**Signing MOU Between IORA RCSTT and CSIR-CIMAP, Focused on Medicinal Plants, I.R. Iran, February 24, 2018**

On February 24, 2018, in the presence of IORA Secretary General H.E. Dr. Nokwe, the IORA Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfer (RCSTT) signed a MOU with the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Lucknow (CSIR-CIMAP) for establishment of a Coordinating Center focused on promoting scientific and technical cooperation and collaboration in specialized fields of Medicinal Plants.

The MoU was signed by Prof. Anil Kumar Tripathi, Director CSIR-CIMAP and Dr. A. Sedrpousan, Director, IORA-RCSTT.  The Indian delegation was led by Dr. Girish Sahni, DG, CSIR and Secretary, DSIR. The MOU Signing Ceremony occurred at the Conference Hall at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I.R. Iran.

Dr. Nokwe indicated the expectation that the Coordination Center will advance participation in the domain of traditional information connected to medicinal plants for the benefit of the nations of IORA member states. Further, she declared that this will grant a chance to two significant member states of IORA (India and Iran) to upgrade collaboration and cooperation on either side.

Mr. Sanjay Panda, Joint Secretary (IOR), Ministry of External Affair, Government of India emphasized the importance of this initiative and the role India plays in Indian Ocean region. In view of the importance India attaches to its role in IORA, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India has committed its support towards the establishment and operationalization of the proposed Coordination Centre at CSIR-CIMAP, Lucknow.

It may be recalled that the draft of signed MOU had been discussed and endorsed by the 19th Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) held in Durban on 16-17 October 2017.
On February 25, 2018, H.E. Dr. Nokwe, IORA Secretary General and the Indian delegation led by Dr. Girish Sahni, DG, CSIR and Secretary, DSIR, Government of India  met the H.E. Dr. Gholami, the Minister of Science, Research and Technology, I.R. Iran. They discussed the science and technology potentials of I.R. Iran as an IORA Member State and its endeavors for promotion of science and technology. Both sides confirmed the role of IORA RCSTT, as an IORA Special Agency to be able to play an effective role for achieving the indicated goals.

Afterwards, H.E. Dr. Nokwe had a meeting with H.E. Dr. Masoumeh Ebtekar, the Vice President of Iran for Women and Family Affairs and discussed the significance and role of IORA Member States especially Iran to cooperate for empowerment of women and improving their status as the major section in human resources in the region. In this connection, the IORA RCSTT proposal for establishing Coordination Centre for Women Empowerment was discussed too.

In the following days, the IORA Secretary General and the Delegation from India met a good number of high-rank officials at public and private sections as follows:

- Prof. Moztarzadeh, the Vice Minister and President of IROST (i.e. host of IORA RCSTT),
- Dr. Ghobadian, the Vice Minister of Industries, Trade and Mines,
- Dr. Fatemi Amin, Director of Razavi Economic Organization,
- Dr. Soltani, Director of Innovation and Prosperity Fund,
- Dr. Ghaffari, Director of Iran Darouk Pharmaceutical Company

And in all the meetings and visits they discussed the issues of mutual interest and decided to define a mechanism for developing cooperation in various fields of mutual interest.

