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March 17, 2013

”APS FOR THE THIRD WORLD AND ARAB PHYSICISTS”

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ABSTRACT:

This proposal aims to bring the physicists from the Third World, such as from the Asian and Arab countries to the network of the American Physical Society through a proposed APS Unity Network (APS-UN) membership. These physicists are highly motivated and carrying out research devotedly with limited resources. However, they are largely isolated and very often unaware of the advanced research in developed countries. They have sincere desire for more exposures of the cutting edge research and some guidance to raise the bar of their academic standard. They are keen on collaborative research and training, especially with the US. Being the most prominent and active society for the physicists, APS can play the most effective leadership role to this large community of physicists, There are several problems associated to this union to APS. Fortunately, they are not difficult to solve. The most critical problems currently are i) the high APS membership fee, ii) difficulties in getting US Visa, and iii) expensive trip for conferences. To circumvent the problems, I would like to propose to introduce the discount

membership network, APS-UN, which has input from a very large community of physicists. The objectives of this proposal are very much in accord with the recent 5 year Strategic Plan of APS.

INTRODUCTION:

I have been working to promote physics education and research in Bangladesh for a long time, and the effort has now expanded to few other countries. The effort was basically by myself, until I was recommended to work with FIP and to stand for one vacant position of a member-at-large at FIP. The position has given me the scope to expedite my effort enormously. Bringing the physicists of the Third World countries under the APS will be a big step toward narrowing the huge gap between two communities, one with advanced research and one with devoted group working largely in isolation.

I have been very enthusiastic and encouraged by the approval of the motion for my initial proposal for bringing them under a discount membership, APS United Network APS-UN, during the last FIP EC meeting held in Atlanta in April 2012. It gave the prospect of getting all of these devoted and motivated physicists under the APS. While the words "devotion" and "motivation" truly describe them, the research standard is in general lower than that is carried out in the developed countries. When I watch their beaming faces of research accomplishment, I admire them. However, they appear not to be aware of the problems and the advances that have been made. They express desire to connect, be involved in cutting edge research and solve problems and be part of advance research. It is a very large community who are working in a manner isolated from the advanced research in the developed countries. Since the last meeting I travelled to United Arab Emirates, India, and Egypt and had the opportunities to discuss the proposal with many physicists in Asian and Arab countries. With their input, I have finalized the present proposal to present at the FIP EC meeting for submission to APS EC with input from the FIP.

In October 2012, I received an encouraging letter from Dr. Kate Kirby, the Executive Officer of APS dated October 4, 2012. It contained the right attitude and for the physicists of the Asian and Arab countries. The statement in the letter mentions the approved motion adopted under the 5 year "Strategic Plan" of APS and it says

"Attracting and serving a diverse and inclusive membership worldwide is a primary goal for APS. In calling for nominations, we wish to remind you how important it is to give full consideration to qualified women, members of underrepresented minority groups, and scientists from outside the United States".

BACKGROUND:

I would like to give a brief background of myself and why I would like to submit this proposal. I have been attending conferences since I was a graduate student. But I do not meet Bangladeshi scientists in these conferences and no one seems to know any university of Bangladesh still now. Even Dhaka University, where Professor Satyen Bose of Bose-Einstein theory was a professor and served as the Physics chair for 25 years, is not known. Professor Bose moved to India in his later age. The contrasting fact is that Indian scientists, who live next to Bangladesh, are very much active in research and well known and all their institutions seem to be known outside India.

To bring the scientific community of Bangladesh to the advanced research, I started working since

1995. In January 1995 I visited Dhaka University with a few thousand dollars and asked the Physics Chair whether an annual physics research award can be initiated. The purpose was to motivate research and give recognition for publications. The idea was new and took several years to convey the message of importance of research publications and go to conferences for interactions and presentations.

After years of work, now there two Physics research prizes for any scientist in Bangladesh, one is annual for contributing research publication and one is for lifetime contributions in physics. Recognition is encouraging more publications. I have also initiated and am working for best physics teaching as well as research guidance awards, and student scholarships in 5 research universities, STEM program in two non-research universities and four other schools. Two of the are only for women. The objectives of these programs is to improve in-class teaching, research involving students, and intellectual and inspirational interactions between teachers and students. In return for improvement of academic excellence, the students nominate the teachers, from whom they learnt most, to be awarded. It is an effective STEM program for improvement of in-class teaching, interactions, and research involvement.

The need for such improvement is not unique in Bangladesh. It exists in other Indian educational institutions, and in other countries. I am involved with such STEM programs at a few universities in a few countries, such as, Aligarh Muslim University in India, Cairo University and Al Azhar University in Egypt. These are very old universities with large number of students and hence with heavy teaching load. The encouragement for recognition help in upgrading the excellence. However, my projects are small compared to the improvement needed.

I am co-founder, with Professor Lotfia El Nadi of Cairo laser institute NILES and professor of Physics of Cairo University, of the International Society of Arab Women in Science. It has now about 230 members from seven Middle Eastern and African countries.

I am the founder of the International Society of Muslim Women in Science (ISMWS) for encouraging Muslim women to science profession. It has now over 100 members from 23 countries.

However, a biggest step will be achieved by bringing the physicists of the Third World and Arab works to APS. The latest development with The APS Strategic Plan will bring enhance coordinated collaboration and faster advances for science.

ISSUES WITH APS MEMBERSHIP:

Implementation of the APS strategic plan requires resolving a some longstanding issues through a few steps. The most crucial problems are i) the high APS membership fee, ii) difficulties in getting US Visa, and iii) expensive trip for conferences. To find out the importance of these issues and their comments, I conducted a survey on the research issues with physicists of a number of countries. I expanded the questions of survey to more physicists since the first one I presented at the FIP EC meeting last year. The survey included physicists from African, Arab, and Asian, countries, such as, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tatarstan, Turkey, and United Arab Emirates. It also inquired their interest in APS and be in the network APS-UN. The survey also included help from Dr. Tamer Elkafrawy at Ain Shams University in Egypt, faculty member Akeel

Huaasin of Basrah University in Iraq, Physics Chair Sabieh Anwar of LUMS School of Science and Engineering, Dr. Kassef of Quaid-e-Azam University in Pakistan, Physics Chair Maamar Benkrauda of United Arab Emirates University, Physics Chair S M Mujibur Rahman of Sultan Qaboos University of Oman, Dr. Laila Babsail of Saudi Arabia, and Indian Physicists attending the CDAMOP conference in Delhi, 2011.

Follwing are the survey summary result. The important fact "Everyone is interested in APS & its membership"

Question 1: How many APS members do you have?

Answer 1: Bangladesh: None (1!), Egypt: Few (≤ 3), India: Few (my contact), Iraq: None, Oman: 1, Pakistan: None, UAE: Few

Reason for low membership: i) Expensive membership fee, ii) Have not heard of APS

Why expensive:

Typical Monthly Income of a physicist: Bangladesh (\sim \$100), Egypt (\sim \$200), India (\sim \$950), Iraq (\sim \$2000), Oman (Reasonable), Pakistan (\$1500-2000), UAE (\$6000)

Question 2: What could be the fair membership fee?

Answer 2: Bangladesh: \$5, Egypt (& other developing Arab countries): \$5 or free, India: \$10 – 15, Pakistan: \$15-20, Iraq: \$75, Oman: \$50, UAE: \$70 & \$1000 for lifetime memberhsip

Question 3: Can the Science and Education Department of the government help in membership fee through a society like Bangladesh Physical Society?

Answer 3: Bangladesh, Egypt, Iraq, Pakistan: The government can if it wants, but helping in membership to a scientific organization is not of no general interest - difficult to work with government officials. India: Difficult to work

Question 4: Do you go to APS conferences?

Answer 4: Bangladesh: No (most expensive & visa), Egypt: No (most expensive & visa), India: Yes if DST grant is granted, Iraq: No, Oman:

No (expensive & visa), Pakistan: No, most expensive, UAE: No (expensive & visa)

Question 5: Which conferences do you go?

Answer 5: Bangladesh: Bangladesh regional, & in India, Middle East, China, Europe (with government grant & visa - ~1 one grant per lifetime), Egypt: Regional, Middle East, & sometime in China, Europe, India: Any conference with grant, Pakistan: Limited, Oman: Middle East, China, Europe, UAE: Middle East, China, Europe
Their Wishlist: APS involvement and providing some good speakers

Question 6: Do you have access to APS journals?

Answer 6: Bangladesh: Very limited, Egypt: on campus internet, India: Most of them, Iraq: No (Some access in the past), Oman: Wants individual discount access, UAE: generally yes

Question 7: What can FIP do for you?

Answer 7: All countries: Give cheaper membership fee and organize conference in their countries.

Each, except Iraq, has facility to hold the conferences. Egypt particularly asked for conference every other year. Egypt and UAE say they are in the most convenient location for Middle Eastern, African, even Asian physicists to attend

I provided the information on i) APS free individual membership, available on need basis, ii) group discount available through regional organizations, iii) additional supportive letter available for visa application.

i) Individual application was good, but no one has gone through the application process, even the best physicists very well deserved to be APS Fellows through FIP, ii) Organizations are inefficient, iii) supportive letter work sometime and does not work for US visa. Only the Indian scientists appear to know about it.

PROPOSAL FOR APS MEMBERSHIP

PROPOSE: Based on the input I received, I would suggest that we, FIP EC, propose the motivating APS-UN (Unity Network) membership for any physicist in the developing and Arab countries. It is a discount membership membership with the following benefits at low cost to APS:

- i) APS-UN membership fee \$10-\$15
- ii) Receive APS electronic announcements
- iii) Receive APS electronic newsletter
- iv) Right to contribute to APS newsletter
- v) Right to participate in APS conferences as a member
- vi) Right to apply for the registration waiver or discount registration fee in APS conferences as a member
- vii) Receive discount on APS journals
- viii) May engage in APS projects
- ix) Apply for any APS travel grant for conference presentations
- x) May cast votes in APS elections
- xi) Right to hold APS regional conferences under APS banner and policies
- xii) Right to receive APS awards and fellowships

• This is similar to that offered by some other organizations (e.g. IEEE) and societies (e.g. INWES) for members in the developing nations. If we consider bringing these physicists to unity network as one of FIP's important goals, we should accomodate the interested individual physicists with a fee that they are able to pay, We can always revise the fee as the situation improves. The most important outcome will be that these physicists will have the opportunity to know the others in the developed countries and be able to interact for advanced research

I believe, we FIP EC can make the right change for the Physicists of Developing and Arab Nations.

We submit the proposal

Note: The list of Physicists in my email network for APS membership information is given below.

• Finally, I would like to say a few things about ISMWS, the International Society of Muslim Women in Science. We have increased the number of members to over 170 from 26 countries. We are still trying to register it. Many members seek for support for conference attendance, short time crisis while they are in some other countries for study or research. I collect job and grant applications to put them at the ISMWS website.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sultana N. Nahar". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

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Table 1: Partial list of physicists from 21 countries supporting the proposal (includes members of the International Society of Muslim Woman in Science)

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