

PRESS RELEASE

21 September 2021

Centre for Peace and Justice, Brac University in partnership with UN Women organised a virtual Peace Adda event to celebrate International Day of Peace

Tuesday, 21 September 2021: Centre for Peace and Justice, Brac University (CPJ) in partnership with UN Women arranged a virtual event to commemorate the International Peace Day 2021. The key objectives of this celebration were to learn the youth aspirations, achievements, challenges and ways forward to making a peaceful and socially cohesive society. The celebration also aims to showcase WPC activities and address effective aspects of peacebuilding processes here in Bangladesh.

The theme for this year's Peace Day is **"Recovering Better for an Equitable and Sustainable World."** On the occasion, with relevance to the theme, CPJ and UN Women along with Peace Café members organised a series of events and activities such as peace adda, rally, seminar, social media campaigns, peace-message, essay, and photography competition.

The opening speeches were delivered by **Manzoor Hasan OBE**, Executive Director, Center for Peace and Justice, Brac University and **Gitanjali Singh**, Head of Office, UN Women Bangladesh respectively. **Professor Dr. AHM Mustafizur Rahman**, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Mymensingh, was present in the program as the Chief Guest.

The main discussion session included young speakers from their different Peace Café initiatives from University Dhaka, Brac University, Begum Rokeya University and Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University. Each speaker identified and discussed on the topic related to Peace and Social Cohesion – barriers and challenges for peace at the local, national and international levels; what should be done to promote peace and social cohesion in our societies; Covid-19 and peace; and so on.

Following the Peace Adda, a photo book named **"The Power of Women"**, was officially launched which is soon to be available in hard copies and currently available on the CPJ website and social media. This Photo Book displays the top submissions from all categories, selected from a range of excellent works from very talented youth artists across the country.

Manzoor Hasan OBE, shared his view on 'peace' while inaugurating the event. He mentioned *"Bangladesh has made impressive progress on the issues of Peace and Development and climbed up seven notches in the Global Peace Index of 2021 - graduating from a lower development country to a development country. Several challenges impede a peaceful and social cohesive society for example, the current extensive existence of the refugee camps, social safety, security and mobility barrier to the women and the other marginalised communities, the increase in child marriage, national unemployment rate, etc."* He concluded his remarks by pointing out some significant learning and recommendations from this Peace Café initiative gathered till date.

Gitanjali Singh, in her opening remarks, noted out the active online engagement of the young peace builders, especially during the entire difficult pandemic period. Sharing from the amazing journey of

PRESS RELEASE

one of the Women Peace Café members from Begum Rokeya University with UN Women peace-building initiatives, she said, *“it is immensely important for the youths to engage themselves actively in their own community to ensure the promotion of peace, social cohesion and gender equality in the society.”* She concluded her speech quoting the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, ***“Peace is not a naïve dream. It’s a light in the darkness. Guiding us to the only pathway to a better future for humanity.”***

Chief Guest, **Professor Dr. AHM Mustafizur Rahman**, emphasised the importance of being a good and just human being to help contribute in this continuous process. He appreciated the youth leaders on learning how to be the persons of justice in accordance with the ideals of our Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with the help of the initiatives from UN Women and CPJ. He said, ***“In order to build a peaceful Bangladesh and world you need to build a peaceful family with no discrimination between boys and girls. Only then we can make a peaceful Bangladesh and that will lead to the ultimate making of a peaceful and socially cohesive world.”*** He concluded by expressing his interest and assurance on behalf of the JKKNUI (Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University) family in always co-operating with this initiative whenever needed.

Tania Sharmin, the Program Analyst from UN Women concluded the session by congratulating the young leaders on their amazing endeavours all along on this Peace Café initiative and aspired to continue working with them in future.

This virtual programme was broadcasted Live and the recording can be viewed on CPJ’s Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/cpj.bracu/videos/286051403024516/>

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