

World Science Day celebrated : Science stands at heart of sustainable development: speakers

ISLAMABAD: To create awareness and encourage students towards scientific education and research with a view of sharing ideas between the scientists and students, Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) in collaboration with UNESCO and ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) organised a Convention Of Scientists on the occasion of World Science Day.

Officials and representatives of the Ministry of Science and Technology, PSF, ECOSF, UNESCO and representatives from academia and research institutions in Pakistan attended the event.

In his remarks, chief guest Ministry of Science and Technology Secretary Fazal Abbas Maken highlighted the importance of science and technology and said that the objective of World Science Day was to renew the national, as well as the international commitment to use science and technology for national development and achieving peace by appropriate use of its applications.

He underlined the importance of the theme, declared by UNESCO - Science for a Sustainable Future - and mentioned that creating knowledge and its applications by using science helped mankind to find solutions to today's acute economic, social and environmental challenges to achieve sustainable development. He said, "In present age, international scientific cooperation is essential, so we should initiate joint programmes from international platforms, in which UNESCO can play a vital role". He described that sustainable development was probably the most daunting challenge that humanity had ever faced and it is only possible by appropriate use of science. "Role of science and technology is crucial; scientific knowledge and appropriate technologies are centre of resolving the economic, social and environmental problems which had made the current development paths unsustainable," he added.

Speaking on the occasion, UNESCO representative Vibeke Jensen, "The World Science Day for peace and development is an occasion for us to remember that the science should be at the service of humanity as a whole, and should contribute to provide everyone with a deeper understanding of this planet and its people. She said science education and research capacity need to be built to allow countries to develop their own solutions to their specific problems. UNESCO provides countries with guidance in developing or revising their national policies and in strengthening national capacities in science education and research.

"On this day, let us commit to create a scientifically literate, knowledge society for all, with sustainable development as a fore most priority," she vowed.

PSF Chairman Dr Muhammad Ashraf in his welcome remarks said the PSF is playing a key role in promotion of science education at different levels in the country. It holds the honour of celebrating World Science Day every year despite limited resources available.

Dr Ashraf informed the audience that the PSF through its various programmes is striving to educate young children across the country about the basic scientific concepts and their applications. The PSF is the only government organisation in the country working for the dissemination of scientific knowledge in the rural areas of the country, he said adding that for this purpose, the PSF operates through science caravans, which are equipped with basic scientific gadgets. There are about seven science caravan centres across the country, which regularly organise science exhibitions in rural and remote areas of the country. Apart from providing scientific knowledge, children are also engaged in different scientific activities and the relevant scientific material is also provided to them, the PSF chairman mentioned.

Dr. Ashraf also thanked UNESCO for its continuous support to the PSF for the execution of different science promotion programmes and vowed to extend further cooperation to all stakeholders for the attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Speaking at the convention, ECOSF President Dr Manzoor Soomro highlighted the aims and objectives of the regional organisation. He said the ECOSF was created to promote science in Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) member countries and Pakistan is one of its important members. He stressed the need for promoting inquiry-based science education. He said that students should be encouraged to ask questions. Raising questions about different phenomenon are key to development of science, he maintained

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