

TWAS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The TWAS 11th General Conference and 20th General Meeting has just successfully concluded in Durban, South Africa. More than 400 scientists attended the opening ceremony that featured Naledi Pandor, South Africa's Minister of Science and Technology (shown in photo).

"We must use science to bring development to countries that are most in need," said Pandor, who went on to affirm that science is enjoying a higher profile throughout the developing world, including in Africa. This has been reflected across the continent, for example, in a re-commitment by Africa's leaders to spend at least 1% of their gross domestic product on research and development, the creation of a strategic research agenda by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and a series of awards introduced by the African Commission to honour and assist scientists, she added.

Nevertheless, the Minister acknowledged that "science and technology has not yet been fully developed in many African countries." Indeed, she noted, several countries have yet to set up science and technology ministries. Additional efforts must be made to help these countries achieve a higher level of economic well-being through both South-South and South-North cooperation, she concluded.



Conference highlights

- The participation of ministers of science and technology from Brazil, India and South Africa in a session devoted to examining the impact of the global financial crisis on science in the developing world.
- The announcement of the winners of the Ernesto Illy Trieste Science Prize for 2009 – Carlos Clemente Cerri, of Brazil, and Pramod Kumar Aggarwal, of India.
- The announcement of the recipients of the 2009 TWAS Prizes and 2010 TWAS Medals.
- Lectures by such prominent scientists as C.N.R. Rao (India), David Block (South Africa), Michael Atiyah (UK), Wieland Gevers (South Africa), Li Zhenheng (China) and Sergio Rezende (Brazil).
- Presentations by the 2008 TWAS Prize winners, TWAS Young Affiliates and, for the first time at TWAS conference, by leaders of Research Units in scientifically-lagging countries supported by the Academy.
- The creation of TWAS and TWOWS National Chapters in South Africa.
- The publication of a comprehensive assessment of the state of science and technology in South Africa.
- An additional contribution of US\$200,000 by the Government of Brazil to the TWAS endowment fund.
- The transmission of the whole event via 'live streaming' over the Internet.
- Daily updates on the TWAS website as well as a live blog by a journalist from SciDev.Net (see: scidevnet.wordpress.com/category/twas-11th-general-conference/).

OTHER NEWS FROM THE TWAS CONFERENCE

The TWAS meeting in South Africa was kindly supported by the Academy of Sciences for South Africa (ASSAf) and the South African Government's Department of Science and Technology.

To show its appreciation to the Government of South Africa, TWAS commissioned a special medal which was presented to the South African President, Jacob Zuma, by Robin Crewe, president of ASSAf (left), Jacob Palis, president of TWAS (second left) and Mohamed Hassan, TWAS executive director (centre). The South African Minister for S&T, Naledi Pandor (right) also attended the small ceremony in Pretoria.



Pramod Kumar Aggarwal receives the Ernesto Illy Trieste Science Prize from Anna Illy and TWAS president Jacob Palis. The US\$100,000 prize, shared with Carlos Clemente Cerri, was presented during the TWAS General Conference in Durban, South Africa. The two recipients were honoured for their work on climate change and its impact on agriculture in developing countries.

COSTIS LAUNCHED



TWAS, the Group of 77 and China (G77) and UNESCO have officially launched the **Consortium for Science, Technology and Innovation for the South (COSTIS)**, an international

organization designed to bring policy-makers and scientists closer together to improve the prospects for sustainable economic growth in the developing world.

The launch ceremony was held at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Representatives from more than 50 government agencies and international organizations, including 25 ministers of science and technology from the developing world, attended the event. In a message sent to the participants, Abdalmahmood Abdalhaleem Mohamed, chair of the G77 and Sudan's permanent representative to the United Nations in New York, noted that "the G77 is confident that COSTIS will play an instrumental role in making science, technology and innovation an integral part of the development process in the South."

A major goal of COSTIS will be to provide a platform for officials from both policy and funding institutions, most notably ministries of science and technology and research councils, to interact with eminent scientists and technologists to forge effective national and regional strategies for science-based development. COSTIS will also seek to promote South-South and South-North collaboration in science and technology.

NEW: TWOWS PRIZES FOR WOMEN SCIENTISTS

The **Third World Organization for Women Scientists (TWOWS)** is now accepting nominations of excellent young women scientists from the developing world for a new prize to be awarded in June 2010.

A prize of US\$5,000 will be awarded to the best young female natural scientist from each of the four regions of the developing world (Africa, Arab region, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean). The first awards will be presented during the TWOWS General Assembly in Beijing, China, in June 2010.

Deadline for nominations is 15 January 2010. For details, see: www.twows.org.

OTHER NEWS FROM TWAS

2010 Euro-Africa Cooperation Forum on ICT Research. Pre-registration is now open for the second "Euro-Africa Cooperation Forum on ICT Research" that will be taking place at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 2 February 2010.

The forum is organized by EuroAfrica-ICT, an EU-funded project consortium of which TWAS is a member, with the support of the African Union Commission (AUC/HRST) and the European Commission (EC/DG INFSO/International Relations Unit) under the Information Communication Technology (ICT) theme of the EU's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). The second forum in Addis Ababa, which follows on from the first held in Brussels in March 2009, will take place as a post-event to the "AU 2010 Summit" and the "AU-ECA 2010 Summit Exhibition". For more information and details on how to participate, please visit www.euroafrica-ict.org/forum2.php.

Associateship scheme news

Tapashi Ghosh Roy, Department of Chemistry, University of Chittagong, Bangladesh, was awarded a TWAS-UNESCO Associateship to work in Fabio Doctorovich's lab, INQUIMAE, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina. The award supports two visits of 2-3 months each within a three-year period. During May-July 2009, she successfully completed her first visit to Doctorovich's lab, carrying out research and obtaining analytical data on several compounds prepared by MSc and PhD students in her lab in Bangladesh. "The collaboration was excellent," says Roy, "and I returned to Bangladesh with good results that will make good publications."

Apart from this Associateship, Roy has previously been awarded two TWAS Research Grants (in 1993 and 1998), which enabled her to purchase some research equipment and chemicals that have directly helped her MSc and PhD students to publish papers in prestigious international journals.



Tapashi Ghosh Roy (Bangladesh) with colleagues from Fabio Doctorovich's lab, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

TWAS Prizes

Nominations are being sought for excellent scientists who have been living and working in a developing country for at least the past 10 years for the 2010 TWAS Prizes. Fields covered are: agricultural science, biology, chemistry, earth sciences, engineering sciences, medical sciences, mathematics and physics.

Nomination forms can be downloaded from the TWAS website (www.twas.org > Programmes > Prizes). The deadline for nominations is 31 March 2010.

NEW DIRECTOR AT ICTP

TWAS's host institute in Trieste, the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) has had a change of leadership. After more than six years as director, Katepalli Sreenivasan has stepped aside.



The new director is Fernando Quevedo, born in Costa Rica but a native of Guatemala. Quevedo, an expert in string theory, has teaching and research experience in Mexico as well as at Cambridge University, UK, where he spent

the past 11 years.

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