



ECOSF NEWSLETTER



Corona Virus - COVID 19: Situation in Numbers in the ECO Member Countries

Country	Total confirmed cases due to COVID-19	Total confirmed deaths due to COVID-19
Afghanistan	59,745	2,625
Azerbaijan	319,109	4,517
Iran	2500000	71,758
Kazakhstan	375,539	3,334
Kyrgyzstan	95,275	1,604
Pakistan	825,519	17,957
Tajikistan	13,308	90
Turkey	4820000	40,131
Turkmenistan	-	-
Uzbekistan	90,808	649
ECO region Total	9,099,303	142,665

Date Stamp: April 30, 2021 Source: <https://ourworldindata.org>

Note: So far, no case has been reported in Turkmenistan.

6th Meeting of the Executive Committee of ECOSF convened virtually

The 6th Meeting of the Executive Committee (EC) of ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) was held virtually (online) on April 21, 2021. The Meeting was chaired by the President ECOSF Prof. Dr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro and attended by the Representatives of the Member States of ECO namely; the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. ECO Secretariat was represented by the Head of Section for International Relations.



President ECOSF opened the meeting and warmly welcomed the distinguished participants. He expressed the hope that positive and constructive contributions by the participants of the meeting would help to successfully finalize the recommendations and endorsements. Subsequently, in his remarks, President ECOSF appreciated the support and patronage of the Government of Pakistan and other member states as well as the ECO Secretariat in furthering the activities of the Foundation. He also highlighted major points of the progress of ECOSF.

During the meeting, the Heads of delegations delivered their statements and highlighted the potential of regional cooperation in the fields of science, technology, engineering, research and innovation. They appreciated the advocacy efforts and progress of ECOSF for promotion of science and technology in the region and collaboration among the Member States through mobility of S&T community and various S&T events including capacity building in science education. They renewed their firm commitment to support the programs of the Foundation and resolved to make it more efficient and productive specialized agency of the ECO.

The Committee stressed upon the need for enhanced cooperation between universities and Institutions of ECO Member States through joint programs and scholarships. Afterwards, the Head of Section for International Relations in the ECO Secretariat, Mr.



Muhammad Farooq made brief remarks and appreciated the Foundation for the efforts made to promote STI despite funding constraints and Covid19.

The Scientific Officer (SO) Engr. Khalil Raza made a PowerPoint presentation on the progress of the Foundation and highlighted the major activities of ECOSF since the last Meeting of ECOSF BoT held on 09th July 2019 preceded by the ECOSF EC. The SO ECOSF presented the



status of various initiatives and programmes being undertaken by the Foundation to promote the Science, Technology & Innovation (STI) in the ECO region. He outlined and presented a snapshot of various events and activities undertaken by the Foundation to strengthen STI in the region.

The EC appreciated the activities and initiatives of the Foundation for developing and promoting cooperation among the Member States as well as with the international organizations in the field of science and technology. The EC particularly appreciated ECOSF for its contribution in bringing together international knowledge resources for the ECO Member States and mobilizing scientific and technical inputs towards addressing critical challenges of COVID-19 in the ECO region. The EC also appreciated the Foundation for continued progress towards the IBSE capacity building in member states in collaboration with its international partners.

The EC highly valued the Foundation for maintaining strong collaboration and network with international, regional and national organizations and UNESCO; and encouraged it to continue more cooperation with the international science organizations and Forums for the benefit of the ECO region with particular reference to engagement of youth and achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the ECO vision by the ECO member states.

Later, the EC held in-depth discussions and made approvals and recommendations on matters. It gave approval of ECOSF Accounts 2019 & 2020, Budget Estimates for the years 2021 and 2022. ECOSF Annual Report 2019 and Draft Work Plan [2021 & 2022 (tentative)] were also approved. The EC finalized and adopted the report of the Meeting.

At the end, the President ECOSF thanked the delegates for their participation and valuable contributions to the deliberations. He expressed gratitude to the Government of the Pakistan, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Science and Technology, MSRT of Iran and the ECO Secretariat for their support to the Foundation. He also appreciated the efforts of ECOSF Secretariat for successful holding of the meeting and closed the meeting.

ECOSF Contributed to the First Virtual Meeting of the ECO Regional Network of Research Institutions/Centers and Think Tanks for Energy Studies

ECO Secretariat hosted the First Virtual Meeting of the ECO Regional Network of Research Institutions/Centers and Think Tanks for Energy Studies on April 27, 2021. The purpose of this meeting was to deliberate on the ECO Strategy for energy cooperation and its action plan, which have been prepared by the consultants from Azerbaijan, Turkey and Iran. This strategy document is envisioned to be adopted during 4th Energy Ministerial Meeting in near future.



Prof. Dr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro, President of ECO Science Foundation, participated as a keynote speaker and emphasized that the supply of reliable, clean and affordable energy remains critical for ECO Member Countries for developing essential industrial and economic base in order to become regionally competitive in today’s fast-changing world.

Earlier, in his opening remarks, H.E. Ambassador Huseyin Avni Bicakli, Deputy Secretary General of ECO expressed that ECO strives for building up the diverse and resilient energy architecture in the region via mainstreaming sustainable energy transition in its overall energy agenda and transformation to clean energy sources.

Participants from Member States discussed the proposals in storage batteries for the development of renewable energy sources, and enhancing export potential in energy. Additionally, the idea of developing ECO information database on energy statistics was put as means of cooperation amongst interested entities of Member States.

ECOSF and BTBU met virtually to chart out plan for training programs of the BTBU-ECOSF Joint Training Center

Beijing Technology and Business University (BTBU) and ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) organized a work plan meeting to deliberate on the plans for upcoming trainings under BTBU - ECOSF Joint Training Center for the year 2021.

During the meeting, Prof. Guo Yi, Secretary, School of International Business and Management, BTBU in his opening statement appreciated the partnership on this Joint Training Platform and looked forward to strengthening this collaboration towards developing more resourceful knowledge tools for BRI countries.

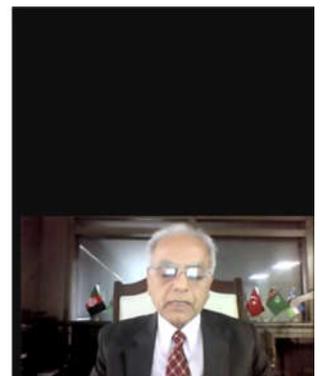
Prof. Dr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro also extended his appreciations to the BTBU leadership for their tremendous cooperation and support towards the BTBU-ECOSF Joint Training Center.

中国科协“一带一路”国际科技组织合作平台建设项目
China Association for Science and Technology (CAST) Program of International Collaboration Platform for Science and Technology Organizations in Belt and Road Countries



北京工商大学——经济合作组织科学基金会
BTBU——ECOSF
“一带一路”科技与经济合作联合培训中心
Joint Training Center on Scientific, Technological and Economic Cooperation under Belt and Road Initiative

Work Meeting



Dr. DI Yuna, Director of Joint Training Center delivered a presentation outlining the future course of action and presented the program activities for the year 2021. She reinforced that this joint training center would play a key role in creating a meaningful impact in the Belt and Road Countries in terms of generating essential knowledge and building the capacity of participating countries to address emerging challenges to BRI.

Engr. Khalil Raza, Scientific Officer ECOSF deliberated on direction and content of the training programs, and the two sides endorsed the joint work plans aligned with emerging needs of the BRI countries.

President ECOSF attended the Launch ceremony of Islamabad Space Observatory

H.E. Mr. Chaudhary Fawad Hussain, the then Federal Minister for Science and Technology of Pakistan inaugurated the Islamabad Space Observatory on 12th April 2021. He was accompanied by the Chairman of National Moon sighting Committee of Pakistan. The purpose of setting up this space observatory is to offer the public an understanding of space science and to inspire the next generation of scientists and attract the younger generation towards science and technology career streams. President ECOSF, Prof. Dr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro attended the launch ceremony.

Observatories around the world play a key role in offering the public an understanding of space and astronomy and in inspiring the next generation of scientists with enriching and engaging experiences. Islamabad-based amateur astronomers have urged the government to dedicate a research center at the facility to offer education and hands-on training besides the sky gazing opportunity. The site in Shakarparian area of Islamabad is deemed ideal as the best sites for observatories are located away from the cities and at a high altitude, however, its location in the heart of Islamabad city will offer easy access to visitors to view the sky through the telescope.



The Islamabad observatory will be established under a joint initiative of the Ministry of Science and Technology and Pakistan Science Foundation for which the Institute of Space Technology (IST) Islamabad will provide technical expertise. The observatory would include a full-dome projection system, guided tours about the solar system, educational science films offering visitors a unique view of the universe. The attraction will be open for all where people can enjoy both day and night sky views.

Strengthen cooperation between ECO countries and China to maximize benefits of BRI said President ECOSF

ISLAMABAD, April 7: In an interview with news agency Gwadar Pro, President ECOSF Prof. Manzoor Soomro expressed that it is crucial to strengthen cross-border cooperation in the field of science, technology and innovation education among participating countries of “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI), including the member states of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), so as to maximize the benefits of BRI. He further expressed that three corridors of the six major economic corridors of BRI pass through



the ECO region, which makes relationship between ECO countries and China very special and close.

His complete interview can be read at following link: <https://tinyurl.com/yj9d322m>

IBSE-LAMAP Pilot Center named after Prof. Yves Quere of France opened in Malaysia

An IBSE Pilot Centre in the name of Prof. Yves Quere of Academy of Sciences of France and one of the Co-Founders of *La main a la pate* (LAMAP) Foundation was inaugurated by the Government of Malaysia and the International Science, Technology and Innovation Centre for South-South Cooperation under the auspices of UNESCO (ISTIC) to honour him for his services towards promotion of Inquiry Based Science Education (IBSE)-LAMAP in France as well in many other countries but especially in Malaysia.



LAMAP established in 1996 under the auspices of Academy of Sciences in Paris had developed a methodology called “Inquiry Based Science Education (IBSE)” for teaching science through hands on techniques/activities. LAMAP promotes and spreads IBSE methodology in more than 60 countries including Malaysia and the ECO Region. The methodology has significantly changed learning of STEM subjects as it develops critical thinking among the students.

The Pilot Centre has been established at Kuala Lumpur, capital of Malaysia for continuing professional development of STEM teachers. A bust of Prof. Quere was also unveiled and put up in the Pilot Centre named after him.



The programme was launched in Malaysia as an initiative of Academician Dato Dr. (Ir.) Lee Yee Cheong as Chairman of ISTIC Governing Board during early 2000s. Dato Lee is also a member of ECOSF’s International Advisory Board. LAMAP and ISTIC have both been collaborators and supporters of ECOSF in IBSE capacity building in ECO Region. ECOSF congratulates ISTIC and LAMAP on this historical development and highly appreciates the gesture by Malaysian colleagues especially Dato Lee Yee Cheong- the man behind the project. ECOSF Team also pays respects to Prof. Yves Quere and wishes good health and Happy 90th Birthday to him.

ECOSF participated in a webinar on Imagining the Carbon-neutral Future: Transformations in Energy and Transport organized by UN DESA.

UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) is hosting a four-part series to discuss ways the world can place climate action at the heart of recovering better from the COVID-19 crisis. As part of UN DESA’s Global Policy Dialogues for Climate Action, a dialogue on Imagining the Carbon-neutral Future: Transformations in Energy and Transport was organized on 28 April 2021. This session was organized in collaboration and support of UN-Energy and UN-Habitat.

The session brought together leading voices in the fields of clean energy and sustainable transport with experts. The objective of holding this event was to discuss practical solutions and ways to reform these systems minimizing their effect on the environment, in the context of recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Cross-cutting issues such as financing, governance, gender, data and statistics will be part of the discussion, as well as how the world can best make systemic transformations to a

more sustainable world while leaving no one behind. On behalf of ECOSF, the President Prof. Dr Manzoor Hussain Soomro and Engr. Khalil Raza participated in the event.

The panellists of the webinar included:

1. Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-Habitat
2. Mr. Xiangkun (Elvis) Cao (China), Micro and nanoscale engineer
3. Mr. Adekoyejo Kuye (Nigeria), project lead, Manamuz Electric LTD
4. Ms. Bahareh Seyedi, Senior Sustainable Development Officer, UN DESA
5. Mr. Kandeh Yumkella (Sierra Leone), former chair of UN-Energy and former Director-General of UNIDO
6. Ms. Kristen Siemen (USA), Vice President of Sustainable Workplaces and Chief Sustainability Officer, General Motors
7. Ms. Damilola Ogunbiyi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All



The discussion during in webinar centered around following questions:

- How can we accelerate a global transition to clean energy, while ensuring universal energy access, especially in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States?
- What policies should Governments undertake?
- What are some of the necessary means and tools to ensure policies are put into practice and deliver our promises of the Paris Agreement?
- How do we ensure that the energy transition is inclusive and equitable for women?

Regional Science Stakeholders explore the Interaction between Climate Change and the Ocean in Asia Pacific SIDS

On the occasion of Mother Earth Day on 22 April, UNESCO Jakarta Office organized the “Intersection between Climate Change and the Ocean in Asia Pacific SIDS” on 20 April 2021, supported by Japanese Funds-in-Trust. Panellists shared the overview of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, Challenges and practices at SIDS, and the various practice on Climate Change mitigation and Ocean protection at SIDS.



The interaction of the earth, ocean, climate, and weather induced disasters are key scientific areas under UNESCO’s portfolio and where UNESCO’s multidisciplinary approaches can play an important role. UNESCO and partners explored how we can better support Small Island Developing states (SIDS), which are at particular risk. Dr. Hans Dencker Thulstrup, Officer in Charge of UNESCO’s Regional Science Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, welcomed representatives from SIDS, experts, UNESCO colleagues, and over 200 participants to enhance our understanding on ongoing work and explore future action we can take.

Dr. Vladimir Ryabinin, Executive Secretary of UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, set the scene by providing a UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030). He highlighted that the first call for actions related to the Decade received hundreds of proposals, which shows strong interest and commitment from partners. Dr. Wenxi Zhu, Head and Programme Specialist UNESCO IOC/WESTPAC, explained the specific action in the region that included various ocean monitoring and capacity development efforts.

ECOSF Participated in the Virtual Dialogue on Valuing Water for a Stronger Pandemic Recovery



As part of a series of events organized in the context of celebration of the World Water Day 2021, UNESCO Jakarta organized a regional experts’ discussion under the heading “Valuing Water for a Stronger Pandemic Recovery” on 20 April 2021, supported by the Government of Japan. The panellists suggested key elements be incorporated and considered for a stronger pandemic recovery.

With participation by over 50 members of the UNESCO water family, the online meeting introduced two case studies on water and COVID-19 – by the Regional Centre for Urban Water Management (Iran) and the UNESCO Chair at the Kazakh-German University (Kazakhstan) – along with regional perspectives on gender from COMSTECH (Pakistan) and watershed management at the Mae Sa-Kog Ma Biosphere Reserve (Thailand).

The panellists delivered their presentations focused on the impacts of and response to the pandemic across different sectors. They recommended the need for new thinking as the region emerges towards a new normal. COVID-19 has brought the importance of adaptable planning to the forefront.

Experts underscored the need for better planning and management need to be advocated at all levels and sectors, including urban planning, business, education and research, as well as protected areas. Incorporating women’s perspectives, knowledge, and values in water management may also enhance the resiliency of planning and serve as a key enabler in a stronger pandemic recovery. The experts concluded that pandemic has necessitated an innovative reorganization of learning and teaching modalities in water education, demonstrated by how the COVID-19 crisis response has brought with it innovation and new thinking.

ECOSF participated in the FEIAP-FAEO AAP Accord Signing Ceremony

The Africa, Asia and the Pacific Accord (AAP Accord) is the framework for the establishment of an International Standard of Engineering Education and empowers each member jurisdiction or economy of Federation of African Engineering Organization (FAEO) and Federation of Engineering Institutions of Asia and the Pacific (FEIAP) to establish a section of the register for Graduate Engineers, Engineering Technologist and Engineering technicians. This historic agreement was virtually signed between FEIAP and FAEO on April 16 2021.



The ceremony was witnessed by the President of the World Federation of Engineering Organization (WFEO), Prof. Dr. Gong Ke; the WFEO Executive Vice President, Engr. Mustafa B. Shehu; President ECOSF, Prof. Manzoor Hussain Soomro and several other dignitaries from UNESCO and the African Union as well as the members of engineering institutions from Africa and Asia.

The AAP Accord is intended to create a framework for an International Standard of Engineering Education and covers the education of engineers, technologists and technicians. The accord will, among other things, facilitate the mobility of those graduates holding suitable qualifications under the accord.

The President of FAEO, Ing. (Mrs) Carlien Bou-Chedid and the President FEIAP Prof. Dr. Huang Wei, signed the AAP Accord. Speaking at the ceremony, the President of FAEO, Ing. Mrs. Carlien Bou-Chedid explained the significance of the accord saying with the signing of the AAP accord, FAEO had come a step closer to realizing the vision of harmonizing engineering standards in Africa.

The FEIAP President, Prof. Huang Wei said he considers the signing of the accord as a great milestone in the history of FAEO and FEIAP as well for engineers around the world in that Africa was joining hands with other member countries to promote quality engineering education and practice which will create a larger market for their services. The President of the World Federation of Engineering Organizations, Prof. Dr. Gong Ke expressed delight that he was witnessing the signing of the AAP Accord.

Other high officials who witnessed the signing ceremony and gave solidarity messages include: Prof. Dr. Shahbaz Khan-Director of UNESCO in Beijing and Representative to China, DPRK, Japan, Mongolia and Republic of Korea; Dr. Eng. Ahmed Hamdy- Executive Director of African Union-STRC & AU-ASRIC, represented by Dr. Mohammed Kyan; Dr. Peggy Oti-Boateng – Director, Division of Science Policy and Capacity-Building (SC/PCB) – UNESCO; and Dr. Thulstrup Hans – Officer in charge, UNESCO Cluster office in Asia and the Pacific.

ECOSF Participated in a webinar on Education Now: "Innovations in Global Education"

Yidan Prize collaborated with the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) and organized a webinar “Education Now” On 23 April 2021. The purpose of holding this webinar series is to respond to the dramatic changes in the field of education in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. A large number of researchers, scholars and experts participated in the webinar. On behalf of ECOSF, President Prof. Manzoor Hussain Soomro participated in the webinar.

The webinar was moderated by Bridget Terray Long, Dean and Saris Professor of Education and Economics, HGSE. Experts deliberated that every nation describes education as a top domestic policy priority. However, a few avenues exist today to connect those policy conversations across national boundaries. The discussion of the webinar



centered around as to what should a global conversation about education look like and what are the pressing international challenges that educators and societies face — and where are the opportunities for innovation, collaboration, discovery, and meaningful engagement on real-world problems?

- Professor Anant Agarwal, Founder, and CEO, edX
- Professor Usha Goswami, Professor of Cognitive Developmental Neuroscience, University of Cambridge
- Professor Thomas Kane, Walter H. Gale Professor of Education and Economics at Harvard Graduate School of Education
- Ms. Angeline Murimirwa, Executive Director-Africa - CAMFED.

Professor Kane said that just in the three years, decade old international organizations like OECD have begun comparing student's skills in math and literacy and science. Now, we must make it easier for policymakers to learn about promising ideas from others countries and to begin testing them, with comparison groups in their own context.

Professor Usha Goswami said that a global conversation about education should look into dismantling the developmental barriers to learn and the kinds of access we can put in place to make sure all children get the right education.

Professor Anant Agarwal said that as we bring in new stackable modular education fuelled by learning science and powered by advances in technology like AI and Machine learning online learning is poised to make quantum leaps in the next five to 10 Years.

Ms. Angeline Murimirwa said that now is the time to build forward acting on the pandemic's harsh lesson to build equity into the system for every child delivering social-economic, and climate justice through education.

Analysis of Public Attitudes towards COVID-19 Vaccination in Selected CAREC Countries

The CAREC Institute in collaboration with Asian Development Bank (ADB), published a report on Analysis of Public "Attitudes towards COVID-19 Vaccination in Selected CAREC Countries" to identify and understand public's attitudes towards vaccination in seven-member countries of the CAREC Program by using latest survey techniques.

Objective of the project was to help member governments develop better understanding of public attitudes for a better roll-out of vaccination programs for maximum coverage needed for herd immunity and return to normal. Time is critical, as pandemic has already extracted huge cost on economies, human health, social orders, and education. Vulnerable groups have borne the brunt of the pandemic and ensuing consequences.

Findings of this report identify some stark realities and challenges for vaccination programs in the seven countries and suggest policy recommendations that can be useful for addressing those challenges. While the majority of the population surveyed do demonstrate trust in vaccines, there are significant numbers who doubt the efficacy of it. A quarter of respondents found it difficult to assess the efficacy, pointing to a significant information gap.

A certain percentage of respondents is in a state of denial altogether regarding existence of the disease. Among those accepting existence of the disease and are willing to be vaccinated, free vaccination is the preferred option for the majority. One interesting finding is that the main determinant of vaccination decision is protection of the family. Survey also captures the deterioration in financial situation for a significant percentage of population, and mounting fears in case pandemic persists. For information, preferred media is television, followed by social media and personal circles.

In any case the overarching fact revealed is that understanding the science of COVID-19 and Vaccination is somewhat lacking, which requires better "Science Communication" thereby countering miscommunication and misinformation/disinformation.

Read more: <https://tinyurl.com/pyj49a9b>

University of Reading, UK Organized an Online Alumni Lecture – Supporting the vulnerable: COVID's social impact

University of Reading, United Kingdom organized a global Online Alumni Lecture – Supporting the vulnerable: COVID's social impact on 22 April 2021. COVID-19 has caused havoc and upheaval in ways no-one could have foreseen. University of Reading invited graduates from diverse backgrounds and industries to share their experiences and expertise on how the global pandemic has changed their sectors.

In this panel discussion, University of Reading Vice-Chancellor, Professor Robert Van de Noort, was joined by alumni from the charity sector to discuss the impact of the global pandemic on supporting the vulnerable. Speakers highlighted that COVID-19

has had a devastating effect on the charity sector's ability to operate, however, at the same time, charities have experienced an increase in demand due to the impact of Coronavirus on the vulnerable.

Many of these organizations are now working in the frontline in the fight against the virus, by supporting the homeless, arranging food provision for people unable to put food on the table, and supporting bereaved families suffering loss. President ECOSF Prof. Manzoor Soomro as an alumnus of the University was invited and joined in the webinar.

ECOSF participated in the UNESCO expert meeting on Open Science and Intellectual Property Rights

Recognizing the ongoing policy challenge to balance openness and Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) protection, UNESCO organized an expert meeting to discuss the relationships between IPRs and Open Science on April 23, 2021. The objective of this meeting was to present different existing instruments and mechanisms that reconcile ownership and sharing/openness, and to exchange on balanced IPRs and Open Science policies and strategies. On behalf of ECOSF, President Soomro participated in the meeting.



This online meeting was part of a series of actions aiming to build a global consensus on Open Science and developing an international standard-setting instrument in the form of a UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science.

The Recommendations put forwarded during the meeting defined the shared values and principles for Open Science and identification of concrete measures on Open Access and Open Data, with proposals to bring society closer to science and commitments to facilitate the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge worldwide.

After considering the comments from the Member States and partners on the first draft of the recommendation, a revised draft has been transmitted by the Director General of UNESCO to Member States (available online) and will be negotiated by Member States at an intergovernmental meeting in May 2021.

ECOSF Participated in PIDE Webinar on "Future of Pakistan Economy with the IMF Program"

Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) organized a webinar on "Future of Pakistan Economy with the IMF Program" on 19 April 2021. The webinar was moderated by Dr. Naadeem ul Haque – the Vice-Chancellor of PIDE. On behalf of ECOSF, President Manzoor Soomro participated in the webinar. Teresa Daban Sanchez, Resident Representative of International Monetary Fund (IMF) to Pakistan was the guest speaker.



Teresa Daban Sanchez said that Pakistan remains committed to the goals of the IMF supported Program, A revenue-based fiscal sustainability strategy, by removing exemptions and privileges, enhancing social and productive spending, coordination with provinces, and elimination of quasi-fiscal circular debt and SOE losses.

IMF representative called for strengthening of social safety net, to protect the most vulnerable as needed, a market-determined and flexible exchange rate, an independent central bank with primary focus on price stability.

Earth Day 2021 organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) - ECOSF Participated

The Earth Day 2021 was organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) of Pakistan on 22 April 2021. The theme of this year's earth day was "Climate Crisis and the Road to Glasgow". The event was moderated by Imran Khalid, Research Fellow of SDPI. A large number of research scholars and experts participated in the event. President ECOSF Prof. Manzoor Soomro also attended.



The Panellists of the event were Dr. Saleemul Haq, Director, International Center for Climate Change and Development, Dhaka-Bangladesh, Ms. Ulka Kelkar, Director Climate Program, World Resources Institute (WRI)-India, Dr. Fahad Saeed, Climate Analytics, Regional Climate Scientist, and Dr. Abid Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI Pakistan.

Ms. Ulka Kelkar said that during the pandemic, emissions have been dropped by 7 percent in one year and this percentage is required each year which is a massive challenge. She emphasized that "the implementation of the climate action will have to happen at local and sectoral levels and thus, local stakeholders need to be supported." Likewise, the climate change budget and climate change finance need to be trickled down to the local levels, she added.

ECOSF Participated in the PIDE Reform Agenda for Accelerated and Sustained growth on 22 April 2021

The PIDE Reform Agenda for Accelerated and Sustained Growth in Pakistan was launched on 22 April 2021 at the Planning Commission of Pakistan. Minister of Planning Development and Special Initiatives, Mr. Asad Umar was the chief guest at the launch event. On behalf of ECOSF, its President Prof. Manzoor H. Soomro participated in the event.



Mr. Asad Umar, in his opening remarks, lauded the efforts of PIDE for coming up with a growth reform Agenda. He said that now that economy has stabilized after efforts of the government now is the time to work towards growth which is not only high enough but sustained for a long period as well. Thus, the PIDE's reform Agenda for accelerated and sustained growth comes at the very appropriate time.

Thereafter Vice Chancellor PIDE, Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, presented the salient features of the PIDE's proposed Reform Agenda for Accelerated and Sustained Growth. According to PIDE the task of preparing the Reform Agenda began with asking a central question; Can Pakistan experience accelerated and sustained economic growth and If yes, how? To find an answer VC PIDE constituted a PIDE Growth Commission. The Commission comprised renowned local economists and development practitioners from all over the country. The commission also had an adequate representation of the female professionals. The commission was supported by a secretariat at PIDE, consisting of 18 researchers led by Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, Vice-Chancellor PIDE.

The Agenda takes the view that the development model that Pakistan has been using since the sixties focuses primarily on investment in hardware led by infrastructure. This model, argues the agenda, developed by Dr. Mahbub ul Haq and the then Harvard Advisory group in the '60s was correct for those times when the country needed investment infrastructure. However, with change dynamics, now the model needs to undergo a paradigm shift – the country now needs to shift its focus from investment in hardware to investment in the software of the society. This software is the quality human capital, innovation, R&D, and most importantly the laws, rules, and processes that further economic activity.

Upcoming Events posted on ECOSF website and Facebook page

Chinese Scholarship Opportunities for International Students in Agriculture Sciences

The Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) is a national organization for scientific research, technology transfer and education in agriculture. It is always striving to provide solutions to a broad range of challenges in sustaining agricultural development through innovative research and technology transfer. For detailed information about CAAS, please visit the CAAS website at <http://www.caas.cn/en/>.

The Graduate School of Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (GSCAAS) is a higher education institution mainly focusing on graduate education (Agency No. 82101). As the education arm of CAAS, GSCAAS has been ranked among China's first-class graduate schools, with an overall competitive edge in the disciplines of agriculture. It offers Master's and Doctoral programs to international students through 34 institutes of CAAS. The study duration is usually 3 years for both Master's and Doctoral programs. Certificates of graduation and degrees are awarded to those who have met the requirements of graduation and degree conferral. The instruction language of the graduate programs is mostly English or bilingual (Chinese-English).

In 2007, GSCAAS received the qualification of Chinese Government Scholarship Granting Institution from the Ministry of Education of China. GSCAAS now offers international students various scholarship opportunities, including the **Chinese Government Scholarship (CGS)**, the **Beijing Government Scholarship (BGS)**, the **GSCAAS Scholarship (GSCAASS)** and the **GSCAAS-OWSD Fellowship** (<https://owsd.net/>). In 2019, GSCAAS officially passed the National Accreditation on Universities Hosting International Students. It has also launched two joint PhD programs in collaboration with the University of Liege in Belgium, and Wageningen University & Research in the Netherlands. At present, there are 486 international students (from 59 different countries across 5 continents) at GSCAAS, 86.8% of whom are Ph.D. students. GSCAAS is further developing its international education program and welcomes all academically outstanding students worldwide to apply to pursue their higher education with this institution.

<http://ecosf.org/Chinese-Scholarship-Opportunities>

First Regional 100 Second Water and Energy Film Festival

UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office in partnership with Ministry of Energy Iran and relevant partners plans to organize the First Regional 100 Second Water and Energy Film Festival. The themes for this festival are as below;

1. The environmental value of water and energy
2. The economic, social, and cultural values of water and energy.
3. Climate change, water, and energy.
4. The role of the media in promoting optimal water and energy consumption management.
5. Access to safe drinking water and sustainable energy.

There are three categories; Film, Documentary and Animation. The poster of the event and for more information, please see the event website: <https://100-we.com/> The deadline for submission is May 7th, 2021.

Distinguished Visitor to the ECOSF

April 30, 2021: Vice Chancellor of Shah Abdul Latif University Khairpur, Pakistan Prof. Khalil Ahmed Ibupoto (left) called upon the President ECOSF at his office and discussed the possible collaboration of ECOSF and the University.

