



JOINING FORCES TO BUILD SUCCESS

Four key TWAS partners – from Sweden, Kuwait, the Netherlands and Austria – delivered a vital message in Vienna: cooperation is essential to achieve results.

 by **Cristina Serra**

Four important partner organisations celebrated their partnerships with TWAS and urged further links between North and South to support sustainable development during the General Meeting in Vienna.

Representatives of the partner organizations cited a range of important benefits of collaboration: advancing women in science, saving children from disease and building private enterprise to boost development.

The speakers were Claire Lyngå, research adviser in the unit for research cooperation at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida); Ylann Schemm, programme director at the Elsevier Foundation based in The Netherlands; and Georg Kapsch, president of the Federation of Austrian Industries, one of the institutions that provided official support to the TWAS 26th General Meeting. Adnan A. Shihab-Eldin, director general of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) was unable to attend, but he delivered an inspiring written message.

Lyngå recalled the fruitful collaboration that TWAS and Sida have established in TWAS's earliest years, with both committed to support for high-quality research to reduce poverty. Basic science is a prerequisite for development and independence, she observed, and scientifically lagging countries may achieve independence through well-focused programmes for development.

For example, Lyngå cited Sida's support

to the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research in Bangladesh, where ready-to-use therapeutic food developed locally is now used to treat severe acute malnutrition. Local ingredients are used which means that the product is inexpensive and the taste is acceptable to the children.

At Makerere University, in Uganda, Sida funded 210 PhDs, 95 masters degree students and 20 postdoctoral researchers from 2010 to 2015. And its support for TWAS's pioneering Research Grants programme has helped establish hundreds of research projects in Africa and other developing countries.

"All these achievements tell how essential research cooperation is," Lyngå said.

"We have the honour of working closely with TWAS and the Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD) since 2010," said Ylann Schemm, programme director of the

▼ From left: Claire Lyngå, research adviser in the unit for research cooperation at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida); Adnan A. Shihab-Eldin, director general of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS). [Photos provided]





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Georg Kapsch, president of the Federation of Austrian Industries

▲ From left: Georg Kapsch, president of the Federation of Austrian Industries; Ylann Schemm, programme director at the Elsevier Foundation. [Photos provided]

Elsevier Foundation. The foundation is a corporate charity funded by Elsevier, an Amsterdam-based Anglo-Dutch provider of scientific, technical and medical information products and services.

The organizations have worked in synergy to build scientific networks and promote knowledge dissemination. And the Elsevier Foundation Awards for Early-Career Women Scientists in the Developing World, organised with TWAS and OWSD, “sustains the career of talented women, who may become leaders of the future,” Schemm said.

At the meeting, TWAS and the Elsevier Foundation announced a new joint programme called “North-South Collaboration in Sustainability”. Said Schemm: “TWAS’ annual conference focused on sustainability demonstrates a powerful commitment from its distinguished members and guests.”

The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) is a private non-profit organization established in 1976, and a loyal partner of TWAS since 1987, when a first agreement was signed.

KFAS Director General Adnan Shihab-Eldin, though unable to attend, sent a heartfelt message to Vienna. “KFAS is proud to have been in support of TWAS activities...including holding the 4th General Conference in Kuwait [in 1992],” he wrote.

KFAS engages in international programmes and worldwide cooperation through grants, programmes and prizes for scientists and students from Arab countries as well as from other developing countries.

As an example, Shihab-Eldin mentioned the recently established Al-Sumait Prize (2015), named after a late Kuwaiti medical doctor who dedicated his humanitarian work to Africa. He also listed other international collaborative programmes with world-renowned universities including the London School of Economics and Political Science, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA), and the Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques in France.

Regarding the importance of international collaborations, Georg Kapsch, president of the Federation of Austrian Industries, suggested that nations should develop an innovation ecosystem. “Sustainable growth needs an economic framework,” Kapsch said. “To be attractive to the international scientific community, a nation must offer basic and applied research facilities, and intensify relationships among scientists, business executives, politicians and the society.”

Innovation, he said, depends on enterprise and competition. But for developing countries, the absence of a stable political system can impede innovation. Fortunately, he noted, many developing countries recognise these needs. Ultimately, Kapsch added, technology is the only science that can cope with major global and regional challenges – and this, he added, is true both North and South.

The TWAS 26th General Meeting also was supported by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy; the Austrian Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology; the Mayor and the Cultural Department of the City of Vienna; the Austrian Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Hannes Androsch Foundation; and the Federation of Austrian Industries. ■

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