

Climate Change and Phytodiversity Challenges and Opportunities, **January 15-18, 2016.**

The 14th National Meeting of Plant Scientists and 5th International Conference of Botany (15-18 January, 2016) on the theme “Climate Change and Phyto-diversity: Challenges and Opportunities” was inaugurated at the Shaikh Zayed Center, University of Karachi on Friday 15th January. The conference was co-organized by the Institute of Sustainable Halophyte Utilization (ISHU), University of Karachi. Seven scientists who are collaborating with ISHU came from Paris (Dr. Miguel-Clusener Godt, Senior Program Officer Chief, Ecological Science and Biodiversity Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences MAB Program, UNESCO Office in Paris), Ethiopia (Dr. Benno Boer, Ecological Science Adviser Africa/Science Specialist UNESCO, Ethiopia), Germany (Prof. Han-Werner Koyro, Justus Liebig University, Germany), China (Prof. Dr. Suomin Wang, Prof. Dr. Jinlin Zhang, and Dr. Hui Huang, Lanzhou University, China) and Qatar (Prof. Dr. Ajmal Khan, Qatar University) also attended the conference.

The delegates highlighted the importance of dealing with the threats of climate change by increasing awareness through high quality research and teaching. The scientists also visited ISHU, which is well equipped with state of the art facilities and trained researchers to promote research activities on various aspects of salt tolerant plants from gene to ecosystem. Some of the foreign delegates showed interest in expanding their collaboration in research activities with ISHU, University of Karachi.

Dr. Miguel Clusener Godt, deliberated on the role of MAB Programs in 1) Protecting the biosphere in various countries to foster the sustainable use of natural resources, 2) Contribute to building sustainable, healthy and equitable societies, economies and thriving human settlements in harmony within the biosphere, 3) Facilitate biodiversity and sustainability science, education for sustainable development and capacity building and to 4) Support mitigation and adaptation to climate change and other aspects of global environmental change.

Dr. Benno Boer, Ecological Science Adviser, Africa/Science Specialist Ethiopia, Unesco, indicated that global climate changes have increased the amplitude and frequency of extreme temperatures, melting glaciers, warming of oceans, intense drought, storms and floods. As a result, natural ecosystems and mankind are suffering the consequences in various parts of the world. Collaborative efforts at all levels are desperately needed to minimize ecosystem damages by using alternate sources of energy.

Prof. Dr. Hans –W. Koyro in his keynote address stressed the need to look into the effects of climate change through a cross-disciplinary approach from the ecosystem down to molecular level in order to safeguard the global biodiversity loss.

At the end of the inaugural ceremony, the Council of the Pakistan Botanical Society presented the “Life Time Achievement Award” to Distinguished National Professor Dr. M. Ajmal Khan, S.I. for his significant contributions to Botany during his illustrious career. During the concluding ceremony, the “Best Student Poster Award” was presented to Ms. Hina Asrar by the international panel of judges. This research was supervised by Prof. Dr. Bilquees Gul and Dr. Tabassum Hussain.

The conference delegates also appreciated the substantial contributions of the ISHU faculty and students in making this mega event a success.