

## Dialogue stresses engineers' role in sustainable development

Recognising the important role of engineers in planning, designing, construction, infrastructure and their lead role in ensuring sustainable development through improved energy and transportation systems, UNESCO's Islamabad and Jakarta Offices organized a national dialogue and international meeting in Islamabad.

Chief guest Hasrul Sani bin Mujtabar, high commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan, in his remarks reaffirmed Malaysia's strong support for UNESCO in enhancing capacity building in education, science and culture under the Malaysian Funds in Trust Agreement as part of Malaysia policy, close collaboration and cooperation. "Besides rice and palm oil trade between Pakistan and Malaysia, I am pleased to see this initiative where engineers of the two countries will work closely with each other," he added.

He said that the international meeting on engineering qualification standardization was part of South-South Cooperation which would be further strengthened through bilateral relation between Pakistan and Malaysia. Pakistan Engineering Council Chairman Syed Abdul Qadir Shah, on the occasion, highlighted the need for standardization of engineering qualification in today's era for addressing engineering related problems and enabling engineers for their cross border contribution.

Vibeke Jensen, representative and director of UNESCO Islamabad, extended her gratitude to all the participants and emphasized that the initiative had meant to encourage and inspire academicians, particularly in Pakistan and other countries of Asia-Pacific Region towards harmonizing the engineering qualification standards to the international standards. She underlined the active linkages between academia and industry as the significant factor that can accelerate industrial development in Pakistan.

Pakistan has been selected as pilot case study for UNESCO-FEIAP collaboration which is working to improve the standards of engineering qualification in universities and institutes of higher education, in association with the engineering bodies. UNESCO agreed to assist FEIAP to champion its guidelines. Representatives and officials from FEIAP, ISTIC, ECOSF and academicians of various engineering universities from Pakistan highlighted the importance of the initiative, key areas of progress and mentioned that PEC possess lead capacity role in the Asia-Pacific Region.

ECOSF President Prof Manzoor H. Soomro shared plans and programmes of the foundation and stressed on effective cooperation and collaboration led to commercialization of research results and economic development in the ECO region. In his closing remarks, Shahbaz Khan, Officer in Charge, UNESCO Regional Science Bureau for Asia-Pacific, Jakarta mentioned UNESCO long history role in promoting internationally-recognized standards for engineering institutions and reaffirm UNESCO commitment to continue its support in countries like Pakistan on need based opportunities.

He emphasized the need to find new ways of learning, teaching, curricula improvement, and executive faculty trainings and stressed Pakistan to take lead for this initiative and help other pilot countries and strengthening linkages between ECO countries of Asia-Pacific region. During the two-day event, engineering experts, industrialists, academicians and focal persons from various national and international entities discussed gaps and opportunities and the development of a road map for

engineering qualifications standardizations. The two day event was attended by officials and representatives of the Pakistan Engineering Council, Higher Education Commission (HEC), ECOSF, UNESCO, ISTIC, FEIAP and representatives from Pakistani engineering institutions and industry. The meeting was held in partnership with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), the International Science, Technology and Innovation Centre for South–South Cooperation under the auspices of UNESCO (ISTIC), the Federation of Engineering Institutions of Asia and the Pacific (FEIAP) and Economic Cooperation Organization Science Foundation (ECOSF), aimed at developing roadmap on engineering qualification standardization and contribution towards South-South Cooperation through UNESCO cooperation programme (Malaysian Funds in Trust for UNESCO).

**Source:** <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/11-Jan-2015/dialogue-stresses-engineers-role-in-sustainable-development>