

Dr. Kalyan B. Goswami
Executive Director



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To,

All Office Bearers and EC members
The Asia & Pacific Seed Association
Thailand

Dear Sirs,

APSA has been formed in 1994 with the support of FAO to nurture the seed industry of the Asia and Pacific regions and to provide a platform for the regional industry to interact and prosper ultimately for the benefit of the agriculture and the farmers of the regions. The members from India like Dr RB Singh, Dr KR Chopra played a big role in the formative years of APSA. As many Indian companies were not willing to take the membership due to the high annual fee compared to the business revenues of the members, the leaders of the seed industry from India persuaded the members to take up the membership to strengthen this regional association and continue as members despite such odds.

The members of the National Association of India (NSAI) and the seed industry in general are very much disappointed and disillusioned with the direction into which the APSA is moving over the past 4 years.

Any association has to uphold the principles of democracy which is briefly defined as 'by the members' and 'for the members'. It appears, some of the influential members of APSA are of the opinion that they know better than the majority of the members of the Association. With their wrong belief and arrogance, they are trying to capture the APSA into a cage, restrict the entry of intelligent, hardworking and independent thinking members into the EC so that they can continue to play their own selfish role in managing and running the Association for their own benefit rather than that of entire industry.

The following steps taken by APSA in the last 4 years are proofs of this statement.

1. While the Association is progressing and prospering smoothly, there was no need for a new constitution. A body was created and mock meetings were held across the region in the member countries but no suggestions that were given and are debated were considered in the new constitution. The constitution was passed in the GAMs in a shocking and deceitful way suppressing debate and with undue haste. As a result, the new constitution happens to be a creation of few influential members of APSA who wanted to somehow hold on to their games, at the cost of the principles of democracy which must have been followed in governing of an Association of this stature.
2. Post implementation of new constitution, the **selection of EC members** (contrary to the promises given, that the Nomination Committee will only scrutinize the applications like an Election Commission) is a proof of the mischief in the minds of few members who want to sabotage the functioning of the

Association. The elections at Goa and Incheon are clear proof of this. This system can only ruin the Association.

It may be noted that elections are held regularly in NSAI or in many other large State Seed Associations and the members sportively and enthusiastically participate and vote in the elections. However, elections never resulted into any problems in running the Association.

3. NSAI has been a member of APSA since 2007. NSAI has been fighting against sabotage and conspiracy by a multinational company in India due to which the domestic seed industry suffered severely. Hundreds of seed companies had to exit from cotton seed business due to this conspiracy. On the other hand, the cotton farmers had to pay very high seed prices, thus attracting the focus of the government and farmer unions, which led to the present scenario where socio political system viewing the seed industry with a suspicious eye. The Association took up the fight based on the morality and legality. Every letter that the Association wrote to the Government is displayed in the website so that the whole world is aware the stand taken by the Association. We are disappointed despite such transparency and personal communication from several senior members of the Association with APSA OBs, APSA chose to create a whisper campaign against NSAI which we could sense during the Incheon conferences. Associations are not meant for supporting the strong and suppressing the weak. Associations are meant for taking up of the cause of the weak who do not have power to lobby as compared to strong MNCs who have tremendous lobbying power with their own special machinery, money power and strategies to carry out their lobbying. If the weak (Small & Medium Scale Companies has 95% share in APSA Membership today) do not get representation in the EC so that their issues are heard by the Association, the functioning of the Association itself becomes meaningless. APSA shall not be fiefdom of a few influential and manipulative members.

Irregularities in Financial Management & Statutory Compliance

In addition to the above, there appears to be financial irregularities and payments without authorization or approvals even to people who seems to have jeopardized the interest of the APSA. Expense reimbursement for travel of OBs shall also be dispensed with. ASC shall not be held in any country if it doesn't break even for finance.

It is also observed that in the recently held GAM at Incheon, breach of constitution happened. It is mandatory for GAM to Appoint Auditors every year for a period of One Year.

The Article 11 (4) & 11 (5) clearly confirms the above mandatory requirement.

Article 11: Revenues and Disbursement

1. The Executive Committee shall General Assembly for approval.
2. Fiscal Year..... f December.
3. The financial resources under:

4. Auditing

- (i) *The accounts of the Association shall be audited every year by the appointed auditor or as stipulated by the Law of the Country.*
- (ii) *The Auditor shall be proposed to the General Assembly by the Executive Committee from outside of the Association, and for a period of one (1) year, which may be extended on a yearly basis.*

5. Appointment of Auditor

The General Assembly shall appoint the Auditor on the recommendation of the EC.

When verified the Agenda of the GAM at Incheon, 'Appointment of Auditor' was not even considered as an Agenda Item. This is making us to understand that, the team of the Auditor gets automatically expired, appoint of auditor did not take place and technically there is no Auditor for APSA as on date.

In addition to membership fees paid by Indian seed companies nsai also supported apsa to earn substantial income through successful holding of ASCs in India. Therefore we are quite concerned about financial indiscipline in APSA.

Under such circumstances, the Governing Council of NSAI is preferring to wait till such statutory rectifications happen to renew the membership with APSA.

As explained, the observations pointed out to indicate the directions in which the APSA is moving will make it meaningless to the common members. However, by correcting the above mistakes and moving into the right direction, APSA can continue to prosper and fulfill its objectives for which it was formed.

The following steps, we feel, will lead to the desired corrections in the course of APSA.

1. The Nomination Committee shall restrict itself only to the scrutiny of the applications based on the qualification criteria well defined by the GAM. They shall have no discretion power to select the candidates. To ensure this, qualification criteria will have to be so clear that there shall not be any discretion at all to the Nomination Committee. The qualification criteria shall be
 - a) Education (Ex: Minimum graduate or post graduate)
 - b) Experience in Industry (Ex: minimum 10 years)
 - c) Experience in running a domestic association (Ex: shall be a board member or office bearer of a national association)
 - d) Contribution to APSA and number of years of membership (Ex: 6-7 years)
2. As envisaged, the major countries shall have 2 and minor countries shall not have more than 1 representative in the EC.

3. The members of the EC shall be from South Asia and ASEAN region only, which means Members of the Executive Committee (Other than 2 from Associate Category) must possess a Passport of Some Asia & Pacific Country.
4. The proportion of Australia in EC shall be in proportion to the membership and not more.
5. The functioning of APSA shall be transparent and participative in nature.
6. The financial transactions shall be shared with the members seeking inputs so that the members' money is spent transparently and only for the purposes it is supposed to be.
7. Too many people of Non-Asian origin are being seen in the EC, Secretariat or OBs. A few members are seen to be continuing for several terms. APSA with a membership of 600 plus, definitely has got more talent and repetitive participation of a few members shall not be encouraged.
8. The election at Incheon is illegal and therefore all the elected members shall be treated as void and re-elections to be held in the next ASC.

We request you to take these suggestions with an open mind which are being proposed with an intention to improve the functioning of APSA for the benefit of the members. For achieving this, it is important to bring the Association out of the hands of the few members who are harming the long term interest of the Association. This can happen only through fair and free elections. We are prepared for discussions in this regard if required with the OBs of APSA.

This letter is being sent with the approval of the Governing Council members of the association.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,



Kalyan B Goswami