Recent Events

In-house Discussion Series

As part of the In-house Discussion Series, RCSS held 2 discussions so far this year. At the first discussion, held on the 25th of February, His Excellency Dr. Shahid Ahmad Hashmat, the High Commissioner of Pakistan to Sri Lanka, spoke on the topic of ‘Regional Security in South Asia: Pakistan’s Perspective’.

The second In-house Discussion was held on the 5th of April, where Her Excellency, Ms. Joanne Doornewaard the Ambassado of the Netherlands to Sri Lanka, spoke on ‘Dutch Legacy in Sri Lanka: Retrospect and Prospects’.

Workshop on ‘Research Proposal Development’

RCSS held the two-day annual workshop on ‘Research Proposal Development on the 19th & 20th of March, providing the opportunity for postgraduate students and working professionals to learn the theoretical and practical aspects of research and research proposal development. The objective of the workshop is to encourage young professionals to pursue research mainly on peace, conflict, strategic and security studies, with the possibility of exploring and connecting the themes in traditional social sciences, anthropology, development studies and beyond.
Ongoing Projects and Upcoming Events

Kodikara Memorial Oration 2019

The Kodikara Memorial Oration is an event held by RCSS in honour of its founding director, Prof. Shelton U. Kodikara. The event provides a platform for distinguished speakers to enlighten those in attendance on the importance of a relevant subject/issue.

The Kodikara Memorial Oration for 2019 will be held on the 6th of August, 2019. The keynote speech will be given by Prof. Veranja Karunaratne on the topic of “World Affairs in Digital Age: Challenges and Opportunities for a Small Island State”.

Prof. Veranja Karunaratne is the Senior Professor, Department of Chemistry, at the University of Peradeniya, and the Vice Chancellor of the Sri Lanka Institute of Nanotechnology (SLINTEC Academy). He holds a Ph.D. in Synthetic Organic Chemistry from the University of British Columbia in Canada.

Kodikara Fellowship Award 2019

RCSS awarded the 2019 Kodikara Research Fellowship to Portia B. Conrad. She is currently working for India International Centre, New Delhi. During her fellowship, Ms. Conrad will conduct a research on “How do CBMs (Confidence Building Measures) perform in South Asia: Mapping the Relative Performance of India-Pakistan CBMs”. The research will be completed by the end of 2019.
Publications

GPPAC South Asia – “Trends in Youth Radicalization in South Asia”

In following up with GPPAC South Asia’s Youth Conference, held in Colombo in 2018, RCSS facilitated the release of a publication as an output of the conference. This publication was titled “Trends in Youth Radicalization in South Asia” and consisted of papers that were based on presentations given at the conference.

Occasional Papers

1) Five Years into Belt and Road Initiative (BRI): Potential Economic Benefits and Opportunities for Sri Lanka
   – By Dr. Ranee Jayamaha.

2) One Belt One Road in South Asia: Opportunity or Threat for Sri Lankan Enterprises
   – By Mr. Lasantha Wickremesooriya.
RCSS Staff Activity

RCSS & UNFPA Joint Research Project

RCSS initiated a research project for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on the “Potential Role of Young Leaders and Volunteers in Preventing Violent Extremism in Sri Lanka”, on the 21st of September, 2018. An extensive amount of research was undertaken over the span of 6 months, encompassing 2,800 youth from the Southern, Eastern, Northern and Central Provinces of Sri Lanka. All research findings were then formulated into a final report, which was completed and handed in to the UNFPA on the 19th of April, 2019.

RCSS Executive Director’s Participation in International Conferences

The Executive Director of RCSS, Prof. Gamini Keerawella attended a vast amount of international conferences during the first half of 2019. These include visits to Nepal from the 10th – 13th of March for the Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks (COSATT) conference, a visit to the Netherlands for the GPPAC Global Steering Group (GSG) meeting from the 26th to the 27th of March, followed by the GPPAC International Steering Group (ISG) meeting in Ukraine from the 26th to the 30th of May. Prof Keerawella also visited Thailand from the 25th to the 28th of June to attend a workshop held by the Near East South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies. The GPPAC South Asia Regional Steering Group (RSG) will conduct multiple activities from the 1st to the 4th of July in Nepal, Prof. Keerawella, RCSS Programme Officer Ms. Natasha Fernando and RCSS Programme Assistant, Mr. Akshay Senanayake will attend this week of activities.
**RCSS Associate Director Participates in World Bank Panel Discussion**

On the 14th of February, The World Bank presented their first Sri Lankan Development Update at an event in Colombo. Prof. Indralal De Silva, Associate Director at RCSS, took part in the Panel Discussion following the presentation of the Development Update. The issue in focus was the ageing population of Sri Lanka, how it will impact the economy and what can be done to deal with potential obstacles. Prof. De Silva spoke about the ‘Challenges of Sri Lanka’s Aging Population and Labour Issues’. With regard to the report, he argued that it had failed to account for the increase in the labour force accompanying an increase in the number of children born in the early part of the new millennium.

**4th NTS Asia Consortium Annual Meeting**

RCSS Programme Officer, Ms. Ayodhya Krishani participated on behalf of RCSS at the 4th NTS Asia Consortium Annual Meeting. The Consortium of Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia) of Nanyang Technological University, Singapore organized this year’s annual meeting themed “Bringing Back Multilateral Cooperation in NTS Governance.” The meeting/conference was held on 25-26 March 2019, in Singapore with the participation from consortium members.

**RCSS Ranked as Top Global Think Tank**

RCSS was listed as one of the world’s top think tanks in the ‘2018 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report’ compiled by the University of Pennsylvania. In all the categories it was listed under, RCSS was the highest ranked Sri Lankan think tank. It is an honour for RCSS to receive such recognition on its profile and performance as the foremost South Asian regional think tank.
GPPAC-RCSS Activity

South Asian Peacebuilders Condemn Bombings in Sri Lanka

The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) South Asia, together with its GPPAC partners around the world, strongly condemns the deadly bombings in several churches and hotels in Sri Lanka on the 21st of April, 2019, which killed over 250 people and injured another 500. These barbaric acts, which were committed on Easter Sunday, are an ugly manifestation of violent extremism, which undermines all our collective efforts towards maintaining sustainable peace and long lasting security.

GPPAC South Asia shares the grief of the families and friends of those who were killed and wishes a swift recovery to all those who were wounded.

It is extremely important that the perpetrators are brought to justice under the law of the land, to ensure that such malicious acts are prevented in the future.

Cooperation and sharing of intelligence across countries in the region is also of utmost importance in countering violent extremism. Accordingly, we strongly urge the countries of South Asia to resolve the problems that divide them and unite for the protection of our people through gender inclusive, interfaith and inter-generational dialogue and peacebuilding initiatives that will enable us to get to the heart of the root causes of such violence

This horrendous act of violence underscores the need for systematic and collective efforts toward preventing violent extremism. This hideous incident just shows the imperative to re-double our efforts in shifting the prevalent paradigm of reaction to conflict into prevention and transformation.

GPPAC-South Asia.
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GPPAC RSG Meeting 2019
From the 1st till the 4th of July, RCSS, as the South Asian Regional Secretariat for the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) will be jointly hosting the GPPAC South Asia Regional Steering Group (RSG) meeting with the Centre for South Asian Studies (CSAS) in Kathmandu, Nepal. GPPAC South Asia RSG members from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka will be in attendance.

Other activities that will take place during the 4 days include a Conference on Youth and Radicalization in South Asia, an interactive discussion between Women Parliamentarians and Women Civil Society Leaders, which will be facilitated by the GPPAC South Asia Gender Focal Points, and lastly, the GPPAC RSG members will visit the EU Delegation in Nepal to discuss their activities and propose avenues for future collaboration.