

Pakistan looking for meaning cooperation with Italy: Dr. Ishfaq

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad has said that Pakistan is looking for meaningful cooperation with Italy in various fields relevant for development, particularly science and technology, higher education and power generation.

He said this while talking to Giuseppe Vegas, Italian vice Minister for Economy and Finance, who called on him in Islamabad here Saturday. Renowned Physicist, Prof. Luciano Maiani, President Italian National Research Council, who has known Dr. Ishfaq since the days when he was DG of the European Nuclear Research Centre (Sern) accompanied him.

Dr. Ishfaq said the existing MoU on scientific cooperation between Pakistan and Italy can be used as an instrument for increasing collaboration in those aspects of science which can contribute towards Pakistan's development.

He assured that the government of Pakistan would provide necessary assistance to Italian investors in this regard.

He said that Pakistan needs increased trade opportunities with developed countries, particularly in the EU region, in order to improve its economy and for providing better employment prospects to the Pakistani youth.

He told the Italian vice Minister that Planning Commission has laid down its long term development priorities in Vision 2030 and is currently focusing on short term goals by formulating a five-year plan in the light of this Vision and government's nine-point development agenda.

Planning Commission's Member Science and Technology, Dr. Samar Mubarakmand and Member Energy, Mr. Pervez Butt were also present during the meeting.

Dr. Samar Mubarakmand informed the visiting Minister that Thar area in Pakistan has one of the largest coal reserves in the world estimated at around 175 billion tonnes. He invited the Italian entrepreneurs to take advantage of this opportunity by investing in the underground coal gasification projects.

Mr. Vegas said that he is greatly encouraged by his meetings with the Prime Minister, the Minister for Finance and the Minister of State for Economic Affairs yesterday and said that his government would encourage Italian businessmen and entrepreneurs to invest in Pakistan to take benefit of its growing market. He said his government would soon commence a viable programme for the development of Pakistan through scientific and technological channel.

Italy's Ambassador to Pakistan Mr. Vincenzo Prati was also present during the meeting.