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Mission statement for President, Biogeosciences Section (BG),  
Asia Oceania Geoscience Society (AOGS)

Please accept my application for President, Biogeosciences Section (BG), Asia Oceania Geoscience Society (AOGS). I have been formally trained as the first generation of “hybrid” molecular environmental scientists – an idea envisioned by the United States (US) National Science Foundation (NSF) in early 2000s to fund Environmental Molecular Science Institutes (EMSI) to foster research and training in science beyond disciplinary boundaries. I followed my graduate studies with Postdoctoral training in Geosciences department at Princeton University and Biosciences Division at Argonne National Laboratory, making my training truly cross-disciplinary.

I am currently a University Academic Fellow (recently launched at University of Leeds under “250 Great Minds” to attract top global talent) in the School of Chemical and Process Engineering at University of Leeds in UK. My research deals primarily with the contaminant and nutrient biogeochemistry with an integrative approach to investigate chemical speciation, bioavailability, and biogeochemical cycles in low-temperature environmental systems.

My highly interdisciplinary scientific background and cross-cultural sensitivity (born and brought-up in south east Asia, having lived and worked in US for one and half decades, and now living and working in Europe) uniquely positions me to bring a new perspective to AOGS in general, and Biogeosciences section in particular. I have cultivated a strong network of international collaborations (in Asia, Europe, and North America), and am further enhancing those through my Global Challenges Research initiatives funded by UK for the greater good of Lower- and Middle-income Asian counties.

As the next President of Biogeosciences (BG) section of AOGS, I would like to primarily focus on three main objectives: 1) promoting interdisciplinary science (e.g., biogeochemical cycles) across different length scales – from molecular to global – for breaking scientific barriers created by individual scientific disciplines, 2) encouraging early career scientists especially young women scientists to break the glass ceilings created around them by the hierarchical culture that exists in Asian societies to this date, and 3) facilitating collaborative platform for bright and upcoming scientists in Asia Oceania region with established research centres and groups in Europe and North America.

Towards these goals, I would create counselling board comprising of seasoned and established scientists for early career researchers. Special care will be taken to recruit imminent women scientists who could advise younger peers regarding potential barriers and solutions to overcome those. I will make sure to highlight international mobility opportunities for those towards the beginning of their career. Being the director of strategic international partnerships at University of Leeds provides me a fantastic opportunity to enhance this agenda. Finally organizing multiscale, multidisciplinary conference sessions at AOGS, as I have been doing since last year, and encouraging others to do the same would enhance the dialogue required for breaking disciplinary boundaries in Biogeosciences. Indeed, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research is the soul of Biogeosciences.

I look forward to working with you and contributing to the strategic mission of the Council of AOGS.