

# ANNUAL REPORT OF THE 35<sup>th</sup> COUNCIL OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF SRI LANKA

This report reviews the activities of the Council for the period 1 April 2014 – 28 February 2015.

## 1. THE COUNCIL

The Council was reconstituted as given below, at the AGM held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2014.

### NASSL Council – 2014

#### Officers

Prof Vijaya Kumar	-	President
Dr Kingsley A de Alwis	-	Immediate Past President
Dr A M Mubarak	-	Vice President
Prof Nilanthi de Silva	-	General Secretary
Prof Nadira Karunaweera	-	Secretary, Foreign Relations
Prof Ajith de Alwis	-	Assistant Secretary
Prof J N O Fernando	-	Treasurer
Prof H D Gunawardena	-	Editor

#### Members

Dr K Locana Gunaratna	-	Council member
Prof Upali S Amarasinghe	-	Council member
Prof T M Sunethra Atukorala	-	Council member
Prof Priyan Dias	-	Council member
Prof Jayantha Wijeyaratne	-	Council member
Prof A D V de S Indraratne	-	Council member
Prof Vajira Dissanayake	-	Council member
Prof Samantha Hettiarachchi	-	Council member
Dr Kamini Mendis	-	Council member

### Resignations and New Appointments to Council

Prof. Nilanthi de Silva resigned from the post of General Secretary in April 2014 and Prof. Nadira Karunaweera was elected by Council in her place. Prof Upali S. Amarasinghe was elected as Secretary, Foreign Relations from April 2014 to take up the vacancy created.

The following changes in ordinary members of Council took place during the year:

Prof Upali S Amarasinghe	-	Resigned as Council member	- April 2014
Prof A D V de S Indraratne	-	Resigned as Council member	- June 2014
Prof Nilanthi de Silva	-	Appointed Council member	- April 2014
	-	Resigned as Council member	- Nov 2014
Dr Kamini Mendis	-	Resigned as Council member	- Nov 2014
Prof Laal Chandrasena	-	Appointed Council member	- Dec 2014
Dr Ranjith Mahindapala	-	Appointed Council member	- Dec 2014

Eleven regular Council meetings were held during the period, with relatively good 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	2	0	11
Dr A M Mubarak	11	0	0	11
Prof. Nadira Karunaweera	11	0	0	11
Prof Ajith de Alwis	6	2	3	11
Prof J N O Fernando	5	3	3	11
Prof H D Gunawardena	8	3	0	11
Prof Upali Amarasinghe	5	5	1	11
Dr Locana Gunaratna	8	2	1	11
Prof Sunethra Atukorala	8	2	1	11
Prof Priyan Dias	9	2	0	11
Prof. Jayantha Wijeyaratne	10	1	0	11
Prof A D V de S Indraratne	1	2	0	3
Prof Nilanthi de Silva	2	3	3	8
Prof. Vajira Dissanayake	5	2	4	11
Prof. Samantha Hettiarachchi	4	5	2	11
Dr. Kamini Mendis	1	3	4	8
Prof. Laal Chandrasena	1	2	0	3
Dr. Ranjith Mahindapala	2	1	0	3

## 2. NEW FELLOWS

At the Annual General Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2014, at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, Colombo 7, the following new Fellows were elected:

1. Munidasa Padmasiri Ranaweera
2. Basil Laliputra Tennekoon
3. Anura Wickremasinghe

### 2.1 Induction Ceremony

The Induction Ceremony for new Fellows was held in the New Auditorium of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, at Kynsey Road, Colombo 8, on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2014. The following took their oaths and were formally inducted as Fellows of the Academy:

1. Prof. MP Ranaweera
2. Prof. BL Tennekoon
3. Prof. A Wickremasinghe

Prof AP de Silva who was elected as a Fellow in 2013 but could not attend the induction ceremonies either in 2013 or 2014, took oaths at a special council meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at the Council Room of the Sri Lanka Association of Advancement of Science and was inducted as a Fellow of the Academy.

### 2.2 Fellowship dinner

The Induction Ceremony was followed by a Fellowship Dinner, which was attended by about 40 Fellows and their spouses.

## 3. CONDOLENCES

The Council noted with great regret, the passing away of five of its distinguished Fellows. Three of them, Professor Emeriti of the University of Peradeniya viz., Prof. GP Wannigama, Prof. V Basnayake and Prof. WP Jayasekera died in 2014. Dr. P Sivapalan, former Director of the Tea Research Institute died early this year and a few weeks ago,

NASSL lost its Treasurer, Prof. JNO Fernando, formerly of the Open University of Sri Lanka.

#### **4. ELECTION OF NASSL PRESIDENT AS PRESIDENT OF SCIENCE COUNCIL OF ASIA (SCA)**

The President of NASSL, Prof. Vijaya Kumar, was elected President of the Science Council of Asia for 2014-2016 at its 14<sup>th</sup> Conference held in Kuala Lumpur in June 17-19, 2014. Dr. Kingsley de Alwis while being President of NASSL had been elected Vice-President of SCA at the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference held in Thailand in 2013.

#### **5. ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR**

##### **5.1 Joint lecture / seminar series with the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science (SLAAS)**

A series of lectures and seminars were held as joint activities between NASSL and SLAAS that were open to the public, on topics that were of relevance and current importance.

A lecture titled '**Beating bowel cancer: prevention is the best way forward**' was delivered by Prof Kemal Deen, Professor of Surgery, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2014 at the SLAAS auditorium.

A seminar titled '**Challenges in managing groundwater resources with particular emphasis on the Rathupaswala issue**' with Dr M Ranasoma, Managing Director, Dipped Products PLC; Dr AM Mubarak , General President, SLAAS and Dr H Manthritilake, Senior Researcher, IWMI as resource persons was held on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2014 at the Auditorium, SLAAS.

A lecture titled '**CKDu – Revisited**' was delivered by Prof Gamini Rajapakse, Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2014 at the SLAAS auditorium.

A lecture on '**CERN and developing country science**' was delivered by Dr Rudiger Voss, Head of International Relations, European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), Geneva, Switzerland on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2014 at the SLIDA auditorium. This event was jointly organized also with COSTI.

A roundtable discussion on '**Supply of drinking water to CKDu areas**' was held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2014 at the SLAAS Council Room with the participation of Tanuja Ariyananda, Executive Director, Lanka Rainwater Harvesting Forum; Duleep Gunawardena, Deputy General Manager, Water Supplies Board (Northern) and Nihal Ferdinando, Former Additional General Manager, National Water Supplies and Drainage Board.

A seminar titled '**Financial measures to encourage private sector to invest in R & D**' was held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at the SLAAS auditorium. The event was Chaired by Mrs Dhara Wijayatillake, Secretary, Ministry of Technology and Research. Speakers were Dr BMS Batagoda, Deputy Secretary, Treasury; Mr Eranga Jayewardena, CEO, Silueta-MAS Holdings and Dr Vaz Gnanam, Director, Credance Genomics. Panelists were Mr Mangala Yapa, Secretary General, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce and Mr Gamini Gunasekera, Chairman, Ceylon National Chamber of Industries.

A seminar on 'Climate Change' with Prof. W.L. Sumathipala, Chairman, National Science Foundation and Dr. B.V. Ranjith Punyawardena, Climatologist, Dept of

Agriculture as resource persons was held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2015 at the Auditorium, SLAAS

## **5.2 Promoting Science Education through Information and Communication Technology**

The resource materials developed during the course of 2012 under this TWAS-funded project were distributed to several schools through the Committee for the Popularization of Science of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science.

## **5.3 Activities related to 'Chronic Kidney Disease of Uncertain Aetiology (CKDU)'**

**Proceedings of the Symposium entitled 'Chronic Kidney Disease of Uncertain Aetiology: a scientific basis for future action'** that was held during the previous year (on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013) was published in May 2014 and copies were distributed to Fellows who attended subsequent NASSL-organized events.

**A panel discussion on 'Follow-up of recommendations made at the symposium on CKDU'** jointly organized with the Rotary Club of Colombo as a public event was held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2014 at the auditorium of the Organization of Professional Associations (OPA). Prof Vijaya Kumar chaired the discussion. Panelists were Dr Ranjith Mulleriyawa, Consultant, Agricultural systems and Nalaka Gunawardane, Science journalist.

**Brain-storming sessions were held monthly preceding the council meeting at the NASSL office on 'CKDU and the way forward'.**

## **5.4 NASSL Participation in Meetings and Workshops**

Prof Vijaya Kumar as President, SCA participated in the Organizing Committee meeting for its 15<sup>th</sup> Conference in Cambodia planned for May 2015 held in Phnom Penh on November 2-4 2014

Prof Vijaya Kumar represented NASSL at the South Asian Summit Meeting on 'Vistas in Structural Chemistry' held in Pakistan from 28-30 April 2014 and at the General Assembly of the Association of Academies and Societies of Sciences in Asia (AASSA) held in New Delhi, India from 15-17 October 2014. Prof Nadira Karunaweera participated in the meeting of the Special Committee on Women in Science and Technology and Prof Gamini Seneviratne of IFS participated in the AASSA conference on Agricultural Biotechnology held in conjunction with the AASSA General Assembly.

Prof Nadira Karunaweera represented NASSL at the Regional Workshop for Women in Science and Technology, Organized by AASSA and the Turkish Academy of Sciences (TUBA), held in Izmir, Turkey from 28-30 May 2014. She has been invited to co-author a publication on 'Women in Science, Technology and Engineering in Asia and Pacific' that is to be completed in 2015.

Prof. Sunethra Athukorale represented the NASSL at the Commonwealth Science Education Conference that was held in Beijing, China in November 2014.

Prof. Vijaya Kumar attended the Commonwealth Science Conference in Bangalore, India in 25-28 November 2014, on a personal invitation from the Royal Society. He also participated in a Organizing Committee meeting of the Science Council of Asia

Dr. AM Mubarak represented the academy at the 102<sup>nd</sup> Indian Science Congress that was held in Mumbai from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and presented a paper at the sessions.

During the course of the year, NASSL received calls for nomination of scientists for several international programmes including for participation at the Young Physician Leaders programmes sponsored by the Inter Academies Medical Panel (IAMP). Dr Neranjan Dissanayake nominated by the NASSL participated at the YPL summit in Berlin, Germany.

## **5.5 Awards received by Fellows**

Several Fellows of the Academy received President's Awards for Scientific Publication in 2010, 2011 and 2012 at a ceremony held on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2014. List is given below:

CAREEM, MA	FERNANDO, DN	RAJAPAKSE, RMG
CHANDRASENA, LG	GUNATHILLAKE, CVS	RATNASOORIYA, WD
De SILVA, ED	GUNATHILLAKE, IAUN	SHERIFF, R
De SILVA, HJ	KARUNARATNE, SHP	TENNAKON, KH
De SILVA, NR	KARUNARATNE, V	THABREW, MI
DEEN, KI	KARUNAWEEERA, ND	THEVANESAM, V
DISSANAYAKE, CB	KOTAGAMA, SW	WEERASOORIYA, MV
DISSANAYAKE, MAKL	PETHIYAGODA, TRD	WEERASOORIYA, R
EDIRISINGHE, JP	PRIYANTHA, HMDN	WIJESUNDERE, DSA

## **5.6 Foreign relations**

### **5.6.1 Science Council of Asia**

NASSL remains committed to hosting the 16<sup>th</sup> SCA Annual Conference scheduled to be held in 2016.

### **5.6.2 Indian National Science Academy (INSA)**

INSA invited a NASSL delegation which participated in the, third Summit of Science Academies of South Asia held at INSA headquarters during the AASSA General Assembly and in October 2014. Prof Vijaya Kumar, Prof Nadira Karunaweera and Prof. Gamini Seneviratne, Institute of Fundamental studies, Kandy represented NASSL at this meeting.

### **5.6.3 Pakistan Academy of Sciences**

NASSL has entered into a formal Memorandum of Understanding with the Pakistan Academy of Sciences in order to facilitate collaboration between members of the two academies.

### **5.6.4 Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA)**

ISCA requested representation of NASSL at the 102<sup>nd</sup> Indian Science Congress-2015 that was held in Mumbai from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> January 2015. Dr. AM Mubarak represented the academy and presented a paper titled "Technology capacity-building, promotion and management of innovation – Sri Lankan Scenario" at a special session under the theme 'Science and Technology in SAARC Countries'.

### **5.7. Sri Lanka Academy of Young Scientists (SLAYS)**

NASSL continues to provide guidance and support to the Sri Lanka Academy of Young Scientists, which meets regularly at the NASSL Office.

### **5.8 NASSL Research and Development Fund**

A Research and Development Fund has been set up to enhance the capacity of NASSL to commission important research projects/ programs in support of its mandated policy advisory role.

### **5.9 NASSL newsletter**

A decision was made to examine the possibility of improving the newsletter and making it a self-financing publication by including advertisements. Discussions will be continued with appropriate publishers in the coming months on production of a magazine and a parallel on-line newsletter.

### **5.10 Sponsorship for Awards**

The Commonwealth Science Follow-on Grants were offered to Conference delegates or their nominees. Grants were either Royal Society Travel Grants to initiate new research collaboration within the Commonwealth or Travel and Mentoring Grants to establish collaborative links between an early career researcher and an established researcher from another Commonwealth country. President, NASSL as a conference delegate nominated Prof. SHPP Karunaratne for the former and Dr Vinitha Thadani, President of SLAYS for the latter and NASSL is pleased to record that both have been informed that their applications were successful.

## **6. 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  
20 March 2015