

The Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMST) is an intergovernmental and an international organization with 10 member countries and 10 centres of Excellence. Since its inception in 1997, it has focused on a) south-south cooperation, b) sustainable development, and c) use of science and technology for the socio-economic development of its member countries. So far the areas in which the organization has worked include climate change and environment, biotechnology, renewable energy and tele-health. COMST has in the recent past aligned its initiatives with the Sustainable Development Goals and pursued triangular cooperation expanding its contacts with international organizations and the countries of the South.

COMST's mandate does not include legal affairs as the focus is on science, technology and innovation through various means and mechanisms. Since the majority of our member countries have marine coastal areas, there is interest in looking at some aspects related to ocean economy and sustainability especially in the context of SDGs. There could be a possibility for COMST to work in this field for which consultations with the member countries is being envisaged.

We appreciate that the above-quoted letter addressed to Specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations Intergovernmental Organizations: Funding Institutions has been forwarded to us. However, we are not in a position to offer much on the legal aspects in the context of the Law of the Sea. We would be happy to maintain our contacts with the UN in the areas that fall within our mandate.

With regards and best wishes,

Ashraf Masood

Former Ambassador/Advisor SDGs