

YSP and UPF Dhaka, Bangladesh webinar Ready for Change: The Role of Youth

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Dhaka, Bangladesh -- UPF-Bangladesh in partnership with Youth and Students for Peace (YSP), an affiliated organization, held a "Peace Talks" webinar on the theme, "Ready for Change: The Role of Youth and Students in Moving Through and Beyond the Global Pandemic," on July 29, 2020. Forty people from different universities in Bangladesh participated in the virtual event along with 1,000 viewers, who watched it through Facebook live.

The program started with warm greetings and an introduction from the moderator, Mr. Imran Ahsan, program coordinator of UPF- and YSP-Bangladesh.

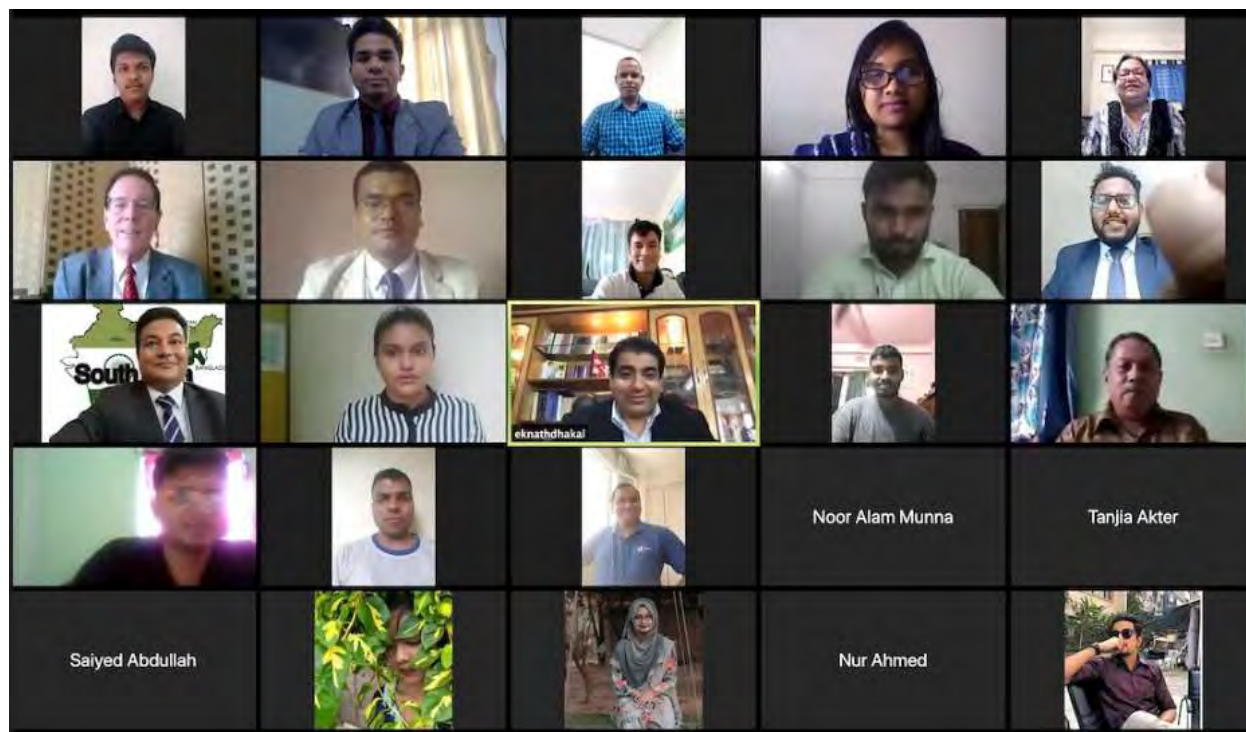
Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, a former minister of government of Nepal and chairman of UPF-Asia Pacific gave the special remarks. He said that UPF is encouraging leaders from all the different sectors in the nation to unite, cooperate dialogue and have compassion to help the nation overcome the momentous challenge of COVID-19. Hon. Dhakal also introduced the upcoming virtual Rally of Hope that will be broadcast live from Korea on August 9 and invited everyone to it.

Dr. Robert S. Kittel, international president of the YSP delivered the keynote speech. He spoke about YSP and how its work aligns with UPF and the theme of the webinar. The vision of YSP comes from the founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, and it is to bring together young people to build a world of peace with true love. Its mission is to advance world peace by empowering youth and students to become global citizens through character education and peace projects supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The YSP's four values are Responsibility, Integrity, Service and Empathy, or RISE. The most serious social problems are youth and family breakdown; if we can solve these problems then we can solve all societal, national and global problems.

UNESCO, the UN Educational, Educational and Scientific Organization, defines youth as a "period of transition from the dependence childhood to adulthood's independence and awareness of our

interdependence as members of a community". Global leadership is needed to solve the effects of the pandemic and needs to be cultivated within the nation, in communities and within ourselves. The more responsibility young people assume, the more public minded they must be.

Mehreen Mahmud, president of the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP)-Bangladesh said that she is grateful to be speaking at this event. She continued by saying that the theme of the webinar is timely and that it means human beings have to overcome this temporary crisis we are experiencing and be ready to move on. She added that the change the world is experiencing has good in it, and good changes occur through catastrophes. Developing habits of cleanliness, understanding how little we actually need to keep ourselves alive and happy, experiencing nature, learning how to keep nature and the natural habitat healthy, developing a better understanding of human values, and brotherhood with and love for one another are only some of the good that the COVID-19 has taught us. The pandemic also has developed some sense of compassion and benevolence among people.



Ms. Sharmin Akther Shakila, entrepreneurship coordinator at the Edward M. Kennedy Center-Dhaka, remarked that youth are the sprint responders to crises. During the pandemic, they have jumped in to help without thinking about their own safety and protection, while policymakers and others were thinking about solutions. However, we have neglected these changemakers. In the history of civilization, the voices of youth have always been low in proportion with the world power domain. Approximately 10 to 20 percent of youth leaders are also global leaders. While they are the actual game changers, the power is not in their hands.

This is something she said that she thinks is very crucial that she sees UPF is working to address. It is bringing youth from different backgrounds and engaging them with the politicians, policymakers.

To achieve goals and to successfully work for others, it is necessary that young people take care of their mental health. Relationships, family and hope are essential to living. The pandemic has showed us where we actually belong: in our family. She said her family has supported her to live and that she has been supporting others. It has been a tough and transformative journey, and we all have made it this far because of the support of loved ones.

Ms. Shakila concluded by saying that by following the three Ds: dream, dare and determination, youth can change the world, and that she believes we can transform society into a society of peace in the future.

Mr. Santosh Kumar Paudel, director of UPF- and the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU)-South Asia, said Bangladesh shines because of its millions of promising youth and can be a role model by providing education on the core principles of UPF. He acknowledged the Eid al-Adha Islamic holiday and extended his wishes for good health, peace and happiness to everyone.

The webinar closed with Mr. Tika Raj Bishwakarma, international representative of UPF- and FFWPU-Bangladesh, thanking all the panelists and participants.