



ECOSF NEWSLETTER



Science Demos and Workshops thrilled Students/Children and Families during MLLF-2020 in Islamabad Pakistan

ECOSF organizes different scientific activities in its Member Countries throughout the year for realization of its mandate. In this regard, the Foundation in collaboration with Pakistan Science Club (PSC), Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF), Pak Alliance for Maths and Science (PAMS) organized various scientific activities for students/kids and families during the Mother Languages Literature Festival (MLLF) on 22-23 February 2020 at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), Islamabad, Pakistan. It is pertinent to mention that MLLF is organized every year by the Indus Cultural Forum (ICF) since 2017 to promote literature in mother languages in Pakistan and ECOSF has all along been one of the supporters/partners of ICF for organization of MLLF. Accordingly the scientific activities have been arranged during MLLF every year to promote understanding of science and technology in local languages and to promote science culture.



The scientific activities on 22-23 February; comprised of demonstrations, workshops, science bus and planetarium show. In two days, following activities were demonstrated:

- **Spinning Eggs:** It is a challenge to find out whether the egg is boiled or not without breaking them.
- **Fun with Inertia:** It is a captivating challenge to drag a currency note placed between two glass bottles without dropping them.
- **Mentos geyser:** An enormous jet is formed when Mentos are dropped into the soda drink defining the process of nucleation.

- **Burst Balloon with Lemon Juice:** The demonstration explains the properties of acid and how it reacts with other substances.
- **Balance Stick:** It is a challenge in which participant tries to balance the stick on one finger.
- **Hydrogen Bubble:** It is carried out in a safe way to show explosive nature of hydrogen gas.
- **Air Vortices:** The demonstration describes the Bernoulli principle to show the relation between speed and pressure of the fluid.
- **Vanishing water:** This activity explains super absorbance of a polymer commonly used in diapers.
- **Elephant Toothpaste:** It explains basic reactions of chemistry by creating large foams and trapping oxygen in soap bubbles.
- **Weighs the unknown:** The activity helps to learn about the properties of an unknown gas by doing simple experiments.

Workshops were also conducted for children to develop elastic or balloon powered cars. The children along with their parents were invited and provided with all the materials to make the cars. The interest and enthusiasm of the participants in making the cars were worth watching. The kids of a family from Azerbaijan Embassy also participated in the workshop.

Like previous years, this year (2020), a large number of students/children and their parents from Islamabad, Rawalpindi and surrounding areas participated in the activities. The families from diplomatic community especially Azerbaijan and Turkey also attended the activities.



The engagement of children in the activities was amazing and the feedback was very encouraging. The participants especially the parents demanded to organize more such activities so that the children/students may be motivated to take science as their career.

To mark the International Day of Mother Languages on 21 February 2020, an opening ceremony of MLLF-2020 was held at PNCA to mark the; wherein around 500 people joined. During the opening session, Director General of PNCA Dr. Fouzia Saeed welcomed all the distinguished guests whereas; the Chairperson of ICF Mr. Niaz Nadeem highlighted the activities of ICF with reference to mother languages and literary workin mother languages of Pakistan. Ms. Zubaida Mustafa- an educationist, writer and proponent of literature in mother languages, was the keynote speaker and she while appreciating the initiative, spoke on the importance of mother languages for quality education across the world. She also acknowledged the efforts of promoting the understanding of science in mother languages.



President ECOSF Prof. Manzoor Soomro also addressed the opening session and said that science and technology is the key for economic development of any society and science can best be learnt and understood in mother languages. He further said that it is not mandatory that if we learn science in English then we can excel but we have examples of many countries in the world such as; France, China, Japan, Korea, Iran, etc. who learn science in their own languages and their development is exemplary. Thus we should encourage learning of science in mother languages; through which, mother languages will also be promoted.

After the opening session, for the next two days, sessions on various aspects of mother languages were discussed, a number of books of prose and poetry in local languages were launched and music by local language artists was played. Books meant for children by different Foundations were also displayed and distributed.



Some glimpses of the hand-on science activities for children are shared hereunder.



First World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development Celebrated!

UNESCO's General Conference proclaimed the 4 March World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development during its 40th session in November 2019 (40 C/64), to raise awareness of the role of engineering in modern life, which is essential to mitigate the impact of climate change and advance sustainable development, especially in Africa and the small island developing states (SIDS).

In spite of the importance of engineering for our life and future, women have been historically underrepresented in engineering fields, typically making up only 10 – 20% of the engineering work force. Even in countries where the numbers of women studying STI have increased, this trend has

not translated into more women entering the workplace. Too many female students who graduate do not go into the engineering profession. The barriers are often connected to persistent gender stereotypes in this field, inadequate policies or educational environments that do not meet their needs and aspirations (<https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/engineering>)



ECOSF places high priority on Engineering activities and is pursuing a programme of "Engineering Qualification Standardization, Accreditation and Professional System" in ECO member countries. On this occasion ECOSF congratulates engineers across the globe for their contribution in the development sector. The Foundation especially encourages women engineers to come forward for greater role to ensure sustainable development in the world.

The message from the President of World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO), Professor Gong Ke – a friend of ECOSF, is available in the link: <http://tiny.cc/mh9wkz>

Prof. Soomro President ECOSF joined the National Committee of Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan to review the Programs of PMAS Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi

Prof. Dr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro, President ECOSF joined the National Committee constituted by HEC Pakistan to review some 70 Ph.D. and M.Phil. degree programs of Pir Mehar Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) from 17-19 February, 2020. Other members of the committee were Vice Chancellors and Deans of Faculties from different universities of Pakistan.



It is pertinent to mention that Dr. Soomro is Professor of Plant Protection/Agriculture and has served as university professor and researcher as well as senior manager in the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of United Nations, Director General of Pakistan Museum of National History (PNHM) and Chairman of Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF).

The Committee reviewed all the programs and various aspect of the university management, and recommended improvement to HEC as required. This initiative has been taken by HEC for quality assurance in higher education sector. After debriefing the Vice Chancellor, a group photograph of the Committee was taken with senior management of the university.

Book Launch & Panel Discussion on 'Culture of Research in Pakistan' organized by Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) in collaboration with Knowledge Platform and The British Council

Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad-PK hosted a Book Launch & Panel Discussion on 'Culture of Research in Pakistan' on Feb 12, 2020. Knowledge Platform and The British Council collaborated with PIDE for the event and PIDE launched the book based on the study on the systems of research in Pakistani universities across the country. The book report with the title; "The University Research system in Pakistan" was launched and copies shared with participants.

A large number of national and international academic experts, scholars, researchers and representatives of development partners and media attended the event. President ECOSF Dr. Manzoor Soomro joined the event on behalf of ECOSF.

The report/book provides an overview of the university research system, and provides valuable recommendations to develop the culture of research in Pakistan. The report says that:

"In its recently published vision 2025 statement, the HEC has set forth an ambitious research agenda under which it plans to lead higher education institutions as the principle drivers of knowledge-based Pakistani economy .This will require reforming the university research system by taking it to a considerably elevated plan of inquiry, innovation and impact.

The HEC's success in developing research activities at universities has come at a price. Its emphasis on research publication has marginalized other research activities .To date, core education stakeholders (policymakers, government officials, regulators, donors, business leaders, professionals and media representative) and the wider public remain disengaged from university research: they generate little by way of demand for research-driven solutions.

While there are notable exceptions, faculty in Pakistan view research as an activity that has, at its principal end journal publication as a requirement for career advancement. Many faculty members across Pakistan feel that research is treated as a 'numbers game' in which quantity is incentivised over quality, and faculty discourse by and large misses the spirit of enquiry and debate, the passion to solve globally or locally meaningful problems, and frictional camaraderie of belonging to communities of practice. Funded through individual research projects, driven by personal career targets, unwanted by the government and private sectors as providers of insights, resident in bureaucratically managed institutions, and overloaded by teaching obligations, most faculty members feel that research is solitary and often isolating exercise"



A Panel Session on 'Culture of Research in Pakistan' was also arranged during the book launch. Dr. Nadeem Ul Haq, Vice-Chancellor, PIDE opened the session and welcomed all the distinguished guests for attending the event. After opening of the session, Mr. Adrian Chadwick, Regional Director South Asia, British Council also spoke and shared his knowledge and wisdom. Renowned academician Dr Zain Ul Abidin, Director General Research & Development, Higher Education Commission, British Council Pakistan experts Ms. Nishat Riaz Director Education, Ms. Sarah (Higher Education) and the Country Director of British Council for Pakistan Mr. Amir Ramzan were among the speakers. Finally Q&A session was held and Dr. Nadeem Ul Haq, Vice-Chancellor PIDE thanked the participating departments, sponsors and participants.

President ECOSF and New Director UNESCO-Pakistan discuss Mutual Programmes

President ECOSF Prof. Dr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro and the new Representative and Director of UNESCO to Pakistan, Ms. Patricia McPhillips met at UNESCO Islamabad Office on February 4, 2020. Prof. Dr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro welcomed Ms. McPhillips for assuming her new role as Director of UNESCO Pakistan. Mr. Khalil Raza Scientific Officer ECOSF and Mr. Raza Shah National Professional Officer UNESCO were also present during the meeting.



President ECOSF shared with new Director UNESCO Pakistan that the Foundation enjoys sound relations with UNESCO and has been working very closely with the UNESCO Pakistan office and the Regional Science Bureau for Asia and the Pacific in Jakarta. Prof. Soomro shared a number of joint programs undertaken by the UNESCO Pakistan and ECOSF in the past, including the development of roadmap for Engineering Qualification Standardization, Accreditation and Professional System (EQSAPS) for Central Asia, Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme and promotion of Inquiry Based Science Education, and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. He also recalled the MoU signed between UNESCO and ECO way back in 1995 for cooperation.

Ms. McPhillips appreciated the strong cooperation between the UNESCO and ECOSF. She said that Pakistan has a tremendous human capital and the role of UNESCO remains vital to uplift the country in promoting science, education and culture. Ms.

McPhillips showed her enthusiasm for promoting science and education in Pakistan and to work together with ECOSF to address emerging challenges in science and education with particular emphasis on climate change and promoting women and girls in STEM fields. Both sides assured their support and commitments to continue to work together in various fields of Science, Technology and Engineering in the ECO region, including Pakistan.

Azerbaijan Embassy organizes a Seminar in Islamabad entitled; “Together for Peace and Humanity- End to Ethnic Cleansing and Genocide”

A Seminar entitled; “Together for Peace and Humanity - End to Ethnic Cleansing and Genocide” was organized by the Embassy of Republic of Azerbaijan on 24 February 2020 at National University of Modern Languages (NUML) in Islamabad Pakistan. The Seminar was dedicated to the 28th anniversary of Khojaly Genocide occurred on February 26, 1992.



The Chairman of Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs (of Pakistan), Senator Mr. Mushahid Hussain Syed was the Chief Guest of the seminar. It was attended by Ambassadors, diplomatic community, academicians, students and people from different walks of life. Prof. Manzoor H. Soomro represented the ECO Science Foundation.

With the national anthems of Azerbaijan & Pakistan and Recitation from Holy Quran, the Seminar was formally begun. Following, a documentary on Khojaly Genocide was played. The Director General NUML Brigadier Muhammad Ibrahim welcomed the diplomats and distinguished guests at the University.



Afterwards, H.E. Mr. Ali Alizadeh, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan thanked the participants for attending the seminar. In his address, he highlighted the incident of genocide and shared that it was a mass murder of 613 Azerbaijani people from the town of Khojaly, committed by Armenian armed forces. The event became the largest massacre in the course of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Later, the Ambassador of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Sakib Foric, the former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Major General (Rtd.) Sardar Muhammad Anwar Khan and H.E. Mr. Mushahid Hussain Syed addressed the Seminar.

Mr. Mushahid Hussain in his speech strongly sympathized with the Azerbaijan people and shared how he and the Government of Pakistan has stood with Azerbaijan and helped them at global forums. He also spoke on the on-going conflict and problems in the Indian occupied Kashmir and called for such conflicts in the light of UN Resolutions.

Six Years of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): Special Seminar held

A special seminar titled; “Six Years of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)” was organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in collaboration with Islamabad Stock Exchange (ISE) on February 6, 2020 at ISE Building in Islamabad. H.E. Mr. Asad Qaiser, the Speaker of National Assembly of Pakistan was the Chief Guest of the seminar, attended by the Ambassador of China to Pakistan, the Ambassadors of various ECO Member countries including Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and a large number of national and international academic experts, scholars, researchers and representatives of development partners and media. It is pertinent to mention the ECOSF is partner with China Association of Science and Technology (CAST) under the framework of Belt and Road International Science Education Coordinating Committee (BRISECC); of which the President ECOSF Prof. Manzoor H. Soomro is Vice President and was among the participants of the seminar.



The Executive Director, SDPI, Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri welcomed the Chief Guest and participants of the seminar and introduced the seminar.

The Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Yao Jing in his remarks said that after 6 years of successful implementation of CPEC projects under the umbrella of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), it is now established that CPEC and other corridors under BRI are projects of international cooperation, wherein 126 countries have so far joined in. He shared that BRI provided credible and tangible benefits to the beneficiary countries and CPEC is one of the successful examples. We are officially against the unilateralism and those against the BRI are against international cooperation, he added. “I am looking at CPEC in the context of historic China and Pakistan relations, where CPEC has provided new focus and new opportunities on economic front”, said Mr. Yao adding that CPEC under more clear and consistent policies coupled with set direction will help Pakistan in the long term.

On corona virus epidemic, Ambassador Yao said that this catastrophe would not stop the economic cooperation between China and Pakistan, and we are thankful to the Pakistani government and people for showing solidarity in our difficult time which provides us strength and more confidence.

President, Islamabad Stock Exchange (ISE), Mr. Zahid Latif Khan was also a panelist in the discussion and said that CPEC is the most successfully implemented project under BRI. The governments of China and Pakistan are expanding its scope in global value chain, social sector development, and blue economy etc., which would provide the gateways for the businesses to grow. He further said that to boost exports, Pakistan needs export surplus, in order to get benefits from Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and special concessions.

Finally, the National Assembly Speaker H.E. Mr. Asad Qaiser in his address said that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a backbone of our economy amid critical economic challenges to the country, terming CPEC a fortune change of the country. He further said that through knowledge sharing and technology transfer, it is hoped that Pakistan would soon get out of the current economic quagmire. Mr. Qaiser said that it is heartening to note that CPEC in its second phase has now included the agriculture and social sector, which would help Pakistan to address the challenges of agriculture and social sector. Mr. Qaiser expressed the need for creating and converting the CPEC committee into a think tank and asked SDPI's support in this regard. He also invited the business community and think tanks for economic policy inputs.



On corona virus outbreak in China, Mr. Qaiser said that through all thick and thin, China always helps Pakistan and in this catastrophe of corona virus, despite concerns, the government and people of Pakistan are standing with China and would provide all out support in their difficult times.

Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) Launches Diploma Courses in Water Quality Testing in Pakistan in collaboration with National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC)

The Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) in collaboration with National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) of Pakistan launched various duration Diploma Courses in water quality testing and management at PCRWR Headquarters in Islamabad on 26 Feb 2020 under Prime Minister's "Skills for All" programme called; "Hunermmand Pakistan" under the "Kamyab Jawan" Initiative.

It was the first batch under Hunermmand Pakistan Programme being trained by PCRWR in collaboration with NAVTTTC in water resources. More batches will be trained in coming days. The programme is meant to produce skilled human resource to fulfil the requirement of local industry. Skilled human resource can also bring foreign exchange in the country through the skilled workforce employed abroad.



Dr. Muhammad Ashraf, Chairman PCRWR welcomed the distinguished guests and highlighted diploma programme entrusted to PCRWR by the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Dr. Nasir Khan, Executive Director of NAVTTTC also addressed the ceremony and introduced the activities and programme of NAVTTTC with the audience.

It is pertinent to mention that water is also a main priority area of ECOSF and among other senior officials of various organizations; the opening ceremony was attended by the President ECOSF Professor Manzoor H. Soomro as well.

IPDS facilitated and hosted Informal Discussion between ECOSF, CAREC Institute and IPDS in Islamabad

An informal get-together between distinguished colleagues from the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies (IPDS) Islamabad, the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Institute and the Economic Cooperation Organization Science Foundation (ECOSF) was organized and hosted by the IPDS team viz., Ms. Farhat Asif, President of IPDS and Mr. Muhammad Asif Noor, Editor-in-Chief of The Diplomatic Insight magazine on 4th February, 2020 at Islamabad Club.

Purpose of the get-together was to bring together three institutions pursuing similar diplomatic goals and to encourage cooperation among them. Participants included Syed Shakeel Shah, Director of CAREC Institute; Dr. Qaisar Abbas (CAREC Institute); Dr. Samad (CAREC Institute); Farhat Asif -Founder President of IPDS and Dr. Manzoor Soomro, President of ECOSF.

The occasion provided a good opportunity for colleagues from the three institutions to be introduced and informally discuss the possible tripartite cooperation between ECOSF, CAREC and IPDS as well as bilateral cooperation among the organizations and their networks especially in Central Asia and linked with China. It is pertinent to mention that ECOSF on its own has a strong linkage with China Association for Science and Technology (CAST) for science education and youth engagement in the ECO region and beyond in Belt and Road member countries. It is expected that formal meetings between the institutions will take place soon.



President ECOSF appointed as Member Senate of Shaikh Ayaz University, Shikarpur

ECOSF is pleased to announce that its President Prof. Dr. Manzoor H. Soomro has been appointed as a Member of Senate (Science) of the Shaikh Ayaz University, Shikarpur by the Government of Sindh.

Upcoming Events posted on ECOSF website and Facebook page

Call for ADB-CI Visiting Fellowship Program

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and CAREC Institute (CI) based in Urumqi, China are inviting applications for the second round of Visiting Fellows Program and invites application for fellowships from interested researchers who are citizens of ADB member countries.

For more details - visit: <https://www.carecinstitute.org/news/adb-ci-visiting-fellows-program/>

Call for Doctoral Grants in the Framework of International Science and Technology Center supported by the European Union

International Science and Technology Center - which is a partner organization of the ECOSF based in Kazakhstan, has announced the call for its 2020 Doctoral Research Grant. The call is open to all disciplines but the research topic shall be related to:

- Developments and trends Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear weapons non proliferation
- Strategic trade control
- National and International trade control system

The Doctoral Research Grant is open to postgraduate students (regardless citizenship) holding a Master’s degree from a University established in principle in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Armenia, Georgia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Mongolia. Applicants will have to be registered in a Ph.D. program in an EU or European Economic Area university and shall have two supervisors. The deadline for the call for applications is 15 April 2020 at midday, Brussels time. For more information and details, please visit: <http://www.istc.int/en/article/20554>

5th International Conference on Management, Engineering, Science, Social Science and Humanities

The 5th International Conference on Management, Engineering, Science, Social Science and Humanities (iCon-MESSSH’20) will take place on August 14-15, 2020. It will bring together Academicians and Experts from different parts of the world to exchange the knowledge and ideas at a common platform to strengthen the Academics and Industry.

For more information: <https://socrd.org/?p=1270>

Notification: Progress and next steps in scoping IPBES assessments

IPBES has notified the progress and next steps towards the scoping assessments. Scoping meetings are scheduled for 24-26 March 2020 (nexus assessment) and 21-23 April 2020 (transformative change assessment). **Please save the date for a review of the draft scoping reports, which is scheduled to take place over a period of approximately 6 weeks between June and July 2020.** The comments received will be made available to the scoping experts as an input to finalizing the draft scoping reports for consideration by the Plenary at IPBES 8.

Please also note that the call for experts to assist with the scoping of the business and biodiversity assessment is planned to be issued in September/October 2020. An online conference to seek early input into the scoping process of this assessment is tentatively scheduled for November 2020. Please regularly check the ECOSF Newsletter and IPBES web-portal for more updates.

<http://ecosf.org/Progress-and-next-steps>

Distinguished Visitors to ECOSF

February 12, 2020: Syed Shakeel Shah, Director of CAREC Institute called upon President ECOSF at his office. The discussion rolled on the programmes and possible collaboration between CAREC and ECOSF. During the meeting, it was agreed that there can be a strong collaboration between both the organizations as 8 out of 10 member countries of ECO are the members of CAREC.

