

The Participants of the Central and South West Asia Forum on Science and Technology Policy for Sustainable Development: Experts and representatives of governments, academic institutions and parliaments of Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, together with resources persons from China and South Korea as well as representatives of International Organizations, UNESCO, ISESCO and UNIDO, held their first meeting in Tehran from 21-23 January 2006.

The participants heard presentations by UNESCO, ISESCO, China and Korea and shared their national experiences in the area of science and technology policy formulation, implementation and assessment. Participants of the Central and South West Asia Forum recommended the following:

- That the Central and West Asia Forum proposed by UNESCO and ISESCO be set-up with the objective of acting as a platform for cooperation in the areas of Science and Technology and Innovation (STI), and of facilitating the exchange of information on science and technology policies, planning, development and training.
- That the sub-regional Central and West Asia Forum should meet annually in a regional capital, the choice of this to be determined each year by the participating countries of the region.
- That governments and decision makers should affirm the belief of the Forum that STI is essential for knowledge-based economic growth and that it should be put at the top of the development agenda.
- That appropriate investment, both public and private, should be made in STI, which will generate returns in the form of improved living standards, poverty alleviation and equitable and sustainable development.
- That provision should be made to assess the current state of STI policy and practice in each country to establish baseline needs and strategic direction.
- That evidence-based realistic science and technology policies should be developed and that Member Governments should encourage a balance between investment in research (science), and in applied industrial and technological development. Partnerships between academic institutions and industry could be facilitated, for example, by agencies such as technology parks or incubators.

- That strategic research programmes in STI be developed, including through scholarships and support to talented students, as well as a system of sharing experiences, best practices and knowledge at regional and global levels. This strategic programme should take into account the priorities and requirements of each country.
- That each government should establish appropriate institutional and financial mechanisms, including programmes of capacity building and training, to ensure that national STI development policies can be implemented.
- That communication of STI issues through mass media should be developed and supported as an essential aspect of policy formulation and public information.

The Forum called upon UNESCO and ISESCO to support through their Offices in Tehran, the organization of the Sub-Regional Forum recommended above, as well as other initiatives supporting the implementation of the recommendations of the Forum.