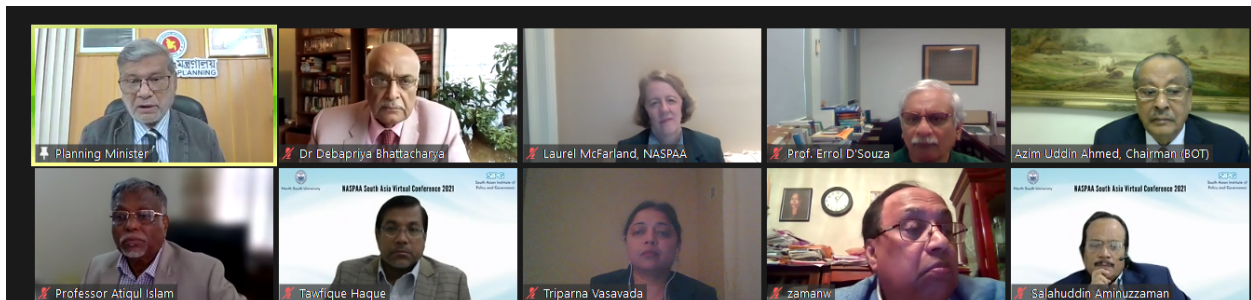


**SIPG of NSU holds three-day NSU-NASPAA South Asia Conference 2021 on “Preparing Public Leaders in South Asia for a Post Pandemic World”  
(12-14 November 2021)**

The NSU-NASPAA South Asia Virtual Conference 2021 on “Preparing Public Leaders in South Asia for a Post Pandemic World” was held on 12-14 November 2021. It was organized by the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) at North South University, the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA) of USA, and the JSW School of Public Policy, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA), India.

The conference aimed to bring together academics, practitioners, members of civil society, and representatives from the public and private sector across South Asia to share lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic and discuss ways to prepare public leaders for a post-pandemic world. Around 87 paper presentations & 14 panel discussions from 13 different countries & 78 universities across the globe were presented at this virtual conference.

Mr. M. A. Mannan, MP, Hon’ble Minister, Ministry of Planning, Government of Bangladesh was the chief guest and inaugurated the three-day NASPAA South Asia Virtual Conference 2021 on 12 November 2021. Mr. Bhawani Prasad Khapung, Hon’ble State Minister, Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal was the chief guest at the closing session on 14 November 2021. Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya, Distinguished Fellow of Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) was the inaugural keynote speaker.



**Photo 1: Inaugural session of the Conference on 12 November 2021**

Special Guests were Dr. Triparna Vasavada, Chair, NASPAA South Asia, Laurel McFarland, Senior Fellow & Executive Director Emerita, NASPAA, USA, Professor Errol D'Souza, Director of IIMA, India, Mr. Azim Uddin Ahmed, Chairman, Board of Trustees, North South University. The chair of the session was Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor, North South University.

Keynote Speakers of the conference were Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya, Distinguished Fellow at Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dr. Alasdair Roberts, Director of the School of Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Ms. Yamini Aiyar, President and Chief Executive of the Centre for Policy Research & Dr. Rumki Basu, Senior Fellow, and Head, Centre for Public Policy and Governance in the Institute of Social Sciences.

“Bangladesh has handled the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 better than the world average despite having weaker institutions particularly, in the health sector,” said Mr. M. A. Mannan, MP, Hon’ble Minister, Ministry of Planning, Government of Bangladesh. He lauded the international conference to be very timely and hopes that the ideas and experiences that will be shared in this virtual conference will help to prepare the public leaders and policymakers in South Asia for a Post Pandemic World. He wished this conference to be a successful one.

Inaugural keynote speaker Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya, Distinguished Fellow of Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) delivered his speech on the topic, “Post-Pandemic South Asia: Six Lessons for the Policy Actors”. He stated that in post-Covid times South Asian countries should focus on closing the gaps in public health infrastructure and work on expanding social safety net programs. South Asian countries should work together in strengthening regional cooperation frameworks and modalities in delivering Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He emphasized that the South Asian countries need to mobilize funds for addressing the “locked-in” regional issues which include public health, climate action, migration, connectivity, and finance.

Mr. Azim Uddin Ahmed, Chairman, Board of Trustees, North South University said that the organization of this virtual international conference is very pertinent both for the government ministries and institutional actors in South Asia to prepare public leaders for a post-pandemic world.

Plenary Keynote speaker Yamini Aiyar from Centre for Policy Research, India spoke on “COVID 19 and the broken social contract”. She highlighted a critical overview of some of the key moments in India's battle against Covid and examined its long-term implications on shaping state-citizen relations going forward.

The inaugural program began with the welcome speech of Prof. Sk. Tawfique M. Haque, Director of SIPG. And the session ended with a speech of the Chair of the session Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor, North South University. He opined that it is high time we prepare for future pandemics and wished for a very successful three-day-long virtual conference.

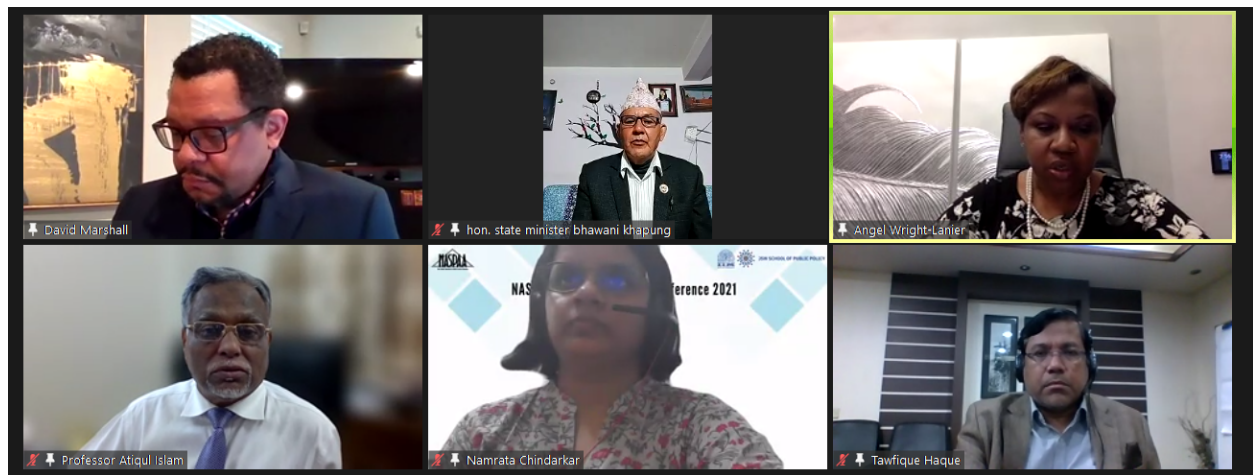
### **Closing Session:**

The closing session of the three-day NSU-NASPAA South Asia Virtual Conference was held on 14 November 2021. Mr. Bhawani Prasad Khapung, Hon’ble State Minister, Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal was the chief guest at the closing session.

Special Guests of the closing session were Dr. Angel Wright-Lanier, Executive Director, NASPAA, USA; Mr. David Marshall, Director of Membership Development, NASPAA, USA; Dr. Namrata Chindarkar, Chairperson, JSW School of Public Policy, IIM Ahmedabad, India. The chair of the session was Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor, North South University.

“Governance and leadership are the key aspects to achieve success during the pandemic,” said Mr. Bhawani Prasad Khapung, Hon’ble State Minister of Health and Population, Government of Nepal. He also added that the lessons learned from this Covid-19 pandemic will strengthen and

prioritize emergency health services to mitigate future pandemics. He lauded the international conference to be very timely wished to be a successful one.



**Photo 2: Closing session of the conference on 14 November 2021**

Dr. Angel Wright-Lanier, Executive Director, NASPAA, USA; said that this South Asian conference is important to NASPAA because it highlights our commitment to connect with the international community of public policy schools and practitioners.

Mr. David Marshall, Director of Membership Development, NASPAA, USA; lauded the conference as it addressed the themes of inequality, environmental health, and sustainable development alongside the pandemic management by public leaders. He hopes for more collaborative approaches in the upcoming days.

Dr. Namrata Chindarkar, Chairperson, JSW School of Public Policy, IIM Ahmedabad, India; stated that this pandemic has demonstrated that the effective response needs to be collaborative. So the content and delivery of public policy education need to include more practitioners and contextualization in it.

Chair of the session Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor, North South University; opined that this academic conference will contribute to our stock of knowledge about pandemic management. It will guide various governments and NGOs to formulate policies for their regulatory, control, and reviving activities centering on public health emergencies.

The snapshot report on the conference was presented by Dr. Rizwan Khair, Associate Professor, SIPG, North South University, Bangladesh. He highlighted the important topics and findings from the papers presented and the panelists discussed at the conference. He hoped that the discussions at this virtual conference will help to prepare public leaders for a post-pandemic world. Academics, researchers, journalists, scholars, practitioners, civil society members, students, representatives from the public and private sector across South Asia and the globe were present among the participants.