

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE 36th COUNCIL OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF SRI LANKA

This report reviews the activities of the Council for the period 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016.

1. THE COUNCIL

The Council was reconstituted as given below, at the AGM held on 27th March 2015.

NASSL Council – 2015

Officers

Prof Vijaya Kumar	-	President
Dr Kingsley A de Alwis	-	Immediate Past President
Dr A M Mubarak	-	Vice President
Prof Nadira Karunaweera	-	General Secretary
Prof Priyan Dias	-	Assistant Secretary
Prof Upali S. Amarasinghe	-	Secretary, Foreign Relations
Dr Ranjith Mahindapala	-	Treasurer
Prof H D Gunawardena	-	Editor (up to 31 st August 2015)
Prof Ajith de Alwis	-	Editor (from 1 st September 2015)

Members

Dr K Locana Gunaratna	-	Council member
Prof T M Sunethra Atukorala	-	Council member
Prof Ajith de Alwish	-	Council member (up to 31 st August 2015)
Prof Jayantha Wijeyaratne	-	Council member
Prof Vajira Dissanayake	-	Council member
Prof Samantha Hettiarachchi	-	Council member
Prof Laal Chandrasena	-	Council member
Prof Asoka Pathiratne	-	Council member
Prof KKYW Perera	-	Council member
Prof Malik Ranasinghe	-	Council member (from 1 st March 2016)

Eleven regular Council meetings were held during the period, with most members in attendance.

Particulars of attendance of members at Council meetings are given below:

Name	Present	Excused	Absent	Total
Prof Vijay Kumar	11	0	0	11
Dr Kingsley de Alwis	9	1	1	11
Dr A M Mubarak	8	2	1	11
Prof Nadira Karunaweera	10	1	0	11
Prof Priyan Dias	4	4	3	11
Prof Upali Amarasinghe	2	8	1	11
Dr Ranjith Mahindapala	6	5	0	11
Prof Ajith de Alwis	3	4	4	11
Prof H D Gunawardena	0	5	0	05
Dr Locana Gunaratna	10	0	1	11

Prof Sunethra Atukorala	7	4	0	11
Prof Jayantha Wijeyaratne	4	4	3	11
Prof Vajira Dissanayake	6	3	2	11
Prof Samantha Hettiarachchi	1	2	8	11
Prof Laal Chandrasena	5	4	2	11
Prof Asoka Pathiratne	4	6	1	11
Prof KKYW Perera	8	2	1	11
Prof Malik Ranasinghe	1	0	0	01

2. NEW FELLOWS

No new Fellows were elected at the Annual General Meeting held on 27th March 2015 at the Ramada Hotel, Colombo 1 since the nominees failed to secure a minimum of 50% of the 49 valid ballots cast.

3. CONDOLENCES

The Council noted with great regret, the passing away of former Fellows: Prof. Rohini Hewamanna and Prof. WP Jayasekera.

4. ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR

- 4.1 A press statement was issued by the President, NASSL on 8th June 2015 expressing concern over the government's decision to ban glyphosate without adequate scientific evidence.
- 4.2 A subcommittee was established to raise funds and acquire office space for the academy.
- 4.3 A meeting was held on 8th July 2015 with the then Hon. Minister of Science and Technology, Dr. Sarath Amunugama to discuss the need for permanent office space, annual fund allocation and possible advisory role of the academy in scientific affairs at national level. While an allocation of funds was made available for 2015/2016, discussions regarding other 2 matters are being continued.
- 4.4 The President, Prof. Vijaya Kumar was appointed as a member of the International Expert Committee of the IAMP Symposium "Exploring Traditional Medicine" which evaluated abstracts and reviewed case studies presented by scientists working on traditional medicine in the areas of clinical trials, acupuncture and moxibustion, public health and clinical trials.
- 4.5 Need for amendments to the rules of the NASSL was discussed first at Council level and the council approved amendments were presented to the membership for approval at a Special General Meeting (SGM) that was held on 15th October 2015 at 3.00 pm at the Auditorium, Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies (LKIIRSS), Horton Place, Colombo 7. The list of amended rules approved at the SGM will be tabled at the Annual General Meeting 2016.
- 4.6 A lecture by Dr Locana Gunaratna (Fellow and Council member) on 'Urbanization and Mega Cities in South Asia: Lessons and Challenges for Sri Lanka' was held on 15th October 2015 from 5.00 to 6.00 pm (following the SGM) at the Auditorium of the LKIIRSS, Horton Place, Colombo 7. The event was open to the public with Hon. Patali Champika Ranawaka, Minister of Mega cities and Western Region Development as the Chief Guest.

- 4.7 The Academy was consulted by the Minister of Plantation Industries on its views regarding the banning of the use of Glyphosate in tea and a detailed response was provided to the Minister.
- 4.8 Prof. Nadira Karunaweera was appointed to a special committee of the Association and Academies of Sciences in Asia, the work of which resulted in a Publication on 'Women in Science, Technology and Engineering in Asia' that was released in August 2015, which also included a report on 'Women in Science Technology and Engineering in Sri Lanka'.
- 4.9 An initiative led by Prof. Nadira Karunaweera, was launched on 8th March 2016 to develop a national database on 'women scientists in Sri Lanka' with an electronic survey to gather information on 'female perspective on deficiencies in the field of science and the areas that require attention to promote women to take up and successfully pursue a career in science'.

4.10 NASSL Participation in Meetings and Workshops

- 4.10.1 Prof Vijaya Kumar as President, NASSL and President, SCA and Dr. Locana Gunaratne represented NASSL at the 15th Annual Conference of Science Council of Asia (SCA) that was held in Cambodia from 15-17 May 2015.
- 4.10.2 Prof Nadira Karunaweera represented NASSL at the Women in Science and Technology in Seoul, Korea on 25-30 August 2015
- 4.10.3 Prof Vijaya Kumar participated in the Exploring Traditional Medicine Symposium held in Beijing in September 2015 in connection with his membership of the expert committee evaluating presentations therein.
- 4.10.4 Prof. Sunethra Athukorale represented the NASSL at the African, European, Mediterranean Academies for Science Education Conference that was held in Dakar, Senegal 12-14 October 2015.
- 4.10.5 Prof. Vajira Dissanaikie was nominated and participated at the meeting on 'Science and Technology Policy in the context of Biotechnology' an event that was co-organized with UNESCO, held in New Delhi, India on 11-12 December 2015
- 4.10.6 Prof. Vijaya Kumar represented the NASSL at the Conference of the Inter-Academy Partnership (IAP) and General Assembly in South Africa 28 February-2 March 2016. NASSL presented its candidature for membership of the Executive Council of IAP but failed to succeed.
- 4.10.7 Dr. Locana Gunaratna was nominated to attend the meeting on 29-30 March 2016 to plan the International Geological Congress.

4.10.8 During the course of the year, NASSL received calls for nomination of scientists for several international programmes that included the following:

- 4.10.8.1 Participation at the Young Physician Leaders (YPL) programmes sponsored by the Inter Academies Medical Panel (IAMP): Dr Veranja Liyanapathirana from Faculty of Medicine, Peradeniya and Dr Sudharshani Seneveiratna from Faculty of Medicine, Colombo were nominated from the NASSL and Dr. Liyanapathirana was selected for participation at the YPL summit in Berlin, Germany from 9-12 October 2015.
- 4.10.8.2 Dr. Suneth Agampodi, Faculty of Medicine, Rajarata University and Dr. Veranja Liyanapathirana, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya were selected for participation at the YPL reunion that will coincide with the World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland in May 2016 on the recommendation of the Academy.

4.10.8.3 Prof. SHPP Karunaratna was nominated and selected for participation at the International Symposium on 'Global Health Issues in Asia' on 19-21 October 2015 in Daejeon, Korea organized by the Association of Academies of Sciences and Societies of Asia (AASSA).

4.11 Awards received by Fellows

4.11.1 Several Fellows of the Academy received President's Awards for Scientific Publication in 2013 at a ceremony held on 18th November 2015. List is given below:

ATUKORALA, T M S	DISSANAYAKE, M A K L
CHANDRAJITH R.L.R	DISSANAYAKE, V H W
De SILVA, H J	GUNATHILLAKE, C V S
De SILVA, N R	GUNATHILLAKE, I A U N
De SILVA, A P	SHERIFF, M H R
DIAS, W P S	WICKREMASINGHE, A R
DISSANAYAKE, C B	

4.11.2 Prof. SHPP Karunaratne and Dr. Vinitha Thadani, former President, Sri Lanka Association for the Young Scientists, as NASSL nominees, were awarded Commonwealth Science Conference follow up grants for 2015/2016.

4.12 Foreign relations

4.12.1 Science Council of Asia

Prof. Vijaya Kumar, as President of the Science Council of Asia (SCA) attended the 15th Annual Conference of the SCA. It was held in Cambodia from 15-17 May 2015. NASSL remains committed to hosting the SCA Annual Conference scheduled to be held from 30 May to 1st June 2016 at Galadari Hotel, Colombo. This event is being co-organized with the National Science Foundation.

4.12.2 Indian National Science Academy

NASSL supported the candidacy of INSA nominee who was elected as the co-chair of the Executive Council of the Inter Academy Partnership

4.12 NASSL website and newsletter

Website of the NASSL was given a new look and updated. Newsletter is being prepared for circulation through the web.

5. NASSL OFFICE

Ms Sriyani Weerasinghe continued to work as Administrative Assistant in the NASSL Office on 3 days a week (Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays).

Prof Nadira Karunaweera
General Secretary / NASSL
22 March 2016