

**Summary Record of the First Meeting of Executive
Council of the MHRD-MoST Alliance held at 5.30 pm on
Monday the 14th March, 2011 in Shastri Bhavan,**

The first meeting of the Executive Council of the “**MHRD-MoST Grand Alliance Initiatives**” was held at 5.30 pm on Monday the 14th March, 2011 in Shastri Bhavan. The meeting was chaired by Ms Vibha Puri Das, Secretary, Higher Education, MHRD. Following were present in the meeting:

1. Dr T.Ramasami, Secretary, DST
2. Dr Shailesh Nayak, Secretary, MoES
3. Shri R.Chandrasekhar Secretary, Telecommunication
4. Shri Sunil Kumar, Additional Secretary, HE, MHRD
5. Prof Ved Prakash, Acting-Chairman, UGC, MHRD
6. Dr Hiro Bhojwani, Adviser to Minister HRD
7. Shri Amit Khare, JS, MHRD
8. Shri V. Umashankar, PS to Hon'ble Minister, HRD
9. Dr Akhilesh Gupta, Adviser/ Scientist-G, DST

The meeting began with Executive Council taking a resolution that Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) be included as a permanent invitee to the council along with Secretary, Telecom.

The Chairperson Ms Vibha Puri Das, Secretary, Higher Education, MHRD welcomed the members and other special invitees. She outlined the background of the Alliance and hoped this Alliance could play a significant role in not only bringing two ministries closer but also in taking forward the initiatives of MHRD and MoST..

Dr T.Ramasami, Secretary, DST gave a detailed background of the MHRD-MoST Grand Alliance Initiative and mentioned that this initiative would help setting up a national agenda for S&T education in the country.

Ms Vibha Puri Das, Secretary, HE, MHRD expressed hope that MoU signed by the two ministries would enable cohesive linkages amongst the institutions of the two ministries. This would also provide an opportunity to have a re-look into the existing interfaces between the MHRD's institutions like Central/State Universities, IITs, NIITs, IISERs, IISc, etc with R&D labs/institutions of MoST. There is also need to improve the networking relationship between the regulators of these institutions (e.g, UGC and CSIR). She felt that the S&T institutions could greatly contribute towards faculty development which would also help enhancing output from MHRD's institutions in terms of quality research and publications. There is also need to assess the performance of Inter-University Centres and provide suitable interventions with the help of S&T institutions. Ministry of Communications and IT could help providing ICT linkages with the National Missions on Education. She said that there is need to put in place a Composite Funding Mechanism in which extra-mural funds are provided by MoST whereas funds for building infrastructure and other expense are provided by MHRD. Secretary(HE) highlighted that the outcomes of this grand alliance should flow at all levels, particularly at the institution level, where the institutions of the concerned Ministries can work together in specified areas as also share their physical infrastructure and human resources. Secretary (HE) also mentioned the Innovation Centres being planned at the institution level and

said that the Innovation Centres should be so established as to bring together the best talents in all institutions and allow them the freedom to work on innovative solutions cutting across the boundaries of disciplines and institutions

Dr T.Ramasami, Secretary, DST agreed that in order to draw maximum benefit there is a need to institutionalise the Alliance in a structural way. He said that MHRD's mandate is far beyond science and far beyond research. It must be recognised that Alliance is focusing on a fraction of MoST and MHRD mandates. This alliance must work to help MHRD create a sustainable system for quality science education. This can be achieved through carefully planned interventions. He mentioned that there has been a three-fold increase in the share of publications coming out from Universities in India in recent years, from 12% earlier to 31% now. We must now focus on such universities which have been performing well in the area of science education and research so as to bring a long term gain to the country. The Alliance should be able to consolidate and synergise efforts made by the concerned ministries in promoting research in the country. There is a need to set up a mechanism of joint funding and joint appointments. He informed that MoST will be taking up the work of mapping of thematic hotspots in top 20 Universities in the country. This would help planning thematic interventions required from both the ministries. He was of the view that for interventions to be effective, we will have to first assess the requirements from demand side e.g., sectoral partners. Institutions may be brought to the picture at a later stage. He also informed that a good number of S&T Entrepreneurship parks have come up in recent past. There is a need to scale up these parks through interventions from various government agencies like Department of Information Technology (DIT). DST has taken up several initiatives to improve science education in primary, secondary and tertiary levels. While more visible impact will be seen after at least 5 years, there are already excitements amongst students to take up science as their career.

Shri R. Chandrasekhar, Secretary, Telecom in his remarks mentioned that India is the biggest market in telecom sector and a world leader in R&D in IT and telecom sectors. He was of the opinion that Alliance can play an important role in enhancing R&D in sectors like IT, telecom, etc. and, there is an urgent need for Industry-academia collaboration in these sectors. Where there have been attempts in this direction in the past, we need much stronger collaboration than what is available today. We need to adopt new models of partnership between public and private. He informed that the Department of Information Technology is setting up an Electronic Development Fund of about Rs 2000 crore to promote Industry-Academia collaboration. Some other models like Venture capitals are also being contemplated. There is need to pick up Success stories of Industry-Academia collaboration (e.g., IIT Mumbai) and replicate them. An area where urgent intervention is required, is Human Health. The Alliance can help bring all stakeholders together to debate and devise strategies to meet such challenges.

Dr Shailesh Nayak, Secretary, MoES said that Alliance can help in identifying thematic research activities in Central/ State universities and national institutions relevant to his ministry for collaboration on a long term. His ministry will help in the process of faculty development in these academic institutions. He mentioned about MoES's support for a Visiting Professor from a leading US University and M.Tech Programme at the Centre for Atmospheric Sciences, IIT Delhi. MoES is also

supporting an Inter-University System at Delhi University. Dr Nayak said that his ministry is ready to support any university in the areas of Earth Sciences.

Prof Ved Prakash, Acting Chairman, UGC, expressed concerns about availability of quality faculty especially in State universities. He also mentioned that many state universities are also doing considerable research and innovation and, therefore, we should include central as well as state universities in various funding schemes. He was of the opinion that the Alliance can help setting up a mechanism of providing financial support to private universities and institutions under PPP. He felt that this Alliance could provide a platform to leverage support of R&D institutions of MoST to update the science curricula of our universities.

Shri Sunil Kumar, Additional Secretary (HE), said that the idea of setting up this Alliance is excellent but we must be able to take up those issues which both MoST and MHRD are not able to take up individually and need support and collaboration with each other.

The EC took up some of the agenda points for discussion. Following decisions were taken:

- a. DST will set up a Cell on "MHRD-MoST Alliance" in Technology Bhavan with a Joint Secretary level officer as Coordinator. It will provide an office space and deploy a few middle and junior level staff to enable the Cell to start its activities. The Cell will be strengthened subsequently with additional manpower drawn from or recruited by MoST and MHRD.
- b. MoST will provide all possible support for establishment of "Science Magnet Schools" as proposed by MHRD. DST may write to other departments of MoST for providing necessary support to this programme
- c. A mechanism for creating a bridge between two ministries on the flagship programmes of MoST may be set up through mutual consultation.
- d. Some of the science Secretaries may be invited to address the forthcoming VC conference to sensitise universities about our initiatives and future plans.
- e. It is decided to devise suitable mechanisms for taking up following initiatives-
 - MoST-MHRD Comprehensive Funding System
 - Setting up of Centres of Research Excellence
 - Linking national laboratories to universities and institutions of national importance (IITs, IISC, IISERs, etc)
- f. DST will send a proposal to Department of Posts to bring out a Postal stamp in the honour of Nobel Laureate Prof S.Chandrasekhar.

Detailed proposals on above may be prepared and placed before EC for discussion in the next meeting.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the chair.