

TWAS, an expanding reality



In 2008, TWAS, the academy of sciences for the developing world, celebrated its 25th anniversary – its silver jubilee. The event was marked by a successful meeting in November in Mexico City, hosted by the Mexican Academy of Sciences, which was attended by nearly 350 scientists from 50 countries. Any such high-profile event requires months of behind-the-scenes planning. But, in 2008, TWAS was not focused solely on organizing this event. Indeed, in the past few months, we have launched more new programmes compared to any other time in the 25-year history of the Academy, barring perhaps our very first steps in developing programmes designed to build scientific capacity in the South all those years ago. These new programmes, launched in collaboration with a variety of partners – national, international and private-sector – are outlined below – in this first issue of the *TWAS e-Bulletin*. By producing this 'light' bulletin, we hope to be able to disseminate news of our activities both widely and in a timely manner. As with the TWAS General Meetings, the launch of these new programmes also demonstrate how active the Academy is 'behind the scenes' – and sends a clear sign of how dedicated we are to serving the needs of scientists in the South for as long as science in the South lags behind the advances being made in the North. We hope that you enjoy reading about our new initiatives, that you find

something suitable among them for either yourself or your colleagues, and that you will help us disseminate this information as widely as possible. Thank you for your assistance – and we look forward to dealing with your applications.

Mohamed H.A. Hassan, Executive Director, TWAS

New Programmes to Assist Scientists in Africa

- TWAS, in partnership with the African Academy of Sciences (AAS) and Microsoft Research, has established the **TWAS-AAS-Microsoft Award** for Young Scientists for the three-year period 2009-2011. The award aims at recognizing young scientists working and living in Africa whose research in computer science has had, or could have, a positive impact in the developing world. Scientists who have received their most recent research degree in the past 10 years will be eligible. Nominees can be any nationality, but must have been resident in Africa for at least two years prior to their nomination. Each year, three winners will be selected from different countries on the continent. Each recipient will receive a Euro 7,000 cash award generously contributed by Microsoft, Euro 5,000 of which is earmarked for further research. The deadline to receive nominations is **15 May 2009**. For complete information see: www.twas.org. Contact e-mail: prizes@twas.org.
- **TWAS-AAS-Microsoft Grants for Scientific Meetings** aim to encourage the organization of international and regional scientific conferences and workshops in Africa. Support in the form of travel grants is provided for some principal speakers from abroad and/or participants from developing countries other than the country in which the event is held. Applicants, who may be of any nationality, must be involved in the organization of international or regional scientific meetings to be held in Africa in the field of computer science. Deadlines for receiving applications are: **June each year** for meetings to be held during January – June of the following year; **1 December each year** for meetings to be held during July – December of the following year. **Exceptionally for 2009 only, there is an additional deadline of 1 April** for meetings to be held during July - December 2009. For complete information see: www.twas.org. Contact e-mail: mahdavi@twas.org.

Programme News:

- **TWAS Fellowships:** The Fellowships programme has expanded even further and will now provide over 280 fellowships annually. Of particular note, TWAS and the National Council on Science and Technology (CONACYT),

Mexico, are now offering 20 postgraduate and 10 postdoctoral fellowships a year. Deadline: **1 July each year**.

- TWAS Fellowship programmes with other partner organizations have been expanded and improved. Visiting scholar fellowships are now tenable at the Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia as well as in China. In addition, the S.N. Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences, India, now offers postdoctoral as well as postgraduate fellowships in the physical sciences. The age limits for both the TWAS-CEMB and TWAS-ICCBS programmes tenable in Pakistan have been raised to 35 years (postgraduate) and 45 years (postdoctoral). For complete information and eligibility criteria see: www.twas.org under Programmes and sub-heading Exchanges. Contact e-mail: fellowships@twas.org.

- Together with the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) and the UNESCO International Basic Sciences Program (IBSP), TWAS has launched a new funding opportunity through the implementation of the **ICGEB-TWAS-UNESCO/IBSP Joint Project on Capacity Building in Basic Molecular Biology** that aims at creating a network of laboratories involved in research on plant and animal pathogens affecting agricultural productivity in developing regions. Deadline for expressions of interest is **31 March 2009**. For any queries or additional information on this new programme, please contact Ms. Barbara Argenti at ICGEB (bargenti@icgeb.org) or visit www.icgeb.org.

- **TWAS and COMSTECH launch Joint Research Grants:** COMSTECH-TWAS Joint Research Grants are awarded to high-level and promising research projects carried out by young individual scientists up to the age of 40 in Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) member states. Grants up to US\$15,000 provide support for research projects in the following fields of science and technology: earth sciences, engineering sciences, information technology and computer sciences, materials science including nanotechnology, pharmaceutical sciences and renewable energy. The deadline for receiving applications is **31 August each year**. Exceptionally for 2009 only, there is an additional deadline of **31 March 2009**. For complete information see: www.twas.org. Contact e-mail: mahdavi@twas.org.

- **TWAS Research Grants**, supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), are provided to individual scientists or research units in 80 countries identified by TWAS as lagging in their S&T capacity (list available on TWAS website). A research grant to individual scientists amounts to a maximum of US\$15,000 while a research grant to research units amounts to a maximum of US\$30,000. The programme provides support for research projects in basic sciences: biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics. As a general rule, the grants are awarded to competent scientists under the age of 45 years. Grants to research units are provided to groups with a renowned leader who holds a PhD and has good research experience. No age limit is applied to the unit's leader. The deadline for receiving applications is **31 August each year**. For complete information see: www.twas.org. Contact e-mail: mahdavi@twas.org.

- **Training Course: Capacity Building in Environmental Issues**. TWAS and Forgea International announce a training course on "Capacity Building in Environment-related Issues in Geomining: Remote Sensing and other Environment-related Issues" to be held on the island of Sardinia, Italy, from 17 to 30 May 2009. The course is open to a limited number of participants from south Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and Balkan countries and is aimed at university researchers, professors and graduate students, decision makers, mid-career technologists, and professionals from public authorities and companies involved in the management of environmental problems related to mine site rehabilitation, reclamation and/or closure. The deadline for applications is **16 March 2009**. For complete information see: www.twas.org or contact Ms. Luisa Bertucci (fax +39 070 672 229 or email: forgea@tin.it).

- **TWAS grants for scientific meetings held in developing countries**. TWAS encourages the organization of high level international and regional scientific activities in developing countries by offering financial assistance of up to US\$5,000 to the organizers of conferences, workshops, symposia and special meetings held in these countries. Applications should be made by the organizers of scientific meetings in developing countries. Deadlines for receiving applications are: **1 June each year** for meetings to be held during January – June of the following year; **1 December each year** for meetings to be held during July – December of the following year. For complete information see: www.twas.org. Contact e-mail: mahdavi@twas.org.

TWOWS Postgraduate Training Fellowships for Women Scientists

- Applications are now being accepted by the **Third World Organization for Women in Science (TWOWS)** from female students from sub-Saharan Africa and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) who would like to obtain their PhD in one of the natural sciences: basic biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics. Both sandwich and full time fellowships are available. Candidates with an MSc degree or an outstanding BSc honours degree are eligible. The host institute must be in a developing country other than the applicant's own. The programme has a new application form and a new deadline (31 July of each year). For more information visit www.twows.org, under the 'Activities' tab. Contact e-mail: info@twows.org

Other fellowship opportunities and more

- **One bold idea, that's all it takes**. Unorthodox thinking is essential to overcoming the most persistent challenges in global health. **Grand Challenges Explorations** fosters innovation in global health research. The initiative uses an

agile, accelerated grant-making process with short two-page applications and no preliminary data required. Initial grants of US\$100,000 are awarded multiple times a year. The grant programme is open to anyone from any discipline, from student to tenured professor, and from any organization – colleges and universities, government laboratories, research institutions, non-profit organizations and for-profit companies. Round 3 opens 31 March 2009. For complete information visit: www.grandchallenges.org/Explorations

- **The Agricultural Biotechnology International Conference (ABIC) Foundation** is accepting applications for a travel bursary for the forthcoming ABIC 2009 Conference to be held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 22–25 September 2009. The deadline for submission of applications is 31 March 2009 with award announcement set for May 2009. The bursary is open to young scientists in developing countries whose potential has come to the attention of the ABIC Foundation. Applications will be accepted from graduate students or post-doctoral fellows at accredited post-secondary institutions whose studies are closely focused on agricultural biotechnology. For complete information visit: www.abic.ca.

- **2009 African Women in Agricultural Research and development (AWARD) fellowships**. AWARD fellowships are open to women agricultural scientists from ten African countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The CGIAR Gender & Diversity Programme warmly invites applications from qualified African agricultural women scientists for this innovative and exciting fellowship programme. AWARD offers specially tailored two-year career development fellowships, available at three levels: post-bachelors, post-masters and post-doctorate. African women from qualifying countries who are conducting research in the following disciplines are strongly encouraged to apply: Crop sciences (including horticulture), soil sciences, animal and livestock sciences, plant and animal virology, agroforestry, agricultural economics, aquatic resources and fisheries, food sciences and nutrition, natural resource management and ecology, biodiversity conservation, entomology, agricultural extension education, molecular biology (applied to plant/animal breeding), and water and irrigation management. The deadline for all applications is 30 March 2009. Details and application forms can be found here: www.genderdiversity.cgiar.org/resource/award.asp

Picture profile



Christopher D. Nwani from Nigeria currently at the National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources in Lucknow, India, had an adventurous start to his fellowship, but he has since settled down well and will remain in India for a one-year postdoctoral research stay.

A reminder for all our awardees: send us your photos and a small blurb and you could be featured in our next issue.

Contact details

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