

Chairperson's Summary
The Seventeenth Science Council of Asia (SCA) Conference
14th of June 2017 – 16th of June, 2017
Manila, The Philippines

Introduction

The Seventeenth Science Council of Asia (SCA) Conference was held in Manila, The Philippines, from the 14th of June to the 16th of June, 2017. The theme of the Conference was on “Science, Technology and Innovation for Inclusive Development”. The hosts of the Conference were the National Research Council of the Philippines (NRCP), Department of Science and Technology of the Philippines (DOST), and Science Council of Japan (SCJ) as the Secretariat of SCA.

The Conference was attended by approximately 450 participants from 13 countries/regions.

Summary of the Conference

The Seventeenth SCA Conference was constituted with an International Symposium composed of an Opening Ceremony, 6 Plenary Sessions, (6 Keynote Speeches), 4 Parallel Sessions with 127 oral presentations, Joint Project Workshop (JPWS), Future Earth Session, Poster Session and SCA's Management Board Meeting I and II.

I. Plenary Session

1. Opening ceremony

At the beginning, an ecumenical invocation and Philippine national anthem were presented by Prof. Ramon G. Acoymo, College of Music, University of the Philippines Diliman, followed by a welcome address of Prof. Christina A. Binag, President of NRCP.

Next Prof. Mesbahuddin Ahmed, Secretary of Bangladesh Academy of Sciences and Prof. Keisuke Hanaki, Vice-President of Science Council of Japan, made opening speeches. Prof. Fortunato T. de la Peña, Secretary of Department of Science and Technology of the Philippines made a keynote address. He mentioned that since the assumption of office of the present government, a new division was set up in the Department, to administer science, technology and innovation policies for a purpose of enhancing an inclusive society. It is therefore engaged in training specialized human resources in the science sector to implement evaluation on productivity, promote technical transfer of new type of cross-sector expertise, and disseminate suitable strategies.

Then Prof. Toshio Koike, Director of International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management (ICHARM) under the auspices of UNESCO made a keynote address. He stated that strengthening resilience of society under stress of climate change is prerequisite for sustainable developments, and is critical to make our society resilient at normal times, although the latest science and technology are not always perfect.

2. International Symposium

International symposium was convened with 6 plenary sessions, 4 parallel sessions and daily poster sessions during the three-day conference as below:

(1) Afternoon, the 14th of June, 2017

There were 146 poster presentations.

A keynote address in the first plenary session was addressed by Prof. Anthony M. Juan, Jr., on “The Body and the Wound: Some Reflections on the Meaning of Research and the Human Being”. He placed science and performing and film arts by articulating scientific and creative disciplines to the humane developments in the process of theatre and cultural histories.

Parallel sessions on the themes of (1) Re-engineering Research (in Humanities, Social Sciences and Governance and Education) towards Inclusive Growth, (2) Eco-environmental Studies and Ecological Engineering, (3) Human Health and Biotechnology, and (4) One Health: Connecting Human, Animal and Ecosystems Health were conducted, in which 32 presentations were disclosed.

(2) Morning of the 15th of June, 2017

Poster session and two plenary sessions with a keynote speech in the respective plenary sessions were conducted.

In the first plenary session, Dr. Renato U. Solidum, Jr., Undersecretary, Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change, DOST, spoke on “Preparing for the Big One: The Case of the Greater Metro Manila Area”. Undersecretary mentioned that recent natural hazards and impact over Metro Manila and surrounding regions from a strong earthquake and tsunami had raised much awareness among not only the government and business sectors but also individuals, family and community, by which it promoted sense of developing risk management preparedness. Dissemination of scientific information and data has had an effect on the change.

In the next plenary session, Dr. Jiba Raj Pokharel, Vice Chancellor of Nepal Academy of Science and Technology, addressed on “Disaster Risk Reduction in Nepal: Its Retrospect and Prospect”. He reported that Nepal suffered from natural disasters like fire, flood, landslide, thunderstorms, earthquakes, etc. almost every year recently. Fragmented policy coordination against disasters was said to have been a reason that Nepal lost relatively large size of lives compared to the neighboring countries. He also highlighted past success and failures of disaster preparedness and addressed what should be done in the future for the disaster cycle of Nepal.

30 presentations were presented in the 2 plenary sessions on the 4 themes: (1) “Integration and Mainstreaming in S&T Innovations”, (2) “Disaster Risk Reduction of Natural Disasters caused by Climate Change, Earthquakes and Tsunami”, (3) “Re-engineering Research (in the Humanities, Social Sciences and Governance and Education) towards Inclusive Growth, and (4) “Eco-environmental Studies and Ecological Engineering.

Poster sessions were held throughout the day for which 133 posters were exhibited.

(3) Afternoon of the 15th of June, 2017

As a keynote speaker of the plenary session, Dr. Meryl J. Williams, Asia-Pacific Fish Watch, addressed on “Innovation and Inclusive Development That Embodies Gender Equality: What Works and What Might Work”. She clarified that in the course of decades of her work in the fisheries, aquaculture, aquatic resource conservation and agricultural research, a method that could work for gender-sensitive approach was to use a gender lens in planning, monitoring, and evaluation for changing key institutions and modes of operation in marketing, entrepreneurship, etc.

Next there were 3 parallel sessions with the themes on (1) “Human Health and Biotechnology”, (2)

“One Health: Connecting Human, Animal and Ecosystems Health, and (3) “Disaster Risk Reduction of Natural Disasters caused by Climate Change, Earthquakes and Tsunami”, and 33 presentations were made.

(4) Morning of the 16th of June, 2017.

Future Earth session was organized in which Dr. Lourdes J. Cruz, University of the Philippines Diliman who was the Past President of NRCP, addressed on “The Philippines Perspective on Future Earth”. She asked if a small country like the Philippines could become a contributor to a global program like Future Earth, and she expressed commitment to utilize Future Earth opportunities of inclusive and transdisciplinary approach to help lessen vulnerabilities from frequent natural hazards in the country.

Thereafter a panel discussion was convened with 6 panelists on the theme of “Air Pollution and Human Health in Asia”.

(5) Afternoon of the 16th of June, 2017

As a keynote speaker, Dr. Josefino C. Comiso, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), USA, addressed on “Climate Change: Impacts, Resilience and Adaptation Strategies”. He stated that the latest research on earth environment mechanism in which a warming climate seemed to have caused heat in ocean and increased sea level by diminishing the Greenland and West Antarctic ice sheets, resulting super-typhoons and flooding.

In the next program, 3 parallel sessions were held with the themes of (1) “Re-engineering Research (in the Humanities, Social Sciences and Governance and Education) towards Inclusive Growth”, (2) “Eco-environmental Studies and Ecological Engineering”, and (3) “Gender Integration and Mainstreaming in S&T Innovations”, and 24 papers were presented.

3. Closing ceremony

Prof. Binag, President of NRCP, summarized the International Symposium and announced “Declaration of the 17th SCA Conference”. Prof. Takashi Onishi, President of Science Council of Japan, expressed gratitude for an enormous contribution by the Philippines for the Conference, and since next year’s SCA Conference will be held in Japan, he said that he looked forward to participation of many researchers. Official group photographs were taken and closing of the Conference was proclaimed.

II. SCA Joint Project Workshop

Joint Project Workshops (JPWS) is conducted every year by both the host country and Japan for exchanging the latest scientific and academic information on bilateral or multilateral research projects. It commenced in the afternoon of the 15th of June this year as an open workshop, and Prof. Binag, NRCP President, and Prof. Hiroshi Yoshino, Secretary-General of SCA, presided over the workshop in which 4 joint researches were presented.

From the Japanese side, Prof. Kazuo Nadaoka, Tokyo Institute of Technology, spoke on “Introduction of Two Coastal Ecosystem Conservation Projects for Coral Triangle Areas Funded by SATREPS Program”. He introduced two joint studies both of which had a focus on “blue carbon”, stored in coastal

maritime ecosystems in the Philippines and Indonesia. Two projects aim at establishing a comprehensive socio-economic model called “Blue Carbon Strategy” for enhancing local efforts to conserve coastal ecosystem which deserves potentials in contributing climate change mitigation and conserving biodiversity.

Prof. Hitoshi Oshitani of Tohoku University spoke on “International Collaborative Research on Pediatric Pneumonia between Japan and the Philippines”. He explained the purpose of this collaborative research which was to design a comprehensive governmental strategy to lessen occurrence of acute respiratory infection cases including pneumonia, and prevent deaths of children aged less than 5 years as a main target group.

Prof. Yukihiro Takahashi of Hokkaido University made a presentation on “Next Generation Earth Monitoring System with Micro-satellites and Ground-based Networks”. He reported a successful joint research on micro-satellites in 2014 in which remote sensing capability to monitor disasters, climate change, biodiversity, pollutions and resources, etc. was drastically advanced. The project has been expanded with DOST to reinforce data analysis capability provided by micro-satellites.

From the Philippine side, Dr. David Johnson, Head, Crop and Environmental Sciences Division, International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) presented some research projects on the topic of “Realizing Asia’s Second Green Revolution through International Partnerships”. He stated that since IRRI was established in 1960 with support of the Government of the Philippines and private foundations based in the US, it had succeeded in developing high yield rice variety leading to so called green revolution. However, latest climate changes exacerbated the global decrease in rice productivity, and an environment-friendly variety of another high yield rice is being experimented. It was for the first time that an international organization took part in the JPWS, which turned out to be informative, and it was anticipated that international organizations be part of the Conference continuously. United Nations Development Program (UNDP), scheduled to present a paper in the JPWS, was unable to make it on the day itself unfortunately.

III. Management Board Meeting (MBM)

1. Management Board Meeting I

SCA’s Management Board Meeting I was convened in the afternoon of the 14th of June, 2017. After self-introductions of the participants, the agenda of the MBM I was adopted. Then the annual activity for 2016, etc. were reported.

The overview of the MBM I was as follows:

With regard to future Conferences, it was explained that the venues for 2020 and 2022 SCA Conferences had already been decided to be hosted by China and South Korea respectively. Myanmar expressed its intention and would be preparing for hosting the SCA Conference for 2019. Nepal also showed interest in hosting the SCA Conference in 2021 or after. Both were welcomed by the Board. The venue for 2018 SCA Conference, scheduled to be held in Bangladesh, was reconsidered in view of recent situation.

There was no entry for the new membership to SCA during the past year. However, Secretary-General stated that there were numerous academies and institutions such as specialized academies of

Myanmar which had showed interest in the membership of SCA.

Lastly the host, NRCP presented the draft text of the 17th SCA Conference Declaration for the Board's consideration.

2. MBM II

The MBM II was convened in the evening of the 15th of June, 2017, with attendance of ASEAN Academy of Engineering and Technology (AAET) and Future Earth Asia Centre as observers.

Upon the deliberate discussion, the content of the 17th SCA Conference Declaration was adopted, and it was agreed to be announced at the closing ceremony of the International Symposium.

It was also agreed that the 18th SCA Conference continues to be presided over by Dr. Aminul Islam, President of Bangladesh Academy of Sciences, but the venue is adjusted to be held in Japan as exceptional measures. Bangladesh's host is to be postponed until 2021 on condition the situation improve. Accordingly, Nepal would consider the host of an SCA Conference in 2023.

For the new office bearers, Prof. Wang Xi, Vice-President of China Association for Science and Technology (CAST) is to assume President-Elect in view that China hosts the SCA Conference in 2020, and Prof. Vijaya Kumar, Immediate-Past President of SCA, expires his term of office. Prof. Xi informed the Board of the venue of the 20th Conference, Shanghai.

A change in Vice-President of SCA from Prof. Edgardo D. Gomez, the former President of NRCP, to Prof. Christine A. Binag, the current President of NRCP was announced.

In the free discussion, exchanges of opinions were made on promoting SCA's Joint Projects and it was discussed that various measures to collaborate with international efforts such as Future Earth could be useful. Other ideas discussed includes a "survey on best practice" among member organizations.

It was mentioned that periodical publication of SCA Conference was successfully registered with ISSN code number (2546-0811).

MBM II was ended with a closing remark by Prof. Gomez.

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