technology, and innovation. The Executive Director while introducing COMSATS highlighting that it has 27 Member States from Asia, Africa, Middle East and Latin America, and a Network of 25 Centres of Excellence is affiliated with organization that

provides its technical arm for scientific cooperation.

Amb. Zakaria briefed the Turkish Ambassador about COMSATS' recent tech-based initiatives. In particular, he noted that the initiative in the field of Electric Vehicles (EV) is strategic and in line with the overall objectives of COMSATS for sustainable development. He informed the Turkish Ambassador about the Nanotechnology Lab established at COMSATS Secretariat that is equipped with advanced research facilities and managed by leading professors and technologists. He expressed COMSATS' commitment to sharing expertise and scaling up scientific cooperation with Türkiye. The Executive Director also provided an overview of collaboration between COMSATS and TUBITAK, a Centre of Excellence of COMSATS in Türkiye.

The Turkish Ambassador acknowledged the efforts being made by COMSATS for promotion of scientific cooperation. He pledged to use his good offices to share the information on COMSATS EV initiative with the relevant Ministry back home. Ambassador Neziroğlu informed that Türkiye plans to organize a University Cooperation Exhibition, which could serve as a platform for further building academic and research partnerships.





The meeting concluded on a note to strengthen collaboration in research, academic & Scientific exchanges, as well as use of emerging technologies to foster innovation for sustainable development..

### **COMSATS and ICESCO Advance 2025 Joint Action Plan, Reinforcing a Longstanding S&T Partnership**

On February 28, 2025, Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, Executive

Director of COMSATS, held a virtual meeting with Prof. Raheel Qamar, Head of S&E Sector, Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), to advance discussions on the 2025 Joint Action Plan and expand bilateral cooperation in science, technology, and innovation (ST&I).

The dialogue follows productive engagements during COP29 and reflects the organizations' mutual commitment to operationalizing shared goals through capacity-building

initiatives and joint projects.

The meeting was also attended by Dr. Mehwish Durani, Head of COMSATS Centre for Climate and Sustainability (CCCS), and Dr. Huma Balouch, Deputy Director at CCCS. Discussions focused on the implementation of collaborative initiatives in emerging technologies to support sustainable development across common member states of ICESCO and COMSATS.

Priority thematic areas included artificial intelligence in agriculture, applications of biotechnology, innovations in additive manufacturing (3D printing), and scalable digital health technologies.

As a follow-up to the meeting, both organizations exchanged and reviewed concept notes on prospective joint projects. These included:

- A “de-Googled” smartphone development initiative
- An international Appathon to foster innovation among youth and startups
- Telehealth platforms to expand access to healthcare services
- Adaptation and localization of electric vehicle (EV) green technologies

Of note, COMSATS provided formal feedback on March 11, 2025, regarding the Appathon concept note—marking a key milestone in project design and implementation planning.

This meeting reinforces the enduring collaboration between COMSATS and ICESCO, spanning nearly two decades, and underscores their shared vision of leveraging ST&I to tackle global challenges and accelerate progress toward sustainable development in their member countries.



## SOME ACTIVITIES OF COMSATS' CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

### Seminar on Green Chemistry for Sustainability: From Invention to Impact

The Royal Scientific Society hosted an interactive seminar titled 'Green Chemistry: From Invention to Impact', presented by Prof. John Warner, co-founder of Green Chemistry and CEO & CTO of Technology Greenhouse, LLC., Prof. Warner discussed the urgent need



to align human-designed systems with the principles of nature, emphasizing the mechanisms of material metabolism found in natural systems.

The seminar covered critical topics such as molecular diversity, sustainable manufacturing, and the importance of collaborative innovation in driving systemic change. It showcased how designing processes inspired by biological systems can result in cost-effective, scalable, and environmentally friendly solutions. Prof. Warner also shared insights from his career, noting that green chemistry principles have enabled him to file 350 patents.

This seminar was part of the Green Chemistry Project, a collaborative initiative by the Royal Scientific Society, Yale University, and UNIDO. The project aims to promote green chemistry principles, advance sustainability, and foster the concept of materials ecology.

### RSS Hosts Dialogue to Boost Youth Engagement in Jordan's Climate Policy Development

Experts and specialists in the field of climate change convened to discuss mechanisms for increasing youth participation in climate action and shaping national climate policies. The initiative seeks to strengthen Jordan's capacity to address climate challenges,

foster innovative solutions, and build resilience to achieve the Kingdom's climate objectives.

The discussions took place during an interactive dialogue session on the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) and Climate Action document. The session was organised by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in cooperation with the Royal Scientific Society, and the Ministry of



Environment, and with the support of the project titled 'Enhancing Youth Participation in Reviewing Nationally Determined Contributions and Climate Policies at the National Level'.

### CUI-Pakistan Hosts Seminar on Sustainable Supply Chain Management

The International Office at COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) hosted a hybrid seminar on "Sustainable Supply Chain Management" on February 27, 2025. The seminar, attended by students and faculty from the Department of Management Sciences, featured Dr. Tahira Abdullah, Assistant Professor at South Champagne Business School (SCBS), France.

The event commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran, followed by opening remarks from Dr. Hammad Omer, T.I., Head of the International Office. Dr. Omer emphasized the importance of international collaboration, stating, "This event marks another step in our commitment to internationalization, as we continue to foster global partnerships for shared growth."

Dr. Tahira Abdullah's lecture provided insightful perspectives on sustainable supply chain practices, focusing on the challenges and opportunities in the field amidst global disruptions.



She covered key areas of supply chain management, supply chain operations, sustainable development, green transition, sustainable supply chain, circular economy, circular supply chain, and doughnut economics.

### CUI and EESIE, Paris Discuss Academic Partnership Opportunities

The International Office, COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) and École d'Études Supérieures Internationales (EESIE), Paris, France, have taken a significant step towards reviving their partnership by holding an online meeting with representatives from EESIE on February 13, 2025. The meeting was attended by Dr. Hammad Omer T.I., Head of International Office, CUI, along with Ms. Samira Shah and Ms. Ayesha Masood from the International Office's French Desk, and Mr. Yves Blanchard, Acting Director, International Office EESIE, Paris, with his team member Ms. Loise Emeraud. The meeting focused on exploring opportunities for student exchange programs, joint research initiatives, and capacity-building training programs.

Dr. Hammad Omer T.I introduced CUI's international engagement efforts, highlighting its active collaborations with the French Embassy and institutions such as CCI Paris and Aix Marseille University. He also referenced CUI's history of global academic

partnerships, including a recent agreement with the University of Regina, Canada. Ms. Samira Shah, Senior Program Officer, IO, proposed hosting webinars featuring EESIE experts, which was welcomed by Mr. Blanchard. Mr. Yves Blanchard presented EESIE's academic strengths in Electrical Engineering, Digital Systems, and ICT.

### Visits of officials from University of Suffolk,

A delegation from the University of Suffolk, UK, visited COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) on February 19, 2025 to explore academic collaboration. The delegation included senior academic and international officers, who met with CUI officials to discuss potential partnerships in student exchange, joint research, and faculty linkages across various disciplines.

The visit featured academic lectures by



Dr. Felix Ngobigha and Dr. Ross Kemble (virtually), focusing on emerging trends in computing and workplace dynamics in the UK. These sessions were attended by students and faculty from multiple departments.

Dr. Hammad Omer concluded the event by highlighting the importance of international cooperation in higher education, followed by a souvenir exchange to mark the occasion.

### Collaboration between CUI and University of Regina, Canada

The Student Exchange Program Agreement (SEPA) Signing Ceremony between CUI and the University of Regina (U of R), Canada, along with a Symposium on Experiential Learning in Higher Education, was held on February 18, 2025, at Islamabad Campus. The event brought together faculty members, students along with the International Office team, while virtual participants included the Acting Consul General of Pakistan in Vancouver, Directors of CUI Campuses, focal persons of the International Office, and Canadian alumni from various CUI campuses. Dr. Jeff Keshen, President and Vice-Chancellor, U of R and Mr. Haroon Chaudhry, Associate Vice-President (International), Chief International Officer & U of R Focal Person participated physically who travelled all the way from Canada to



Pakistan for one of this purpose.

Dr. Hammad Omer, Head International Office and CUI Focal Person U of R, delivered the welcome remarks and an overview of the University. He highlighted that the engagements between CUI and U of R, are built on a shared commitment to academic excellence and international collaboration.

Mr. Haroon Chaudhry, Associate Vice-President (International), Chief International Officer, and U of R Focal Person, presented an overview of the University of Regina and spoke on "Institutional Engagement of the University of Regina in Pakistan." He encouraged CUI students to participate in Mitacs Globalink Research Internships at U of R. A keynote speech on "Experiential Learning in Higher Education" was delivered by Dr. Jeff Keshen, President and Vice-Chancellor of U of R, followed by a Q&A session where Canadian alumni, faculty, and students actively engaged in discussions.

The formal signing of the SEPA took place, with Dr. Tahir Naeem, Director P&D/HRD of CUI, signing on behalf of the Rector of CUI, and Dr. Jeff Keshen signing on behalf of U of R. His Excellency Mr. Ghulam Hussain, Acting Consul General of Pakistan in Vancouver, joined virtually and emphasized the importance of strengthening people-to-people ties between Canada and Pakistan. He expressed confidence that the agreement would pave the way for joint research initiatives, faculty exchanges, and student mobility programs, assuring full support from the Consulate General of Pakistan for this collaboration.

In his closing remarks on behalf of the Rector of CUI, Dr. Tahir Naeem underscored the significance of academic partnerships, highlighting

the insights shared during the event. He reiterated that SEPA reinforces the commitment of both institutions to global education, cross-cultural academic exchanges, and enriching student learning experiences.

## Global Moot on Natural Product Chemistry Concludes

The 16th International Symposium on Natural Product Chemistry (ISNPC-16) concluded on February 20, 2025 at ICCBS, University of Karachi, with key recommendations for advancing research in natural products.

Amid growing interest in natural products within the healthcare sector, the symposium's concluding session emphasized the urgent need to protect medicinal plants from overexploitation. It also called for the development of new herbal drugs derived from medicinal plants and natural compounds to combat major diseases.

A total of 60 scholars from 29 countries, including Germany, the USA, the UK, China, Sweden, Iran, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Sudan, Nigeria, Cameroon, Algeria, and Zimbabwe, participated in the conference, while 400 scholars attended from Pakistan. The four-day global science gathering featured

several brainstorming sessions, plenary lectures, invited presentations, and session lectures. Additionally, around 130 research posters were presented by young scholars. Notably, several memorandums of understanding (MoUs) were signed between ICCBS, University of Karachi, and leading institutions from various countries.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Dr. Farzana Shaheen thanked both national and international experts for their participation. She noted that the attendance of a large number of foreign experts reflects the symposium's role in fostering scientific collaboration beyond borders. She underscored the importance of medicinal plant research, emphasizing that the development of plant-based drugs could help prevent several fatal diseases.

Dr. Syed Ghulam Musharraf, ISNPC Organizing Secretary, also expressed gratitude to all participants and acknowledged the contributions of faculty, staff, and students in making the symposium a success.

## Internship Program for Medical Students at Dr. Panjwani Center

The Internship Program 2024 for medical students and graduates was



successfully concluded at the Dr. Panjwani Center for Molecular Medicine and Drug Research (PCMD), University of Karachi.

Organized annually, the program aims to enlighten medical graduates about ongoing research on prevalent diseases. This year, 13 final-year students and recent graduates of MBBS and BDS completed their training in various areas of biomedical sciences.

Prof. Dr. Farzana Shaheen, Director of the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), University of Karachi, distributed internship certificates to participants from various medical universities across Pakistan. During the certificate distribution ceremony held at ICCBS, Prof. Dr. Farzana Shaheen congratulated Prof. Dr. Asmat Salim and her team for organizing such an impactful and unique internship program.

Participants received training at various ICCBS research centers, focusing on fields such as Bioinformatics and Computational Chemistry, Cancer Research, Genomics, Medicinal Chemistry, Metabolic Disorders, Virology, Proteomics, Microbiology and Immunology, Pharmacology, Molecular Biology, Structural Biology, Stem Cell Research, Enzyme Inhibition Studies, and Bioequivalence Studies.

### Prof. M. Raza Shah Appointed Director of ICCBS-Pakistan

Following a decision by the ICCBS Executive Board, the Chairman of the Executive Board, Prof. Dr. Khalid Mehmood Iraqi, who is also the Vice Chancellor of the University of Karachi, issued an official notification



on confirming Prof. Shah's appointment.

Prof. Shah has made outstanding contributions to Nanomedicine and Supramolecular Chemistry, and Prof. Shah has received the prestigious Khwarizmi International Award from the Iranian Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology, earning the distinguished title of Khwarizmi International Laureate. He also received the Civil Award (Tamgha-i-Imtiaz) from the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Abdus Salam Award. He has been elected as a fellow of The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS). Currently, he is appointed to many distinct positions including; UNESCO Chair on Medicinal and Bio-organic Natural Product Chemistry, a member of the Expert Advisory Committee for the International Traditional Medicine Clinical Trial Registry China, President of the Chemical Society of Pakistan, Guest Professor (Nankai University) and Visiting Professor (Hunan University of Traditional Medicine) at China. Prof. Shah has made significant strides in Nanomedicine and Supramolecular Chemistry. He has authored seven books and edited four books published by Elsevier.

### ITI-Sri Lanka: Empowering Laboratory Professionals through NVQ Level 4 Program

The Industrial Technology Institute (ITI), Sri Lanka, continued success of its NVQ Level 4 program for Laboratory Assistants, conducted in collaboration

with the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC). This initiative is not merely providing vocational training; it's opening doors to global career opportunities for aspiring laboratory professionals.

In an era where scientific advancements are rapidly transforming industries, the demand for skilled laboratory personnel is higher than ever. Recognizing this need, ITI has designed a comprehensive program that equips students with both the practical skills and theoretical knowledge required to excel in modern laboratory environment. We are pleased to report the successful completion of three batches of this vital program, with the fourth batch currently underway. The positive feedback and career progression of our graduates stand as a testament to the program's effectiveness.

The NVQ Level 4 certification is recognized both nationally and internationally, significantly enhancing the employability of our graduates. With the increasing globalization of industries, this certification opens doors to exciting career opportunities in laboratories around the world.

ITI-Sri Lanka remains committed to providing high-quality vocational training that meets the evolving needs of the industry. We are constantly updating our curriculum and facilities to ensure that our students receive the most relevant and up-to-date training.



## GLIMPSES OF SOME EVENTS



## Scholarships offered by COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI), Pakistan

COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI), Pakistan, offers MS & PhD Scholarships for students and researchers belonging to COMSATS' Member States and prospective members. The scholarships are offered in the following key programs: Computer Science, Management Science, Electrical Engineering, Biosciences, Mathematics, Physics, and Meteorology.

The relevant details, including terms and conditions, eligibility criteria, admission procedure and schedule, application form, etc., are available on CUI website: [http://ww2.comsats.edu.pk/internationalstudents/COMSATS\\_HQ.aspx](http://ww2.comsats.edu.pk/internationalstudents/COMSATS_HQ.aspx).

For further details, please visit:

[www.comsats.org](http://www.comsats.org) or write to:  
[farhan@comsats.org](mailto:farhan@comsats.org).

## TWAS-ICCBS Postgraduate Fellowship Programme

The International Centre for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS) — comprising the H.E.J. Research Institute of Chemistry and the Dr. Panjwani Centre for Molecular and Drug Research in Karachi, Pakistan — and TWAS offer fellowships to young scientists from developing countries (other than Pakistan) who wish to pursue research towards a PhD in chemical and biological sciences.

Applicants are encouraged to apply for the preliminary acceptance letter as early as possible, even before the opening date of the call. Keeping in mind that only Acceptance letters dated the same year as the year of application are eligible. For the Acceptance letters, applicants are requested to provide their two-page curriculum vitae (CV), copy of the last degree, and at least two letters of recommendation.

**Deadline:** 14 August 2025

**For more details, please visit:** <https://twas.org/opportunity/twas-iccbs-postgraduate-fellowship-programme>

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