A high-powered five member delegation from Germany visited NUST Global ThinkTank Network (GTTN) on 21st January 2016, to participate in a roundtable discussion on dimensions of regional security.

The delegation comprised: Dr. Patricia Flor, DG & Federal Government Commissioner for Disarmament and Arms Control, Federal Republic of Germany; Ambassador Ina Lepel, German Ambassador to Pakistan; Ms. Christine Hohmann, Head of German Division for Disarmament; Col. Klaus Wolf, German Defence Attaché for Pakistan and Dr. Dan Tidten, First Secretary, German Embassy.

GTTN was represented by Mr. Amer Hashmi, Advisor NUST and President GTTN; Brigadier (Retd.) Amir Yaqub, Director Operations and Collaboration GTTN, Senior Fellows GTTN namely former Governor of Balochistan and KPK Mr. Owais Ghani, Former IG and DG Intelligence Bureau Dr. Shoaib Suddle, and former Vice Chancellor University of Balochistan Brigadier (Retd.) Agha Gul; Ambassador (Retd.) Syed Hasan Javed, former Pakistani ambassador to Germany; Mr Syed Muhammad Ali and Ms. Haleema Saadia from Centre for International Strategic Studies Islamabad, and the GTTN team including Ms. Atia Kazmi, Senior Research & Policy Analyst; Mr. Atif Bilal, Project Manager - Advisor’s Office; Mr. Atif Shahzad, Associate Project Manager, Ms. Adeeba Rahman, Coordinator, and Ms. Sibgha Rahman, research intern GTTN.

Mr. Amer Hashmi welcomed the guests and introduced Pakistani participants while Dr. Flor introduced the German delegation. Dr. Flor, the head of German delegation has earlier also served as the German Special Representative for Central Asia. Her current responsibilities include looking after UN peacekeeping, cyber security, counter terrorism, and arms control and disarmament at the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Colonel Klaus Wolf, German Defence Attaché for Pakistan is a former student of NDU, Pakistan.

The guests were introduced to NUST Knowledge Ecosystem, which is founded on the vision of building knowledge economy in Pakistan by creating knowledge intensive activities and nurturing intellectual capabilities especially of youth.

The discussion from Pakistan’s side focused on an in-depth appraisal of Pakistan’s regional security environment. That in the wake of complex, unprincipled and intense geopolitical new great game in this region, it is likely to remain mired in turmoil and instability. War is a never-ending phenomenon; conflict always recurs because it is in human nature to strive for the inaccessible. It was identified that the U.S., China, EU/NATO, Russia, India, Pakistan, Turkey, Central Asian republics, Saudi Arabia, UAE and international Norcomafia as major players, affecting Afghan security. Pakistan cannot remain oblivious to the double game being played by the U.S., India and Afghan government. U.S. has an extensive intelligence network of around 3-4,000 CIA operatives inside Afghanistan besides the 9,800 American troops and 2000 NATO soldiers and is not unaware of Afghan and Indian intelligence activities against Pakistan from the Afghan territory. Moreover, the U.S. failure in stabilizing Afghanistan was a reality waiting to happen. The growing Daesh mantra in this region may find its way into Afghanistan but it is more likely that the remnants of Taliban are rebranding themselves as Daesh.

The speakers stressed the significance of promotion of economic interdependencies between the neighbors of Afghanistan that they were the only long-term method of stabilizing Afghanistan and 2 the region. Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline, once built, will help Pakistan become positively relevant towards both Iran and India and create both a mutual stake in a stable and prosperous Pakistan for both its neighbors. Germany’s positive stance towards accepting more Muslim immigrants was also appreciated.
Presenting German perspective, Dr. Flor identified the main German concerns that included Afghanistan, ungoverned territories, international terrorism particularly the rise of ISIS, providing safe havens to terrorists and drug trade as the main German international security concerns.

The head of German delegation emphasized the need to achieve political consensus through reconciliation process in Afghanistan. She shared her belief that the growing strength of terrorist outfits and organizations in the country and their evolving nexus with Afghan Taliban is an alarming phenomenon, which needs to be dealt with iron hand and which otherwise might threaten the vitals of national, regional and global security. She expressed German interest in knowing Pakistan’s stance on geopolitical shifts in the region, rise of China and how Pakistan expects to ensure the security of its shipping lanes and Gwadar, despite conflicting interests of major regional and global players. She said that in a globalized world, one cannot build islands of prosperity, progress and peace and both internal and external security are interdependent and inseparable.

She was also curious to know Pakistan's stance on regional uncertainties, insurgencies, proxy wars, clashes and arms race with India. She expressed interest in economic and other CBMs to help stabilize region and reduce tensions. Transparency, in German view, could help build confidence, particularly in areas of arms control and disarmament and offers a win-win situation.

The discussants were in complete agreement that the regional security problems are inextricably interrelated and should be viewed in a holistic manner. The maze of complex problems addressing the dilemma of having arms industry and then defending the notion of arms control should be coped with a pragmatic approach that could prioritize and tackle this ambiguity.