

TWAS-ICTP Collaboration

In July 2009, TWAS and the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) signed a memorandum of understanding that commits the two organizations to work more closely together. To date, although the TWAS secretariat has been generously hosted by ICTP since the inception of the Academy in 1983, the number of collaborative programmes has been limited; the two organizations having mainly taken the route of avoiding competition. Several TWAS programmes, for example, do not provide support in the fields of mathematics and physics because ICTP runs similar programmes.

All that has now changed, and already joint projects and joint programmes are under way. Last November, for example, TWAS teamed up with ICTP's Aeronomy and Radiopropagation Laboratory and other partners to support a workshop on the science and application of global navigation satellite systems. The workshop was hosted by the National Universities Commission in Abuja, Nigeria, and some 25 professors and lecturers from 12 Nigerian universities attended. Another workshop, held in Cairo and Alexandria, Egypt, in January 2010, marked the second of a series of regional workshops on this and related issues.

TWAS and ICTP have also agreed to contribute to an African PhD programme on geohazards being run by the Institute of Geophysics, Space Science and Astronomy, Department of Physics, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. In addition, TWAS will support a number of ICTP diploma students and fellowships, as well as sponsoring various networks in specific areas of mathematics and physics.

With both TWAS and ICTP supported by the Italian government through UNESCO, it is only right that we should work together. The various programmes that we are now collaborating on – mostly targeted towards young scientists and research groups in Africa – will surely have an impact on the culture of scientific excellence in that region in the near future and, hopefully, for a long time to come.

Mohamed H.A. Hassan, TWAS executive director



Participants of the workshop on the science and application of global navigation satellite systems, Egypt, January 2010.

International Year of Biodiversity

A two-day conference on biodiversity, hosted by the Royal Society, UK, examined a broad range of issues related to the protection and sustainable use of the world's natural resources. More than 200 scientists from around the world attended. The conference, subtitled "integrating ecosystem services into biodiversity management", marked one of the first international events to take place during the UN-designated International Year of Biodiversity, which was officially launched a few days later, on 21-22 January, at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris, France.

To mark the International Year of Biodiversity – and to contribute to the need for a new generation of trained taxonomists in the South – TWAS is highlighting a number of centres of excellence in the South where awardees of TWAS fellowships and other exchange programmes can be hosted.

For details of these centres, see: www.twas.org > Programmes > Exchange.

For additional information on the IAP meeting at the Royal Society, see: www.interacademies.net/CMS/4017/generalassembly2010.aspx.

For additional information on the International Year of Biodiversity, see: www.cbd.int/2010/welcome/.

EuroAfrica-ICT

euroafrica-ict

www.euroafrica-ict.org

The 2nd Euro-Africa Cooperation Forum on ICT Research, convened at the United Nations Conference Centre, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 4 February 2010, brought together some 240 participants from 44 countries for a one-day meeting. The combination of plenary sessions and thematic parallel sessions meant that more than 70 speakers, chairs and rapporteurs were directly involved in the conference programme. The conference, which followed on from the first edition held in Brussels, Belgium, early in 2009, aimed again at paving the way for a strengthened and coordinated approach to foster Euro-Africa cooperation in the field of information and communication technology (ICT) and provided a forum for discussions on recent developments and perspectives in the field.

Now, the European Commission DG-INFOS has confirmed that it will provide two additional years' funding that will support the EuroAfrica-ICT consortium (of which TWAS is a part) in the organization of two more Euro-Africa Cooperation Fora on ICT Research. The first of these will be held on 7-10 December in Helsinki, Finland, in collaboration

with the EuroAfrica-ICT consortium (of which TWAS is a part), the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, and co-located with the eI (e-Infrastructures)-Africa conference.

For additional information on the EuroAfrica-ICT project, including reports of the Forum and other aspects of the project such as the EuroAfrica ICT community, newsletters or helpdesks, see: www.euroafrica-ict.org.

TWAS-COMSTech Grants

Through a new programme that provides research grants to young scientists under the age of 40 in OIC (Organization of Islamic Conference) countries, TWAS and COMSTech have made awards of up to US\$15,000 to 19 young scientists in 10 countries to a total of US\$200,000 provided by the two organizations. Grant awards are available in the fields of earth sciences, engineering sciences, information technology and computer sciences, materials science including nanotechnology, pharmaceutical sciences and renewable energy.

The deadline for applications is **31 August 2010**. See www.twas.org > Programmes > Grants.

PERMIT Project

Since mid 2008, TWAS has been partnering with Yildiz Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey, as well as the University of Primorska, Slovenia, and University Ca' Foscari, Venice, Italy, on a European Union-funded project: 'Promote Education and Reciprocal Understanding through Multicultural Integrated Teaching' known by the acronym 'PERMIT'.

Through TWAS, five Turkish science teachers were able to join in the project with arts and humanities teachers from Turkey as well as teachers from Italy and Slovenia. Three workshops, one held in each participating country, allowed the teachers to interact directly, to develop novel course materials that brought multicultural issues into their syllabi, and to report back on how students responded to real-life, in-class trials of this material.

"The idea was to try and get the students to focus on the similarities they have with students of a similar age but from another cultural background," informs Çigdem Kagitçibasi (TWAS Fellow 2006), who was selected to represent TWAS on the scientific steering committee.

The project ended with a conference in Istanbul where the teachers and students presented their work and thoughts on the project.

For additional information, see: www.permitproject.eu.

TWAS Programme News

The call for applications for the **South-South Fellowships** programme opened on 1 March 2010. Various deadlines apply, depending on the partner organization. For eligibility criteria and other details, please check the TWAS website: www.twas.org > Programmes > Exchange > Fellowships.

TWAS has signed an agreement with the **African Union Commission** to jointly sponsor a series of **national awards for young scientists** from African countries. The US\$5,000-prizes will be awarded by ministries of science and technology in Africa, sometimes in collaboration with other awarding organizations such as academies of science. The deadline for nominations to this programme, which replaces the TWAS Prizes for Young Scientists programme in Africa, is 30 June each year, with the prizes awarded on 9 September, African Union Day, each year.

The first round of **TWAS-AAS-Microsoft awards** for young computer scientists in Africa were presented at a TWAS Regional Conference for Young Scientists in Nairobi, Kenya, in December 2009. The winners, from three different African countries, were:

- Youcef Bentoutou, *Centres de Techniques Spatiales*, Arzew, Algeria.
- Omar Fakhri Hamad, Department of Electrical and Computer Systems Engineering, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- Tshilidzi Marwala, Research Chair in System Engineering, Department of Science and Technology, South Africa.



Youcef Bentoutou (Algeria) received his TWAS-AAS-Microsoft award from Cheick Diarra (Chairman for Africa, Microsoft Corp.) while Francis Allotey (TWAS Fellow and AAS executive board member) looks on.

TWAS is currently accepting nominations for the 2010 edition of the **Ernesto Illy Trieste Science Prize**. This US\$100,000 prize is open to scientists from developing countries only. This year's subject area is 'Renewable energies for environmentally sustainable industrial technologies'.

The deadline for nominations is **15 May 2010**. See www.twas.org > Programmes > Prizes.

Young Affiliates news

Following their nomination by TWAS, four TWAS Young Affiliates have been invited to attend this year's prestigious Interdisciplinary Meeting of Nobel Laureates in Lindau, Germany, which aims to bring together Nobel Laureates with the world's most talented young scientists in the fields of chemistry, physics and medicine/physiology.

TWAS Regional Offices are currently seeking nominations for the 2010 intake of TWAS Young Affiliates, who should be aged below 40 and have at least 10 international peer-reviewed publications to their credit.

TWAS on Twitter



TWAS is now posting short notices and web-links (i.e. 'tweets') of its activities and the activities of its associated organizations on the social networking site, Twitter. Please visit twitter.com/twasnews for details. Anyone can sign up and receive regular updates of TWAS programmes, news and events. To date, we have more than 100 followers.

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