

Minutes of the Steering Committee Meeting held at Colombo, Sri Lanka

Date: 13th Dec 2012, Venue: Crystal Lower Hall, Taj Samudra and its RE-CALL the next morning on

14th Dec.2012

1. The minutes of the Kathmandu Conference were confirmed.
2. The Secretariat funds availability and expenditure statement as obtained by the JNU Accounts department was read out.
3. The Secretariat office shared with the fund use rules of the JNU Project Finance Department which is governed by the Accounts and Audit Rules of the Government of India. Broadly certain restrictions apply:
 - a) NAPSIPAG is not a funding agency and conference hosts need to ascertain prior to conference organizing that this is a research network and funds are available for research purposes and office maintenance only.
 - b) The membership money available with the Secretariat cannot be used to fund conference travel unless indispensable and approval obtained by the Vice Chancellor/ Chief Finance Officer setting the rationale of indispensability such as building research groups or developing research projects ensuring global participation for maintaining competitive edge in research and mutual learning.
 - c) All activities such as lectures, panel discussions and meetings of experts are funded by outside agencies. NAPSIPAG can only spend marginally on tea/ lunch cost on prior approvals from the accounts departments.
4. Members approved a 'framework of organizing a conference' which is to be followed by all prospective NAPSIPAG conference organizers/ collaborators/ partners.
 - a) The hosts will have to arrange for their own funds and NAPSIPAG Secretariat can only assist and advise them on the strategies, sources and contact persons.
 - b) The hosts have to ensure regular communication with NAPSIPAG steering committee and executive members. This regular communication should be maintained with those who wish to participate.
 - c) Travel support to NAPSIPAG members is not a norm and depends upon the availability of funds with the exception of keynote speakers, Steering Committee members, invited distinguished scholars and three Secretariat functionaries. However, if the local organizers are in a position to fund additional participants they are allowed to do so in consultation with NAPSIPAG Secretariat. They along with the other senior and founder members of NAPSIPAG should be treated at par and not discriminated in boarding and lodging arrangements.
 - d) *All Individual members* who have duly paid their full membership fee and *only two members representing Institutional members* are exempt from the payment of registration fee.
 - e) All conferences should observe the NAPSIPAG vision principles and this should be formally documented in the conference brochure and website.
 - f) All hosts should come up with a budget conference where all participants are able to stay together at a modestly middle range government or university guest house while the inaugural ceremony could be organized in a more distinguished place if necessary.
 - g) The review process should be through a team of not more than 10 senior experts across the region selected on the basis of their impactful publications in research and academic journals.
 - h) Funded participants should submit in writing that they 'have not presented this paper in any other conference and no part of it is plagiarized and if anything as such is found at a later date they would have to reimburse the financial support allocated to them by the hosts'.
 - i) The number of participants who are funded should be maintained as records and an e- copy submitted to the Secretariat by the hosts.
5. Members agreed to prioritize the fundamental vision of NAPSIPAG for a further advancement of research and practice in a more coherent manner.

Meeting was adjourned as the SLIDA Bus for taking members for the ceremonial dinner was waiting.

14th morning meeting called to answer and address URGENT ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS:

MINUTES:

1. Members shared their anxiety and harassment which they faced during the conference at Colombo, Sri Lanka. This was triggered by the fact that many non-members were supported for their travel and lodging at Taj Samudra, the upscale hotel in the capital city while most NAPSIPAG members were made to stay at a government guest house with no one to attend to them for morning tea, mosquito coils and sanitation. When they learnt that the USD 5000/- funds coming to the hosts from ADB at the behest of the Secretary General were spent on non-members and still the Chairperson instead of alerting the hosts declared the conference as the 'best so far' in his inaugural speech to the media, they felt insulted and cheated. Hosts of previous conferences objected to the Chairperson's remark as 'anti-NAPSIPAG'.
2. Members questioned the Chairperson's leadership at Melbourne as both he and the host were located in the same city and also being former colleagues, he could have easily seen through efforts being made for proper lodging arrangements of NAPSIPAG members.
3. Members questioned the financial propriety on fund collection in the name and logo of NAPSIPAG by the hosts. They objected to the 'dual control' by the Chairperson was 'an exercise of authority without responsibility'.
4. Members felt that for streamlining decision making and bringing accountability and transparency to the NAPSIPAG Secretariat the post of the Chairperson be abolished.