

INGSA Asia East Asia Capacity Building Workshop 2019

Forty seven participants from 13 countries (Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Philippines, Lao PDR, Singapore, Republic of Korea, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, New Zealand and Nigeria) attended the International Network for Government Science Advice (INGSA) East Asia Capacity Building Workshop at the Malaysian Higher Education Leadership Academy (AKEPT) on the 13th and 14th of August, 2019. The workshop themed “Non-communicable Diseases & Science Advice” was co-organised between INGSA Asia, International Science Council Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ISC ROAP) and AKEPT, with Asia Research News as the official media partner.



Participants and committee of the INGSA East Asia Capacity Building Workshop 2019

Day 1: 13th of August 2019

Registration and welcoming remarks: The registration began at 8.30am, followed by welcoming remarks from Prof. Dr. Abhi Veerakumarasivam, Chair of INGSA Asia who presented the overview of 1) roles and function of INGSA Asia and 2) objectives of the workshop. He also encouraged all the participants to stay connected with INGSA Asia through social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. This was followed by a welcome address by Prof. Emerita Datuk Mazlan Othman, Director of ISC ROAP who talked about the role of global networks such as ISC to collaborate with local stakeholders in realizing the purpose of science. Dr. Wan Nur Ibtisam Wan Ismail, Deputy Director (Leadership Sustainability) of AKEPT

then welcomed all participants to AKEPT; further sharing her views on the importance of this collaborative workshop. Finally, Tan Sri Zakri Abdul Hamid, Patron and Advisor of INGSA Asia and also former Science Advisor to the Prime Minister of Malaysia gave the participants a warm welcome and hoped they would gain valuable experience from the workshop.



Welcome address from the Chair of INGSA Asia, Prof. Dr. Abhi Veerakumarasivam



Opening remarks by Prof. Emerita Datuk Mazlan Othman, Director of ISC ROAP

Keynote Address: Sir Peter Gluckman, Former Chief Science Advisor to the Prime Minister of New Zealand, INGSA Chairman and President-Elect of International Science Council delivered a keynote address, entitled “Principles of Science Advice”. Science and technology advice involves informing or influencing policy through evidence that include much more than simply providing policymakers and politicians with factual results of scientific and technological research and expecting that these results are applied to policy deliberations and decisions. The purposes of evidence in informing policy include: 1) to provide an explanation of complex (open) systems so options can be explored; 2) to define options for action to achieve a particular outcome(s) and explore the implications of each option; 3) to address a particular implementation issue or scientific question, especially during emergencies/crises; 4) to define and plan an intervention and 5) to evaluate the impact and effect of the intervention. Finally, Sir Peter completed his keynote address with 6 lessons to remember when providing science advice:

- Lesson 1: Solicited vs unsolicited reports, understand the policy process

- Lesson 2: Defining the problem is critical
- Lesson 3: Timing is everything
- Lesson 4: Remember all of the stakeholders
- Lesson 5: Provide practical and scalable options/ways ahead/solutions
- Lesson 6: Writing a report is not impact



Keynote Address by Sir Peter Gluckman, INGSA Chair

Plenary Session 1: Battling Non-Communicable Diseases in Asia: Perspectives on the Research Landscape

Four participants shared their perspective of the research field in battling NCD:

- Prof Kim Byung Soo, Director, Division of Natural Sciences, National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Korea

Evidence of how research (especially in personalized medicine) has impacted patient management, and that patient survival rates have also increased although cancer incidence is increasing.

- Dr Bharath Prithiviraj, Research Associate, Advanced Science Research Center, City University of New York & Principal Investigator, MetaSUB International Consortium, Hyderabad, India

Evidence of how the internal and external microbiome contribute towards the health-disease continuum; potentially impacting policies that govern how the built environment impacts the brain-gut axis.

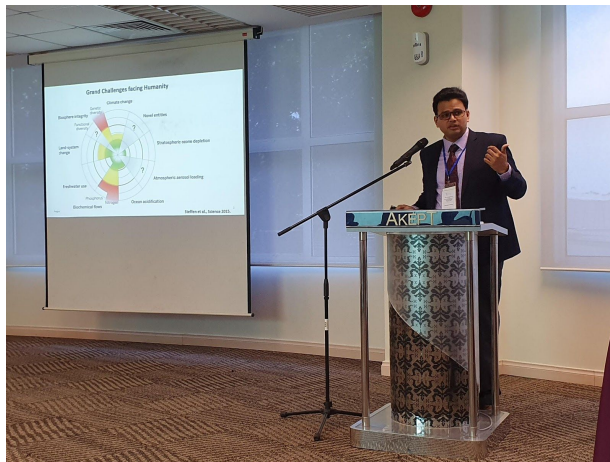
- Dr Razinah Sharif, Senior Lecturer, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia & Chair, Science Outreach Working Group, Young Scientists Network-Academy of Sciences Malaysia

Evidence on how nutrition research and behavioral change intervention can impact nutritional status of a country; also the need of multi-stakeholder engagement.

- Dr Meghnath Dhimal, Chief/Senior Research Officer, Nepal Health Research Council & Member, Global Young Academy

Evidence on how Nepal is facing an NCD epidemic; and the current initiatives that are being done to promote academic-policy collaboration.

After the presentations, a Q&A session was held for the other participants to share their interest with the topics earlier discussed by the four participants.



Speakers of Plenary Session 1 : Prof Kim Byung Soo, Dr Bharath Prithiviraj, Dr Razinah Sharif and Dr Meghnath Dhimal



Participants engaging in the Q&A of Plenary Session 1

Case Study 1: A fictional case study titled “Amplexia” was presented. The case study addresses childhood obesity, commercial interest, international relations and changing socio-demographics. The participants debated and assumed various roles of stakeholders involved in the case. Participants were exposed to various active learning pedagogies. Finally, participants were asked to reflect on two areas:

- What is the role of the science advisor in this situation?
- What perspectives and considerations should be reflected in any advice given?



Participants presenting their perspectives for Case Study 1

Plenary Lecture 1: Building Trust & Credibility: Media, Society & Policy

Danial Abdul Rahman, Head of Communications & Strategic Initiatives, Open Learning & Former Press Secretary, Ministry of Education Malaysia discussed the importance of understanding what the ‘demand’ side in the science-policy interface expects. He gave insights

into the changing dimensions of how we process information and the dynamic interplay between academics and their multiple role as advisors, influencers as well as data creation & brokerage.

Plenary Lecture 2: Dutch Experience: Healthy Ageing: From Academia to Regional Influence

Prof Sibrandes Poppema, Former President of the University of Groningen & Distinguished Professor of Sunway University shared his experience in developing a cohort study in the University of Groningen that has evolved into a European Union-funded initiative; and the importance of balancing fundamental research and applied research.



Plenary Lecture 1 and 2 by Danial Abdul Rahman and Prof Sibrandes Poppema

Gala Dinner onboard the Tasik Putrajaya Cruise

Participants enjoyed dinner on a cruise together with the guest of honour Isnaraissah Munirah Majilis, Deputy Minister of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change, Malaysia (ESTEC) at Putrajaya Lake.



All smiles on board the cruise at Putrajaya Lake

Day 2: 14th of August 2019

Keynote Address 2: Tan Sri Zakri Abdul Hamid, INGSA Asia Advisor, Former Science Advisor to the Prime Minister of Malaysia shared his experience in the science advice space. He urged scientist to link up with political leaders and shared the dynamic nature of working with politicians. He advised participants on the prerequisites of convincing policymakers, which are:

- Credibility
- Relevance
- Legitimacy

He finally shared his ultimate aspiration for INGSA ASIA: hoping that the platform will become another successful stage on which science and public policy can convene and intertwine – we need a cultural and social transformation.



Keynote Address 2 by Tan Sri Zakri Abdul Hamid, INGSA Asia Advisor

Plenary Session 2: Bridging Knowledge Gaps in the Region: Finding Opportunities for Science Advice

Panel:

- Dr Feisul Idzwan Mustapha, Disease Control Division, Ministry of Health Malaysia

Evidence on how co-creation/co-design of policies and frameworks is necessary; especially the health of a nation is a responsibility of everyone and not just the Ministry of Health Malaysia.

- Asst Prof Dr Usman Zafar, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Islamabad Medical and Dental College, Pakistan

The lack of data on NCDs in Pakistan is significantly affecting the formulation of effective public health policies.

- Dr Suraj Battarai, Member, Global Young Academy & Research Fellow, Global Public Health, Nepal

The various initiatives of how young researchers around the world are beginning to play a major role in the science advice space; such as Global Young Academy, ASEAN Young Scientists Network, etc.

- Shilpi Agrawal, Researcher, North East Frontier Technology University, India

Initiative to promote NCDs at pre-school and school level; complementing high-level top down approaches with bottom-up approaches.

- Seyed Shahmy, Biostatistician & Pharmacologist, National Science & Technology Commission, Ministry of Science, Technology and Research, Sri Lanka

Evidence of increase in NCD incidence in Sri Lanka and the establishment of a national science advice system that is taking place in Sri Lanka



Speakers of Plenary Session 2: Dr Feisul Idzwan Mustapha, Asst Prof Dr Usman Zafar, Dr Suraj Battarai, Shilpi Agrawal and Seyed Shahmy

Case Study 2: A fictional case study: Freudania was presented: Dealing with youth mental health, cultural and religious influence and changing socio-demographics. The participants debated and assumed various different roles of stakeholders involved in the case. Participants were exposed to various active learning pedagogies. Finally, participants were asked to reflect on two areas:

- Sufficiency of evidence: How much evidence is enough? Where do you source this evidence?
- How do you change perceptions and influence interest in unsolicited situations.

Oral Highlights Presentations

Nine participants presented their elevated pitch on the importance of their work or idea in a mock setup, where they shared their “science advice” with the Prime Minister/President of their

country. Each participant was then provided with feedback on their strengths and improvements followed with a summary by Sir Peter Gluckman on the areas to consider.

Final Discussions: Future Strategies and Concluding Remarks

Participants formed groups according to their geographic locations and discussed strategies to strengthen science advice in their respective regions. A group of postgraduate students also took part in the discussion and provided various ideas to raise awareness on science-policy as well as the importance of science communication among young scientists.

Presentation of Certificates

Sir Peter Gluckman, the Chairman of INGSA ended the workshop by presenting certificates to the respective participants of the workshop.



Sir Peter Gluckman presenting the completion certificate to a participant from Malaysia