

International Webinar on “The UN in Times of People’s Needs: Rethinking Multilateralism” Dhaka, Bangladesh, September 16 and 17, 2020

On 16-17 September, Center for Peace Studies (CPS) under South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) of North South University (NSU) Bangladesh and the United Nations (UN) in Bangladesh co-hosted an international webinar titled, “The UN in Times of People’s Needs: Rethinking Multilateralism”. The aim of the webinar was to identify the successes of and challenges faced by the UN since its founding, with a view to draw from the lessons learned over the last 75 years and provide recommendations on the way forward.

In the inaugural session, HE Fabrizio Hochschild, Under Secretary General of UN and Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on the Commemoration of the United Nations 75th Anniversary and Mr. M A Kashem, Chairman Board of Trustees (BoT) of North South University attended as Special Guest.



The webinar consisted of five substantive sessions focusing on different themes relating to the UN’s areas of work and function, including the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in the context of COVID-19; human rights in times of crises; peacekeeping and peacebuilding, humanitarian action; as well as a colloquium on civil society’s perspectives on the UN.

The general view that emerged from the webinar was that the UN has made notable contributions toward fulfilling its Charter obligations, particularly in regard to helping people achieve larger freedoms. Participants also remarked that despite the many achievements of the UN, much still needs to be done for the global population, notably in the areas of conflict prevention and the prevention of gross human rights violations and genocide. Participants also raised questions about the UN’s effectiveness in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants further noted that the UN is the embodiment of a rule-based, open multilateral system and that its effectiveness and usefulness is determined by those who make it—the UN is what its member states wish it to be.

The two day long International Webinar concluded with the presence of Mr. M A Manan, Minister of Ministry of Planning, Mr. Shahriar Alam, State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Mia Seppo, Resident Coordinator of UN, Bangladesh and Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice chancellor of North South University. The concluding session was moderated by Senior Fellow of SIPG, Ambassador Mr. Shahidul Haque. A joint statement prepared by United Nations and North South University has been delivered in the closing session.