

President Jacob Palis, Secretary-General Dorairajan Balasubramanian, Executive Director Mohamed Hassan, Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to ICTP. As you know, this 18th General Meeting of TWAS was to have been held in Islamabad; when circumstances forced the change of venue, it was only natural that ICTP would readily agree to host the meeting.

I say that it is only natural because ICTP and TWAS share the same vision for building scientific capacity. The two institutions may use different means but the intended end is similar. The strength of our connection can be seen by the fact that nearly 40% of TWAS Fellows in Mathematical Sciences and Physics were either ICTP Associates or worked intimately with ICTP. It is this shared heritage that keeps the two institutions together and close—not simply shared real estate.

The Academy's leadership since inception has built up a strong TWAS, and deserves our praise and congratulations. However, the challenges that TWAS faces have not diminished with time but seem to be growing. Compared to when TWAS was created, some developing countries have prospered

and built up large cadre of excellent scientists; indeed, they have valuable lessons to offer to us. Unfortunately, others have regressed. As with physical wealth, scientific wealth is also getting concentrated. One does not have to look far for the effects of this condensation: a third of TWAS Membership comes from two countries, one half from top four countries, and two-thirds from the top ten; all of Africa counts for less than 10%, and sub-Saharan Africa for about 6%. I believe that an intelligent and sensitive response to this uneven development will be our most difficult challenge.

We cannot shirk from it.

On behalf of ICTP as a whole, allow me say that ICTP belongs to you as it does to those of us who live and work here. So you are home and should feel at home; and you should not expect the quality of arrangements to be at the same level as those you might have found in Islamabad.

Once again, I welcome you to ICTP—for most of you this is not the first time—and I am sure that the meeting will be greatly successful despite the circumstances.