



# ECOSF NEWSLETTER



## Lahore Science Mela (Fair) – 2019 held in Lahore-Pakistan, ECOSF joined as Key Partner/Collaborator

Lahore Science Mela (Fair) – 2019 was held on 12-13 October 2019 at Ali Institute of Education, Lahore, Pakistan. The Mela was organized by Khwarizmi Science Society (KSS) in collaboration with ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF), Government of Punjab, Ali Institute of Education, JS Bank and others. It was the 3rd in a row in the series of annual Science Mela, started in 2017. Since the start, ECOSF has been part of the Science Fair, supporting the event in various ways.

The Mela was opened by renowned philanthropist and businessman, Mr. Syed Babar Ali. In his opening remarks, Mr. Babar appreciated the organizers for setting this kind of Fair on regular basis and affirmed his possible support in future as well.



Earlier, Prof. Manzoor H. Soomro in his remarks said that ECOSF has been part and supporting the Mela since its launch in 2017 and hoped that this collaboration would continue in future. He further said that the Science Advocacy and Diplomacy plays a pivotal role in popularizing the science among the masses, thus, there is dire need to organize such kinds of events throughout the country and beyond in the Economic Cooperation Organization region, so that scientific culture can be promoted in the society which will ultimately boost the socioeconomic conditions of the people at large. He recalled bringing Mathematics trainers/communicators in the Mela last year and also shared that ECOSF has developed collaboration with China Association of Science and Technology (CAST); and under the collaboration Teenager Maker Camps and China Adolescent Science, Technology and Innovation Competition (CASTIC) are organized annually in China wherein the teams comprising of students and teachers from around the world participate. Dr. Soomro suggested that ECOSF and KSS in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders can organize such maker camps in Pakistan as well. The suggestion was appreciated.

It is pertinent to mention that since the world is celebrating the 150th anniversary of Periodic Table of Chemical elements, the festival was focused on the wonders of chemistry including elements, minerals, compounds, mining and major industrial processes. The other sets of exhibits were divided into several parts such as life sciences, wildlife flora and fauna, AI and electronics, mineral and agricultural resources and space sciences, to name a few. The exhibits and scientific projects were

displayed by the students, youth, entrepreneurs, scientific organizations such as Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), COMSATS, National Centre for Physics (NCP), Astronomical Society of Pakistan, universities and many more.

This year, a team from CERN Laboratories Switzerland also came to Mela and established “Large Hadron Collider (LHC) Interactive Tunnel” at the Mela and demonstrated the simulation of immersive experience of Particle Physics and God Particles “the Higgs Boson”. This activity was quite a centre of attraction especially for the senior class/high school students.



The Lahore Science Mela was open-to-all; thus about 30,000 people from all walks of life especially the students and youth visited the Mela and took keen interest in the exhibits and scientific projects. The Minister for Education Punjab Dr. Murad Raas also visited the projects/exhibits and appreciated the innovative ideas of the students. He also praised the organizers for arranging these kinds of events.

Following are some glimpses of the Mela:



**ECOSF becomes Affiliated Member of AIUTA**

ECOSF is proud to share that it has been granted/inducted as the “Affiliated Member” of **International Association of Universities of Third Age (AIUTA)**. The Membership was approved by the Governing Board of AIUTA in its meeting held on October 10, 2019 in Byblos, Lebanon.

Due to changing demographics, the fraction of elderly population is growing at a considerable rate in many countries. This growing ageing population is developing a serious challenge and affecting the economic, social and cultural and overall lifestyle of a nation. In order to address this challenge, University of Third Age (U3A) program was launched in Toulouse France in 1973 and spread rapidly throughout Europe and across the Atlantic to America to cater to the educational needs of elderly people. It

is a remarkable initiative to help higher age groups to not only remain health and active part of the society, but also contribute in the socio-economic sphere with education, research skills.



AIUTA brings together third age universities from all continents. Its action over the past four decades has made a significant contribution to the cause of senior citizens through lifelong learning, exchanges between universities and education enabling them productive members of society.

There are millions of senior citizens in the world who do not have much to do in life primarily due to social and cultural norms. They need something to keep them up-to-date and engaged. Thus, the University of the Third Age (U3A) is the perfect place to be for senior citizens. The main idea behind the U3A is to make it easier for people to study whatever they like.

The Affiliated Membership will enable ECOSF to engage the elderly/senior citizens of ECO countries to share their wisdom, expertise and experiences with the senior peoples of different countries of the world. It is pertinent to mention that ECOSF earlier this year prepared a report on the statistics of elderly and status of Education for the Elderly in ECO Region and was presented in an international conference of AIUTA held in Wuhan- China in May 2019. It was noted that ECO member country Afghanistan is No.1 in the world in terms of elderly living with their children and being taken care of, apparently due to the strong family culture.

### **Celebrating 70 Years of China's Achievements in Poverty Eradication Seminar held at SDPI Islamabad**

A seminar titled “Celebrating 70 years of China's achievements in poverty eradication” was organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in Islamabad- Pakistan on 17 October 2019 to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. This year China is celebrating its 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. The seminar highlighted the factors responsible for poverty and the ways and strategies used by the P.R. China for eradication of poverty in that huge country.



The Chief Guest of this event was H.E. Mr. Yao Jing, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China in Pakistan. In his speech the Ambassador said that China’s much-touted transformation did not come overnight nor was it created in isolation. It is the part of an overall comprehensive development strategy which is not confined to growth rate only, but it is meant to include education, health, environmental protection, social security and high-quality development, The Ambassador added

H.E. Mr. Jing went on to say that the multi-billion dollar China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is entering its second phase where both countries are now focusing on industrial cooperation, agricultural cooperation, and socio-economic development.

He shared that under social cooperation, they are focusing on six areas including health, education, water, agriculture, poverty eradication and human resource development.

Parliamentary Secretary for Planning Development and Reform Ms. Kanwal Shauzab in her talk said that China not only miraculously lifted a substantial chunk of its population out of poverty but also became a hub of technology and innovation in the world because it educated its people with advanced technical skills and science education. **“There is a dire need to educate and equip our young generation with modern technical skills as per the demand of changing development paradigm,”** she added. Pakistan also needs a paradigm shift in the education system to help fight poverty, she stressed.

SDPI Executive Director Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri in his remarks said that we all need to work together to empower our children, their families and communities to help reduce poverty.



Zalmi Foundation Executive Director Shakeel Ahmad Ramay, Dr. Mushtaq Gill a water management expert and Mr. Zamir Awan former Science Councilor of Pakistan in Beijing also spoke and shared their experiences in and with China; and appreciated China’s inclusive decisions made by engaging local communities and youth by making them part of development strategies on its way to eradicating poverty.

On behalf of ECOSF, its President Dr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro participated in the Seminar And during the Q&A session, he spoke about the success of China in motivation of youth and promotion of innovation whereby emphasis has been on inquiry based science education (IBSE) approach which contributed towards poverty reduction. He also shared that China Association of Science and Technology (CAST) is partner of ECOSF for innovation and maker camps as well as IBSE for children and youth under the framework of “Belt and Road International Science Education Coordinating Committee (BRISECC)”; of which Dr. Soomro is an elected Vice President.

After the seminar, a cake cutting ceremony was arranged; wherein, the Ambassador of People’s Republic of China in Pakistan (center) H.E. Mr. Yao Jing, along with other dignitaries cut the cake.

**MoU Inked between AETDEW and CYSCC for long term Collaboration to Engage the Youth for Science, Engineering and Technology**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Academy of Engineering and Technology of the Developing World (AETDEW) and Children and Youth Science Center of China Association of Science and Technology (CYSCC) on September 25, 2019 at green and beautiful city of Nanning, China.

Due to non-availability of AETDEW President Dato Lee Yee Cheong, Prof. Manzoor Hussain Soomro, Member Board of Directors of AETDEW signed the MoU on behalf of the Academy; whereas, the CYSCC was represented by its Director General Mr. Liu Yang. The signing ceremony was witnessed by President of Belt and Road International Science Education Coordinating Committee (BRISECC) Prof. WU Yueliang and other leadership of CAST. International dignitaries from; Australia, Indonesia, Tunisia, Czech Republic, Ukraine and Armenia, some of them members of AETDEW, also witnessed the ceremony.



Salient features of the MoU are to collaborate in following fields:

- Sending young talents to attend “Belt and Road (B&R) Teenager Maker Camp Camps;
- Explore possibility of working together on training and communication programmes of science teachers;
- Promotion of scientists and engineers to inspire children and youth’s interest in science, engineering and technology;
- Working to gather on mutually interested topics.

Both the organizations wov to put their best possible efforts to materialize the collaboration in the best interests of youth of the countries along the belt and road.

**PCRWR, UNESCO and ECOSF are assisting the Government of Balochistan (Pakistan) in the nomination process of inscription of “Karezes of Balochistan” as the UNESCO’s World Heritage Site.**

The Government of Balochistan in collaboration with the Pakistan Council for Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), UNESCO and ECOSF, and other stakeholders has initiated the process of nomination and inscription of Karezes as the UNESCO’s World Heritage Site. ECOSF highly values this as an essential first step towards the preservation of rich Cultural Heritage of Balochistan. In this context, the Planning & Development Department, Provincial Government of Balochistan- Pakistan has constituted the Steering Committee for nomination process of Karezes and Cultural Landscapes of Balochistan as World Heritage Site. ECOSF is pleased to report that its President ECOSF, Prof. Dr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro will serve as one of the Members of this Steering Committee to review and assist the stakeholders for inscription and possible nomination of Karezes as the World Heritage Site. The Steering Committee held its first meeting in Quetta on July 31, 2019. The PCRWR has been designated to work as the Secretariat of this program to coordinate the overall process and provide technical support to the stakeholders.

As per notification issued by the Government of Balochistan, the Steering Committee will function in accordance with following Terms of Reference (ToRs):

1. The Committee shall periodically monitor and review the progress of the preparation of the Dossier and seek to meet after every four months. However, an emergency meeting may be called anytime if required. The members of the committee will meet the expenses of regarding participation in the meetings from the respective departments.
2. The Committee shall facilitate the work of the consultant and other experts involved for the preparation of all relevant documentation for the finalizing of the dossier e.g. obtaining permissions and facilitating meetings with relevant officials and community members etc.
3. The committee will make sure that the process for the preparation nomination is inclusive and all the relevant stakeholders including Government and Non-Government institutions, academic and relevant communities are consulted and involved in the process.
4. The Committee will ensure to accomplish and create public awareness about the process, finalize the nomination dossier on the Karez and submit to the World Heritage Center through Department of Cultures, Archives and Tourism, Balochistan, Federal Department of Archaeology and Museums, Islamabad and Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO.

### THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE: AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS IN KAZAKHSTAN

*Courtesy of Eurasian Research Institute (ERI) Kazakhstan*

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), first announced by Chinese President Xi Jinping in Kazakhstan in 2013, is a continuation of China's integration with the international community as well as a new pattern in the Chinese economic and foreign policies. With the implementation of the BRI, China seeks to remove infrastructure and political barriers to trade in Eurasia. Ever since China announced the BRI, academic research and policy reports have been interested in studying its geostrategic intentions and possible geo-economics implications. However, China's investment is not limited to transport and infrastructure, but is also expanding in economic terms into agriculture and the food industry of the countries along the route. Kazakhstan is the largest Central Asian recipient of Chinese investment in these sectors. There are joint projects that started after the BRI announcement and special projects branded as the BRI ones. The Kazakh authorities responded quickly and favorably to the Chinese initiative by incorporating its 2015–2019 "Nurly Zhol" ("Bright Path") infrastructure development program into the BRI. As well-known Chinese expert on Central Asia, Professor of Fudan University Zhao Huasheng stated, it is more essential for the BRI to have the Central Asian states as active participants and promoters, not as mere respondents and recipients. So, in implementing the BRI, China should make the regional countries its 'allies', but not just collaborators.

In mutual trade, Kazakhstan mainly exports crude oil and metals, while China exports manufactured goods such as electronic devices and textile products. The purpose of the Kazakh government is promoting economic diversification and diminishing the (over)dependence of the country on oil. The meeting of prime ministers of Kazakhstan and China Karim Massimov and Li Keqiang in December 2014 launched the official negotiations in this area. At this meeting, an agreement on the creation of a joint venture for the production of semi-finished products and intermediate goods was signed. Through the long-term period of bilateral negotiations on cooperation, agriculture was always on the agenda. The recent agreements reached by the ministries of agriculture of the two countries at the Kazakhstan-China Agrarian Investment Forum in 2017 boosted cooperation in this field. As a result, Kazakhstan has already agreed the standardization requirements for exports of 17 food items, such as wheat, meat, vegetable seed, oil, honey, and other food products.

The changing situation with food security in China has also facilitated Chinese investments in Kazakh agriculture. According to the China Center for Agricultural Policy at Peking University, China's overall food self-sufficiency is forecasted to fall from 94.5% in 2015 to around 91% by 2025. In addition to that, with Chinese people becoming wealthier, their food consumption and the quality of products they consume are also rising. High-quality food and agricultural products are appropriately valued in China for environmental friendliness and naturalness. Additionally, China has suspended purchases of U.S. agricultural products during the trade war. These circumstances have led to an increase in exports of Kazakhstani food products to China. According to the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan, over the past 10 years, 2.1 million tons of wheat have been delivered to China. Last year,

Kazakhstan exported more than 550,000 tons of wheat to China, in comparison to 110,400 tons in 2015. As of today, 105 Kazakhstani enterprises are registered in China and have the right to export wheat from four regions of Kazakhstan.

Read more:

<https://eurasian-research.org/web/publications/Weekly-e-bulletin-16-09-2019-22-09-2019-No-225.pdf?1570701605>

### Distinguished Visitors to ECOSF

**October 16, 2019:** Prof. Dr. Muhammad Qaiser Former Vice Chancellor of University of Karachi and Chief Editor of Pak. Journal of Botany and Prof. Dr. Ikram ul Haq Former Vice Chancellor and Emeritus Professor of the GC University Lahore made a courtesy call upon Prof. Soomro and discussed possible cooperation for organizing an International Conference in Plant Sciences in 2020.



**October 15, 2019:** 5-Member Delegation Beijing Association for Science and Technology (BAST) headed by Ms. WU Yuan visited ECOSF to explore the possibilities of cooperation. The delegation accompanied by Mr. Jia Wei, First Secretary for S&T at the Embassy of China in Pakistan, was warmly welcomed and briefed about ECOSF and its objectives and programmes. BAST Delegation also briefed ECOSF team on their programmes and activities. The delegation took keen interest in the programmes of ECOSF. The discussion was carried out for the collaborative scientific activities between ECOSF and BAST in the ECO Region.



**October 3, 2019:** Director General, PASTIC, Dr. M. Akram Shaikh called upon the president ECOSF at his office to discuss possibilities of future cooperation among both the organisations.

