

International Society of Microbial Ecology (ISME)

Southeast Asian Regional Symposium on Microbial Ecology (SARSME) 2020 & South Asian ISME Ambassadors Meeting

12-14 February 2020

Pokhara, Nepal



Participants (South Asian ISME Ambassadors Meeting)

ISME Executive and Board Members:

Edward F DeLong, Colin Murrell, Nicole Webster

South Asian ISME Ambassadors:

Rup Lal (India), Shahida Hasnain (Pakistan), Dev Raj Joshi (Nepal) Anwar Hussain (Pakistan), Vishakha Raina (India), Kosala Sirisena (Sri Lanka)

Invitees from representative countries of South Asia/Asia:

KHM Nazmul Hussain Nazir (Bangladesh), Aisath Naila (Maldives), Nirmal Kumar Thapa (Bhutan), Presanthilakshmi Sithapathi (Singapore)

Participants of Southeast Asian Regional Symposium on Microbial Ecology (SARSME 2020)

A total of 160 delegates from 8 countries of South Asia/Asia

Local Participating Organizations



Venue:

Himalyan Deurali Resort, Pokhara, Nepal

Summary of Activities/Program

Day 1: February 12, 2020	
Date/Time	Program
07:00 - 8:00	Registration/ Breakfast
Pre-Symposium Workshop I (Hall A)	
08:00 - 8:20	Opening Remarks: Prof. Edward DeLong and Dr. Dev Raj joshi
08:20 - 8:50	Lecture on Computational Biology Tools: Prof. Rup Lal
09:00 - 12:00	Pre-symposium workshop Module I – III
12:00 - 13:00	Lunch/Networking
13:00 - 15:30	Pre-symposium workshop Module III – IV
15:30-16:00	Registration/Networking Break
Symposium Inaugural Session (Hall A)	
16:00 - 17:30	Symposium Inauguration Chair: Prof. Chandra Bahadur Thapa
17:30 - 18:00	Plenary Lecture: Prof. Edward F. DeLong
18:30 - 20:30	Dinner/Cultural Program
Day 2: February 13, 2020	
07:00 - 8:30	Registration/ Breakfast
Plenary Session I (Hall A) Chair: Prof. Edward F. DeLong	
08:30 - 9:00	Key Note Speaker: Prof. Colin Murrell
09:00 - 9:30	Key Note Speaker: Prof. Shahida Hasnain
09:30 -10:00	Key Note Speaker: Prof. Craig Cary
10:00 - 10:30	Tea Break/Networking
Plenary Session II (Hall A) Chair: Prof. Colin Murrell	
10:30 -11:00	Key Note Speaker: Prof. Rup Lal
11:00 -11:30	Key Note Speaker: Prof. Nicole Webster
11:30 - 12:15	Poster (Poster Hall)
12:15 -13:00	Lunch/Networking/ Poster
Scientific Parallel Session	
13 00 -16:15	Scientific Session I (Chair: Prof. Shahida Hasnain) & II (Chair: Prof. Pathmalal M. Manage) Hall A Scientific Session III (Prof. Md. Tanvir Rahman) & IV (Prof. Md. Mofizur Rahman Jahangir) Hall B

Workshop-II	
16:15-18:30	Scientific Writing and Career Round Table Discussion Chair: Prof. Rup Lal (Hall A) Prof. Edward F. DeLong, Prof. Colin Murrell
19:00 - 21:00	Dinner/ Networking
20:00 - 21:30	ISME Ambassador Meeting (Closed Meeting)
Day 3: February 14, 2020	
07:00 - 08:30	Breakfast
08:30 - 10:15	Scientific Parallel Sessions Scientific Session V (Chair: Prof. Craig Cary) Hall A Scientific Session VI (Prof. Rajani Malla) Hall B
10:15 - 10:30	Tea Break/Networking
10:30 - 12:35	Special Event Women Microbial Ecologists' Session Chair: Prof. Nicole Webster
12:35 - 13:30	Lunch/Networking
13:30 - 14:30	Closing Ceremony/Valedictory

South Asian ISME Ambassadors Meeting

The South Asian ISME Ambassadors Meeting was held during 13th February at Himalyan Deurali Resort in the beautiful city of Pokhara, Nepal. The meeting was held in conjunction with the Southeast Asian Regional Symposium on Microbial Ecology (SARSME 2020), 12th -14th February 2020. The ISME Ambassadors meeting with the ISME President and ISME International Board Member was attended by 8 ISME Ambassadors and 4 invitees representing 8 South Asian / Asian countries. The meeting was chaired ISME president Edward F DeLong. After a brief introduction to ISME by Colin Murrell, Nicole Webster presented an overview of the ISME Ambassador Program and a summary of information obtained from the regional survey (among microbial ecologists of this region) conducted prior meeting in January 2020. The Ambassadors of the different countries presented scenario of microbial research, opportunities and challenges, and ISME ambassador activities in their respective countries. The invited participants from 4 South Asian / Asian countries expressed their regards to associate with ISME network and emphasized on ISME outreach activities in their countries too.

The ISME Executive and Board members acknowledged the organization of first ISME regional symposia in South Asia (Southeast Asian Regional Symposium on Microbial Ecology) with the commitment of the Ambassadors to expand their collaborative networks in the region. ISME Executive

members were also impressed by the ISME policy aligning events like student trainings and women microbial ecologists' discussion during the SARSME 2020. ISME president and board members expressed their willingness to support South Asian Microbial Ecology initiatives in future too. It was also noted that, despite the strengths and diversity in research across a South Asia, it is poorly represented in the global ISME Symposia or other platforms. The meeting highlighted on need of developing strategy and working together for the growth of microbial ecology research and boosting the career of microbial ecologists in the region . The Ambassadors raised issues of the financial restrictions for South Asian researchers associated with research and participation in international conferences.

The Ambassadors agreed to strengthen the regional network of South Asian microbial ecologists under the umbrella of ISME work, continue to work together to ensure organization of the regional symposia (SARSME) in regular interval. The South Asian ISME Ambassadors expressed gratitude to the ISME sponsorship for the regional symposium and the Ambassador meeting and appreciated that ISME resources contributing to promote activities in South Asia.

Southeast Asian Regional Symposium on Microbial Ecology (SARSME 2020)

Southeast Asian Regional Symposium on Microbial Ecology (SARSME 2020), an ISME sponsored regional meeting brought together a total of 160 Microbial Ecology researchers and graduate students from this region. The symposium was jointly Prithvi Narayan Campus (Tribhuvan University), Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forest and Environment (Gandaki Province of Nepal) and Microbial Ecology Network Nepal organized the symposium in association with Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (Government of Nepal), National Youth Council, and Visit Nepal Year 2020 secretariat. The Symposium was supported by Nepal Tourism Board, Nepal Academy of Science and Technology, Tribhuvan University and Kathmandu University with others.

The symposium was inaugurated with traditional Nepalese culture by Chief Minister Prithvi Subba Gurung, Provincial government, Gandaki Province, Nepal. ISME president Edward F DeLong highlighted on ISME mission to promote microbial ecology globally. SARSME 2020 coordinator Dr Dev Raj Joshi (ISME ambassador to Nepal) briefly discussed on the objectives and activities of the SARSME 2020.

During the symposia six plenary lectures were delivered distinguished researchers and professors of microbial ecology (Edward F DeLong, Colin Murrell, Craig Cary, Nicole Webster, Rup Lal and Shahida Hasnain). Diverse array of microbial ecology research including seventeen invited talks, seventeen oral presentations and 36 posters presentations were presented in the symposium by the microbial ecologists/microbiologists of South Asian countries - India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives and Singapore (details in Program book). Three best oral presenters and three best poster presenters were awarded with **best presenter award** and certificate.

During the SARSME several other side events were also organized. These included:-

Pre-symposium workshop on “**Hands on training in Computational Biology for (Meta) Genomics Analysis**” was organized on first day (12th Feb 2020) of the symposium to enhance analytic capabilities of Master/Ph.D. students, Postdoctoral and early career researchers. ISME ambassador Prof Rup Lal and his colleagues trained students and faculties on bioinformatics and computational biology tools useful in microbial ecology research.

The special workshop on “**Scientific Writing and Career Round Table**” for Early Career Researchers (ECRs) was also held during the Symposium on second day (13th Feb 2020) that helped them develop research careers in Microbial Ecology. In first part of workshop, Prof Edward F DeLong explained “Scientific writing and Publishing” and Prof Colin Murrell described “how to get published” in high impact journals. In Second part- Career Round Table discussion which was moderated by ISME ambassadors Dr Anwar Hussain and Dr Kosala Sirisena, the distinguished international researchers Prof Edward F DeLong, Prof Colin Murrell, Prof Craig Cary, Prof Nicole Webster, Prof Rup Lal and Prof Shahida Hasnain presented their inspiring journey in research.

In the both workshops, four students interjecting most valuable questions were awarded by best interjector prizes and certificates.

Discussion session for Women Microbial Ecologists

In order to encourage active participation of early career as well as mid-career female scientists to pursue microbial ecology, a special session was organized on third day (14th Feb 2020) as part of this Symposium. In the special women session which was chaired by Prof Nicole Webster and moderated by Dr Reshma Tuladhar (Nepal), 10 representative female scientists of this region – Prof Shahida Hasnain (Pakistan), Dr Vishakha Raina (India), Dr Sangita Shakya (Nepal), Dr Aisath Naila (Maldives), Dr Poorna C Priyathalika (Sri Lanka), Dr Presanthilakshmi Sithapathi (Singapore), Ms Rafeza Begum (Bangladesh), Dr Tista Prasai Joshi (Nepal) shared their scientific career stories and discussed on opportunities and challenges for women in research. This discussion inspired many young female delegates during the symposium.

PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1: Symposium participants



Photo 2: Inaugural of SARSME 2020



Photo 3: Plenary speakers with Local organizers



Photo 4: Invited talks and Oral presentations



Photo 5: Poster presentation and evaluation by ISME board members



Photo 6: Best presenters Prize winners with ISME president and SARSME 2020 coordinator



Photo 7: Best interjector Prize



Photo 8: Participants of the Women microbial ecologists' session



Photo 9: Traditional Nepali Cultural Program



Photo 10: Breakfast and Lunch of participants of SARSME 2020