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From the President: ARSA 2015 and Beyond

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Hello everyone. We may have different perspectives, but let me greet you Merry Christmas and let us all hope that 2016 will bring us bountiful and peaceful life.

As we head towards 2016, the Council Members of ARSA will start planning for our incoming 6th ARSA International Conference. We will do the planning when we meet at Hasanuddin University, Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia sometime in September 2016. During such planning meeting, we will discuss the organization of the conference such as its theme, its plenary speakers, visitation of sites for our field trip and formation of local organizing committee. We will also be conducting a round table discussion on sustainable food consumption and production along with

political ecology of natural resources. This meeting of the Council members will be funded by the project of our Vice President, Professor Motoki Akitsu of Kyoto University.

As your President and Chair of the Council, there are a number of issues that we have to discuss. There is no doubt that ARSA is a living organization. It is evidenced by its capacity to conduct International Conferences since 1999. Our past conferences were attended by social science academics from more than fourteen countries within and outside the region. This is an outstanding accomplishment of a group of people who decided to call themselves members of Asian Rural Sociology Association (ARSA). This is despite the fact that while we have an approved Constitution and By-Laws, our organization does not

charge regular membership fees. We fund our International Conferences from the registration fees of participants and from the grants of Japan Foundation every now and then. Also we depend heavily on the support of our local host university in carrying out our International Conferences. As much as possible, we limit the venue of our Conferences to the host university to reduce our operational costs as well as to publicly encourage the participation of local social science academics and students to such an event. While such strategy is working well, I thought that it will be better if we establish a mechanism wherein our participants become members of the organization. Based on our Constitution and By-Laws, there are two kinds of memberships to ARSA. One is the institutional and the other is individual membership. As of now, our institutional members are those from Japan and South Korea. They each contributed 1000US\$ for the last eight years. Other participants from Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia and other countries do not have local organizations. They do not pay any membership fees because we lack a mechanism on how to do it. Because of this, our Association depends heavily on the institutional membership fees paid by the Japanese and South Koreans. Without any solid base of generating funds for our organization, our financial position is always in a precarious state. But despite this, we have to take note however, that for a number of times, the Council Members were able to conduct mid-term meetings because some of its members were able to generate projects where they could charge the expenses. Our survival as an organization depends heavily on the support of some of the Council members who are able to mobilize funds for a meeting or a conference just like what we will have in

September 2016. As your President and Chair of the ARSA Council, I am thinking of integrating our membership fee in the registration fee to be collected during our International Conference. This is my proposal. This is open for comments and reactions from the quasi members of the ARSA today.

We should be very active in refining and advancing the field of rural sociology in the region. As we know, rural sociology's domain of interests intersects with other fields such as geography, community development, sociology, extension education and other fields. What really is the scope of rural sociology? Unlike in European universities where a discussion on what is "rural" is still very much in vogue, in Asia we do not have much attraction to discuss such. We probably take for granted the definition of rural and forget to enquire whether it is an empirical referent or a sociological one. In the Philippines, we define rurality based on occupation, population density or the presence or absence of certain services in a particular place regardless of population density. But with increasing population density everywhere, provision of social services, physical mobility of people, and urbanization, defining "rural" using the above cited variables may bring more confusion than clarifying/sharpening it. It is for this reason that I am proposing that some of us may have to go back to examining what is "rural".

One of the criticisms of rural sociology is its lack of theory (theories). But this may not be true after all. The plenary papers delivered during our 2nd International Conference in Lombok talked about the definition of rural sociology and why this field is a science. According to Vanclay (2004), it is a

science because it has theories, methods and protocols, organized groups and journals and publications. It was also during that conference when Tolentino (2004) of the Philippines argues that most research in rural sociology was done either to confirm or refute the project of modernity. Further, she argues that rural sociology has to look beyond the theory of modernity such as post modernism, post structuralism, and others to maintain its relevance. Then Prof Kitahara of Japan argues that rural Asia is changing because of industrialization and changes in consumption which resulted to many different types of villages. These are influenced by the quantity and quality of linkages rural villages have with urban and industrial centers. As researchers, he reminds us that we can understand these general trends but reminds us to listen to subjective realities, views and discourses of rural society through the voices of peasants, NGOs, and citizens. He further reminds us that there is no best or better perspective for everybody, but if we continuously discuss and debate, we may find some acceptable way of resolving the problems of changing Asian rural society. Donnermeyer (2004) argues the significance of understanding the concept of community as these are spaces where social relations are directly organize to confront issues associated with globalization, cultural, economic and social change according to their social uniqueness and place.

There were four major crises that occurred in the region and have been the focus of 3rd ARSA International Conference. These were (1) Asian financial crises in 1997; (2) global food crisis as a result of food price increases in 2007 and 2008; (3) recognition of climate change as a global pressing issue; and, (4) series of energy crisis. Prof Surichai of

Thailand once wrote in our Conference Proceedings, the Rural Sociology III, under the new framework of globalization, the 2007 Conference discussed the new trends and problems emerging in rural communities and economies and deepens the perceptions towards the new environment and mechanism faced by the rural regions, the agricultural sector and farmers' communities. These various crises has undoubtedly put the universities and research institutions under public pressure to make sense of and respond to the situation. Disciplines beyond "hard sciences", including rural studies and rural sociology, have therefore been examined through the lens of social value for their relevance and participation in public life.

The discussions in 2007 were turning points for people to reconsider "human insecurity", perceive social risks and threats, establishment of new orders for international economic activities, and define concepts and policies regarding international aids and globalization. Setting the impact of urbanization on rural areas, agriculture and farmers under the background of globalization and international competitiveness as the major theme, the 2007 Conference intended to search for feasible new ideas and strategies to solve problems associated with human insecurity.

Further the rise of China and India in the global economy posed international security as one of the most important development at the global arena.

Prof Surichai further argues then that despite the talks of knowledge society, the crises that we have been experiencing are reflective of consequences of fragmented knowledge and its uncertainty. In fact, Prof Surichai

challenges us then to ask ourselves if we are living in a “knowledge society” or “risk society” sounding off just as what Beck’s has been arguing. He says that in knowledge society we expect politicians, (who are our policy and decision-makers) to know how to achieve their objectives. In our case, we are made to accept and recognize that unforeseeable and uncontrollable factors and events are at work. Given this reality, he asked, “Can rural sociology produce knowledge that can help us face the real world better?”

Our subsequent conferences talked about all sorts of themes ranging from social capital, sustainable development, resilience of communities, structures and processes shaping societal development, migration, communities in transition,

socioeconomic and cultural transformation. In all of these, we are certain of our observance of scientific rigor in conducting our research.

With these note, I encourage all of us to think what kinds of paper to bring to our 6th ARSA International Conference.



LUTGARDA L. TOLENTINO, PhD
President and Chair of the Council,
2014-2018.

What I learn from ARSA

Oakla CHO, Sogang University, South Korea

ARSA has become one of my important references for my research and teaching since 2004, when I participated the second annual conference held in Lombok, Indonesia. I always look for Asian examples to trace back the changes of Korean rural societies. At that time my interests were on gender issues in rural communities. I was pretty much impressed by various examples from Indonesia. I was thrilled by its variety and vast case studies by Indonesian scholars who were from all parts of Indonesian islands. I presented a small paper concerning New Community Movement from woman’s perspective. Many young women scholars asked how Korean women farmers joined to the movement in and out of classroom. I had not realized this conference contains

cultural events, as a part of program. It was a surprise and fun to join to so lively party. I realized that a party could be enjoyable without alcoholic drinks, liquor. It was rare moment for me to take a glimpse of Lombok culture. Each national delegate gets traditional Indonesian trouser for official photo. This tradition has not been practiced these days, though. Of course meetings with member scholars from many countries were stimulating. I could see more common issues beyond regional varieties among papers presented. In fact I went to the conference to assist Prof. Kim, Joosook, the president of Korean Rural Sociological Association with the proposal to host the next IRSA conference in Korea. Many members encouraged us and agreed to endorse our proposal. With full support of ARSA,

KRSA hosted the IRSA. I am very much graceful for all supports from members. I have become a board member of council of ARSA since.

Working as a council member for ARSA I have witnessed the growing concern among rural sociologists in Asia. The fields to analyze socio-economic struggle to survive in the period of radical changes in globalization and environmental crisis are the major topics among ARSA members. I attended three conferences missing one conference held in China. Themes for ARSA conference reflect these concerns-“Globalization and Rural Social Change,” “Prospects of Asian Rural Sociology for 21st Century,” “The Multidimensionality of Economy, Energy and Environmental Crises and their Implications to Rural Livelihoods” and “From Challenges to a Prosperous Future in Rural Asia”. Even though each member country seems to be in different stage in rural development with various cultural backgrounds, we can trace back similar strategies and organizations to be adopted. Therefore the conference seems to provide a rare occasion for us to communicate among scholars and policy makers. It seems that we are like farmers working together in the field.

Scholars in ARSA seem to be divided into two groups; one is those whose field is their own society like me, the other group is those whose field is Southeast Asia. Many local scholars of a hosting university seem to play major

roles to provide detailed concrete research examples in each conference. One of the benefits from this composition is to extend our thought further moving from our own specific interests to general structural problems in Asia.

I appreciate all those knowledge that I have gotten from the conference. Also I feel so close to our council members who share our thoughts and feelings as a rural sociologist. Council meetings always run with the high spirit, patient and caring with rational managerial decision. It is remarkable to see how council members reach the agreement without much communication. I will miss the council meetings.

My job as a council member will be over next year during the mid-term council meeting and prof. Kim Chul-kyoo will represent KRSA. I am very thankful for all council members and presidents as well as KRSA members for their cooperation. Even though my term is over, I would like to join ARSA activities and to look forward cooperative research with Asian rural sociologists.

Oakla CHO, Ph.D.
ARSA Council Member



[Notice] Conference Venue for the next ARSA 2018

As I have announce in the previous newsletter, Vice President, Professor Saleh Ali and his colleague, Dr. Muhammad Arsyad are now working together to host **the 6th ARSA Conference in 2018 which is going to be held at the Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Sulawesi, Indonesia.**

The University Rector, Prof Dwia Aries Tina, officially endorsed and granted permission for holding the Conference at the university.

Professor Saleh Ali and Dr. Muhammad Arsyad (Department of Socio-economics of Agriculture) was appointed to Chair and Co-Chair of the Local Organizing Committee. In September 2016, the ARSA mid-term Council Meeting will be held at the Hasanuddin University and we are going to discuss further details related to the Conference. Detailed information of the Conference will be announced in late 2016.

(Secretary: Masashi Tachikawa)

ARSA Netters in Journal

Greeting.....

ARSA netters have another activity in Scientific way. They are functioning as editorial member of *International Journal of Agriculture System (IJAS)*, published by Hasanuddin University (UNHAS) twice a year (June and December). IJAS has been indexed by:

1. [EBSCO](#)
2. [DOAJ](#)
3. [Google Scholar](#)
4. [Mendeley](#)
5. [CiteULike](#)
6. [Open Academic Journals Index](#)
7. [Research Gate](#)
8. [Cite Factor](#)

The aim of this journal is to provide a venue for academicians, researchers and practitioners to share/discuss theories, views, research results, on issues related to the science, technology in the development, management and issues in agricultural system particularly in the tropics. However, any other articles related to non-tropical agricultural system are also welcome. IJAS publishes original, peer-reviewed scientific articles on research related to agricultural systems. Articles published in this journal deal with a broad range of topics in the fields of agriculture, animal science, fishery, forestry, and natural resources. Manuscript submitted to this journal may deal with any aspects of the above fields such as food, animal, and fish production system, land use system, silviculture, forest and natural resource management, crop-livestock integration, socio-economic and policy aspects of rural/agricultural systems, etc. Five of editorial boards and reviewers of IJAS come from ARSA netters. They are Lutgarda Tolentino, M. Saleh S. Ali, Masashi Tachikawa, Muhammad Arsyad and Yoshio Kawamura.

Please visit: <http://pasca.unhas.ac.id/ojs/index.php/ijas/about/editorialTeam>
Waiting for your manuscript to IJAS.

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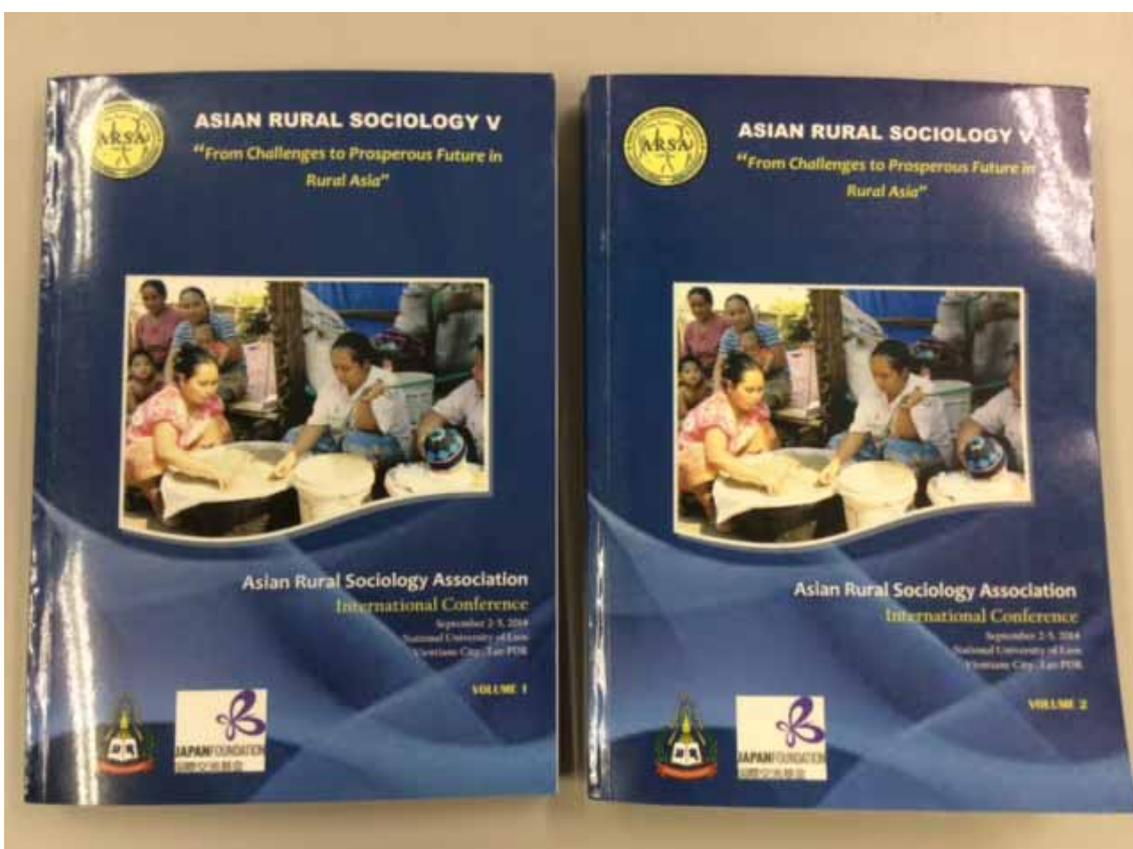
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Upcoming Events

[2016]

Joint 2016 Annual Meetings and Conference of the Association for the Study of Food and Society; the Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society; and the Canadian Association for Food Studies

University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC), Canada
June 22-26, 2016

<https://afhvs.wildapricot.org/>

20th ICABR Conference: Transforming the Bioeconomy: Behavior, Innovation and Science

Ravello (Amalfi Coast – Italy)

June 26-29, 2016

<http://economia.uniroma2.it/icabr/call-for-papers/>

Third ISA Forum of Sociology
“The Futures We Want: Global Sociology and the Struggles for a Better World”

Vienna, Austria

July 10-14, 2016

<http://www.isa-sociology.org/forum-2016/>

Rural Sociological Society (RSS) Annual Meeting

Toronto, Canada

August 7-10, 2016

<http://www.ruralsociology.org/>

IRSA XIV World Congress of Rural Sociology, Toronto, Canada,

August 10-14, 2016

“Sustainable and Just Rural Transitions: Connections and Complexities”

<http://www.ryerson.ca/arts/irsacongress2016/>

Constitution of the ARSA

Name & Mission

The name of the organization is the Asian Rural Sociology Association (ARSA).

The mission of the ARSA is to cultivate the development of the science of rural sociology, to extend the possible application of results of scientific inquiry to the improvement of the quality of rural life, and to exchange and generate meaningful scientific founding for the rural development in Asia. As a non-profit organization, ARSA strives for scientific and educational purposes only.

Structure

The organization consists of General Assembly, and Council.

General Assembly

The general assembly will be held approximately every four years, preferably in conjunction with Asian Rural Sociology Association Conference. The General Assembly may be held by the request of the Council.

Council

The Council will be composed of one representative of each country. The term of elected membership on the council shall not exceed for one conference periods, normally four years. The council shall be convened by the President. The council members will be elected by each country’s members. The council can include non-voting members such

as a secretariat to support the President and advisors to run the council smoothly. The main responsibility of the Council is the functioning of the organization. All decisions of the Council will be made by majority of the votes cast.

Membership

Membership of ARSA is open to any individual and organizations wanting to promote the objectives of the organization and paying the relevant fees.

There are four categories of membership:

- * Sponsoring institutional or organizational membership is open to regional rural sociology organizations.
- * Full membership has rights to participate in the general assembly, to vote, to submit articles, and to receive all newsletters and publication.
- * Quasi-membership has same rights except right to vote.
- * Student-membership is the same as quasi-membership but only receive newsletters. This membership is only applicable to graduate and university students.
- * Membership fee depends on country's economic status and be changeable with approval by council.

First group - Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore
Second group - China, Thailand, Malaysia,

Indonesia
Third group - other countries

Voting

All decisions needed for votes shall be taken by a simple majority rule. The place, date, and other administrative decisions for conference and general assembly can be decided by the council for management convenience.

Finance

The Association shall be financed by: member subscriptions, sale of the association publications, donations, and other research projects funds. The Council Committee shall decide reimbursement for any reasonable expenses incurred by any member who carry out work for the Association. Administrative work and management of financing will be mainly carried out by the secretariat with the control of council members.

By-Laws and Regulations

Any issues and subjects needed for detailed rules will be set forth by by-laws and regulations. Those will be decided by the Council.

Supplementary Provision

1. This constitution shall come into effect as from March 27, 2004.
2. Amendment made on September 3, 2014

ARSA Council, 2014-2018

Office	Officer	Organizational Affiliation	Country	E-mail
President	Lutgarda L. Tolentino	WorldFish	Philippine	lutgardatolentino@gmail.com
Vice President	Motoki Akitsu	Kyoto University	Japan	akitsu@kais.kyoto-u.ac.jp
Vice President	Saleh Ali	Hasanuddin University	Indonesia	saleh.assofie@gmail.com
Council	Guoqing Li	Institute of Urban and	China	ligq@cass.org.cn

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	Surichai Wungaeo	Chulalongkorn University	Thailand	Surichai.W@chula.ac.th
Secretary (non-voting)	Masashi Tachikawa	Ibaraki University	Japan	masashi.tachikawa.3@vc.ibaraki.ac.jp

From the Secretary

- Currently the ARSA website is out of service because of technical problems. We are working to prepare for the renewal of the ARSA website and an e-list where you can post information which could be shared among the members of the ARSA.
- In this Newsletter, you can find the contents of two volumes of the Asian Rural Sociology V (2014). If you are interested in accessing these volumes,

please contact secretary of the ARSA via following e-mail address. We are planning to upload these volumes on the ARSA website once the website is back to service.

- If you have any questions, comments and suggestions, please send an e-mail to the secretary: masashi.tachikawa.3@vc.ibaraki.ac.jp

Rural Asian Perspective is published regularly by the Asian Rural Sociology Association (ARSA). For further information, contact:

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