

VIRTUAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

ASTA-JA USA

AUGUST 2, 2020, 8:00 PM EST – 9:30 PM EST

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88503182962?pwd=NEs0ZnVTZHE5cnhNaWRsMGZBMmpKQT09>

Meeting ID: 885 0318 2962; Passcode: 817387; Host: Dr. Durga D. Poudel, President, Asta-Ja USA

Note Taking- Dr. Jiwnath Ghimire

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Dr. Ambika P. Adhikari, Dr. Raju Pandey, Dr. Durga Poudel, Dr. Khusi Ram Tiwari, Dr. Arjun Aryal, Dr. Krishna Paudel, Dr. Prakash Neupane, MD, Dr. Tara Niraula, Dr. Puru Shrestha, Dr. Shyam Shrestha, Dr. Kalpana Khanal, Ms. Kamala Neupane, RN, Dr. Prasamsa Singh, Dr. Peetambar Dahal, Mr. Shankar Gautam, Dr. Prem Bhandari, Dr. Rupak Rauniar, Dr. Jiwnath Ghimire, Mr. Sahas Shrestha.

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to an order by Dr. Durga D. Poudel.

ROLL CALL

Introduction by all the attendees.

WELCOME REMARKS AND VOTE OF THANKS

Dr. Durga D. Poudel, President, Asta-Ja, welcomed the attendees and new Life Members, and delivered vote of thanks to the outgoing BODs and EC.

ASTA-JA USA AND ITS FUTURE

Dr. Ambika P. Adhikari highlighted the strength and the future potential of Asta-Ja USA:

- 98% of total businesses in USA are small businesses
- Passion is in everybody in Asta-Ja
- Organizations with large members are not able to function efficiently
- We focus in work
- Less politics

- Action-oriented works
- We can quickly move in decision-making

Future focus areas

- Agriculture
- Self-reliance
- Environment

Funding

- many funding opportunities are out there
- local communities and small communities are the focus, and is proven approach,

Conclusion

- Focus areas should be kept small, local and community oriented,
- Post COVID-19 5 focus areas,
- We can contribute for the seed money for start-up,
- Funding opportunities should be explored,
- Partnership among the local government, community, and NGOs.

PRESIDENT REPORT

Dr. Durga D. Poudel, the President of Asta-Ja USA, presented the report:

- 2018-2020 report is presented and shared through email to all Life Members.
- Policy Brief Committee, Newsletter Committee, Life members, Executive committee, BOD – names were shared.

Achievements

- 501 (C)(3) status achieved,
- Amazon smile for the revenue collection
- Rotary Club Hawaii has established a network with the Damauli Rotary Club
- Science and Tech: NRN conference participation
- 26 life members in the organization
- 2 issues of newsletter and 2 policy briefs published

Projects

- Veg production project, \$10K
- NRNA Environment Community Awareness and Climate Change, \$10K
- Center for Excellence for Environment and Climate Change
- \$75K funding for the Chunder Drinking Water Project in Tanahun
- COVID-19 relief works – \$1,600.00
- Schoolchildren support fund - Educational Foundation \$3,200 - 2 years cloths and the supplies for students
- Two high schools in Tanahu - \$35K in progress - Lab capacity building in two schools
- 25 Rotary members from Hawaii will go to Tanahu to set up the project

- Over \$100K raised during the last two years,
- Thanks to Dr. Arjun Aryal and Dr. Puru Shrestha for efforts on fundraising.

Recommendations

1). Proposed Committees:

- Organization, Marketing and Networking Committee
- Policy Advisory Council
- Newsletter Committee
- Finance Committee

2). Brochure, business card, leaflets, promotional materials (t-shirts, hats, pens, etc.), introductory PowerPoint

3). Membership: Gender balance issue, Only 4 female members

4). Asta-Ja Journal, Newsletters, books, policy briefs. Need for Asta-Ja Journal

5). Post COVID-19 Resilient Nepal Convention: Support for convention

6). Collaboration with INGOs, NGOs, Government agencies for Research and Development projects

Dr. Durga Poudel thanked all Board of Directors and EC members for their continued support, guidance, and help in making this tenure a great success including Dr. Tara Niraula.

Dr. Tara Niraula appreciated the work that was done in the last two years.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Lessons Learned – Dr. Arjun Aryal, Dr. Prem Bhandari

Arjun Aryal:

- Time, Treasure, Talent: high talents in the organization, treasure can be collected, we can also allocate time; he appreciated ideas from Dr. Ambika Adhikari
- No person can do alone, we need to support each other
- 501(C)(3) is done, we have tools ready, we can pursue grants.

Prem Bhandari:

- Asta-Ja ICC members - we are blessed with the talents, which can be utilized for building the resume of Asta-Ja USA.

Asta-Ja USA Networking – Dr. Puru Shrestha, Dr. Prakash Neupane, Dr. Tara Niraula

Dr. Durga Poudel said that Asta-Ja USA has its sister organizations, Asta-Ja ICC, Asta-Ja Research and Development Center, Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal and others. Asta-Ja USA is the focal point of these organizations.

Puru Shrestha:

- He thanked for the higher participation of women in the meeting
- He met Durga Poudel through the networking,

- NRNA - he is active in the NRNA, he believes on the networking. Professional and social connection is the main. Dr. Ambika Adhikari is a big resource.
- Intl org has projects and money for Nepal; 32 - 60% only used for Nepal,
- Asta-Ja is qualified and has the capacity, we need to focus on research and development projects and search for funding opportunities.

Prakash Neupane:

- Live meeting should be in-person next year,
- Health Sector: Jadibuti (Nepali herbs) should be included in the priority of the Asta-Ja.
- Research project should be included,
- Food security should be included,
- Health networking - Nepal has a lot of expertize and research ideas, and the partnership environment is increasing in the health sector,
- Charitable organization: America Nepal Medical Foundation is active and he is one of the founding member, it has built strong network, we can benefit from this network.
- Diversity of expertize in the organization should be utilized in writing grants and implementing.
- Health sector - medical profession related journal publication.

Tara Niraula:

- Nepali expert and scholars involved institutions - America Nepal Medical Foundation: started in his living room,
- Asta-Ja can provide leadership to collaborative projects. He believes that Dr. Durga Poudel's leadership is the main backbone for the successes of Asta-Ja.
- Members interests and expertise should be matched with the organizational focus areas, the belief and scholarship of the individuals who has matching expertise to the organization, professional networking should be promoted,
- Rotary International did not considered environment as focus areas previously, it is adding new working areas in the exiting 6 focus areas, and we should promote networking with Rotary International and local Rotaries.
- We have to start from the small tasks and complete with the excellent outcome, we can do the networking with the Rotary, Lions, and Sierra Clubs
- We have to extend network in the field of knowledge and scholarship, we have to network with the colleges and universities, we have to make pools of expertizes on the focus areas of the organization.

New Frontiers – Dr. Krishna Paudel, Dr. Kalpana Khanal, Dr. Raju Pandey, Dr. Rupak Rauniar

Krishna Paudel:

- Low hanging fruits: imports of 2 billion US dollars in agriculture, high quality seed production in Nepal,
- Marketing of the produced goods; food science and the standard related training on the food productions can help, production is very important, but it

is not the base, market has to be created for the productions. This includes the cold storage facilities and others. We can provide training on cold storage facilities and improvement on product standard.

- Creation of market, training on cold storage, high value product training can be beneficial, herbs production and promotion.

Kalpana Khanal:

- Research - Journal registration and publication: We should focus on young generation, grad and undergrad students focus.
- We have to provide internship for the younger generation in our projects
- We need to make sure that we will give back to society and communities in meaningful ways; we have to include the personal narratives in the debriefing of the wrapping-up of the projects, which can be used in grant writing.

Raju Pandey:

- Research on the food export and imports
- Alternatives of chemical pesticides, biocontrol agents can be promoted,
- Waste management, black shoulder fleas, protein production from the larvae of these fleas from waste.

Rupak Rauniar:

- Other production opportunities besides agriculture should be promoted in the international markets
- Individual producers should be connected to the quality, volume and the scale; people are asking about the promotion of coffee
- Publish series of news in the local newspapers in our expertise
- Corporate brand has to be promoted in the newspapers
- Internal competencies matrix should be created for quick deployment for specific tasks.
- Grant writing/proposal writing committee should be identified for different fields.

Open discussion – Participants from the floor

Ambika Adhikari:

- Book project: 3 drafts are submitted,

Tara Niraula:

- Finance Committee can be renamed as Development Committee,
- Re-emphasized the new generation participation in the projects and programs from graduate and undergraduate students,

Jiwnath Ghimire:

- Since Nepal is repeatedly impacted by earthquake, and hydro meteorological disasters, we should also focus on the disaster preparedness, response and recovery and community resilience.

Shyam Thapa:

- Environmental policies research funds should be promoted for students,
- Promoting the nature as the living lab such as trekking, can be nexus to the research on climate change,
- Vermi composting education and training should be extended,

Prasamsa Singh:

- Young generation should be promoted in our projects - internship and thesis grants,

Kamala Neupane:

- Hygiene at the grassroots level,
- Publicity of the organizations is not sufficient, the work should be publicized, committee should be formed, flyer should be developed and social media should be used.

ELECTION OF THE BOD AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 2020-2022

Election Commission- Dr. Khusi Ram Tiwari, Chief Election Commissioner, Dr. Puru Shrestha, Member, Dr. Basu Sharma, Member

- 1) Board of Directors (BOD), 2020-2022.
19 board of directors were nominated and became BOD
The resumption of the BOD 2020-2022 will begin from the next meeting.
- 2) Executive Committee, 2020-2022.

President: Dr. Tara Niraula proposed Dr. Durga Poudel; seconded by Dr. Ambika Adhikari; all BOD members supported; Dr. Durga Poudel accepted the decision of BOD members to be the president for 2020-2022.

Vice President: Dr. Dilip Panthee nominated Dr. Prem Bhandari through email; nomination from the floor came for Dr. Kalpana Khanal. Dr. Kalpana Khanal declined the nomination. Nomination of Dr. Prem Bhandari was seconded by Dr. Kalpana Khanal; all BOD members supported; Dr. Prem Bhandari accepted the offer to be the Vice President for 2020-2022.

Secretary: Dr. Kalpana Khanal was proposed, seconded by Dr. Rupak Rauniar; Dr. Kalpana Khanal declined the offer to be secretary for 2020-2022. Mr. Shankar Gautam proposed Dr.

Arjun Aryal, which was seconded by Dr. Kalpana Khanal; all BOD members supported; Dr. Arjun Aryal accepted the decision of BOD members to be the Secretary for 2020-2022.

Joint secretary: Dr. Shyam Thapa proposed Dr. Kalpana Khanal; seconded by Dr. Tara Niraula, all BOD members supported; Dr. Kalpana Khanal accepted the decision of the BOD to serve as Joint Secretary for 2020-2022.

Treasurer: Dr. Puru Shrestha proposed Dr. Prasamsa Singh; Dr. Arjun Aryal had the question about the banking signature issues between USA and Canada because the bank that Asta-Ja has an account is located in the USA. Dr. Prasamsa Singh currently lives in Canada which will bring signature problems. Dr. Prasamsa Singh declined the offer to be Treasurer for 2020-2022. Dr. Kalpana Khanal proposed Ms. Kamala Neupane; Dr. Shyam Thapa seconded the nomination. All BOD members supported; Ms. Kamala Neupane accepted the decision of BOD members to be the Treasurer for 2020-2022.

ADJOURN

Dr. Prashamsa Singh adjourned the meeting by thanking and congratulating all.

Meeting adjourned at 3:45 PM (HST).