Kodikara Award Fellowship 2019

Ms. Portia Conrad from India was awarded the Kodikara Fellowship Award 2019. She presented her research to RCSS in January, 2020. The research on the topic “How do CBMs (Confidence Building Measures) perform in South Asia: Mapping the Relative Performance of India-Pakistan CBMs” is now in the process of being published and will soon be released under the RCSS Policy Studies series. Prof. Rasul Rais, Professor of Political Science, Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), from Pakistan and Board Director of RCSS was the supervisor of the research.

Secretary General of SAARC Designate Visits RCSS

The newly appointed 14th Secretary General of SAARC, Ambassador Esala Weerakoon, made a curtsey visit to RCSS on the 3rd of February, before leaving Colombo to assume duties at the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu. The RCSS Executive Director, Prof. Gamini Keerawella and Ambassador Weerakoon had a stimulating discussion on moving the SAARC process forward. The possibility of having closer collaboration between RCSS and the SAARC Secretariat in promoting regionalism was also discussed.
Launch of New RCSS Website

In January 2020 RCSS launched its new Website. The new Website reiterates the RCSS objectives and priorities in promoting common good among the South Asian community.

Publications


The Part I: The Portuguese Thalassocracy and the Estado da India in the Indian Ocean; Pax Britannica and the Indian Ocean; The Indian Ocean after 1945.

The Part II: Changing Geo-Strategic Contours in the Post-Cold War Indian Ocean; From the Indian Ocean to the Indo-Pacific Region.

The publication is available for purchase at the RCSS Kodikara Library. (Price: LKR 450)

The RCSS published “Democracy and Civic Space in Sri Lanka: Discourse and Trajectories”.

Following up from the GPPAC Sri Lanka workshop on Democracy and Civic Space in 2019, RCSS has released this publication based on its proceedings.

The book contains the following three chapters: “Democracy, Civil Society and Civil Space” by Prof. Jayadeva Uyangoda

Paradox of Democracy and Attrition of Civic Space in Sri Lanka: Quo Vadis?” by Prof. Gamini Keerawella

“The Constructive Role of Civil Society in a Time of Political Flux” by Dr. Jehan Perera.

This publication is now available for purchase at the RCSS Kodikara Library. (Price: LKR 500)
For the year 2020, GPPAC South Asia is in the process of conducting a plethora of activities. The COVID-19 pandemic in particular stands as a critical historic crossroad with many directions and options before it.

Inter-Generational Stories of Peacebuilding

Inter-generational Peacebuilding is a main contributor in preventing conflict and breaking the cyclic process of violent conflict. “Inter-Generational Stories of Peacebuilding” is an initiative that aims at identifying the existing gaps within inter-generational peacebuilding and creating a platform on how to address them by the end of the year 2020.

This initiative will be led by Ms Nighat Khan from the ASR Resource Centre in Pakistan while Ms. Visaka Dharmadasa from AWAW (Associated of War Affected Woman) Sri Lanka, Ms. Kumuduni Samuel from WMC (Women & Media Collective) Sri Lanka and Ms. Saloni Singh (Didi Bahini) from Nepal will act as contributors.

South Asian Perspectives on Sustainable Development and Gender Equality: A Virtual Policy Roundtable and Publication of Policy Brief

The Virtual Policy Round Table is initiated to generate region-centered specific knowledge on the SDGs, particularly Goal 5 - Gender Equality. Seven voluntary national reports from each partner country will be materialized by the end of the year 2020. The project will be led by Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath and Ms. Seema Kakran from WISCOMP (Women in Security, Conflict Management & Peace) India. Professor Arshi Hasmi from Pakistan, Ms.Visaka Daramadasa from AWAW Sri Lanka, Ms. Lailuma Nasiri from AJO (Afghanistan Justice Organization) Afghanistan, Mr. Ashish Banik from BEI (Bangladesh Enterprise Institute) Bangladesh and Ms. Shahindha Ismail from MDN (Maldivian Democracy Network) Maldives will act as contributing bodies.

Network Strengthening/ Regional Steering Group Meeting (RSG)

The RSG Meeting seeks to initiate more intra-regional interactions through GPPAC National Activities in 2020-2021. The first online RSG meeting is scheduled to be held on the 18th of August accompanied with a series of virtual meetings in the future. Professor Gamini Keerawella, the RLO and RCSS from Sri Lanka will convene the meeting.

Peace and Conflict South Asia Weekly

This activity aims to develop 52 weekly alerts on conflict and peace issues across the world that would reach the 20 memberships of GPPAC South Asia and around 1000 readers in the region and globally by the end of the year 2020.

The project will be led by Professor Suba Chandran from NIAS, India. WISCOMP will act as the contributing body.

The Implication of COVID-19 Pandemic for South Asia: Civil Society Perspectives

Seven reports of country-perspectives and three regional reports on multifaceted implications of COVID-19 on social, economic, and political spheres and the role of civil society in mitigating impact at the country and regional levels will be developed. Dr. Mallika Joshep from India (GPPAC) and Dr. Nishchal Pandey from Nepal; Professor Suba Chandran from India; and Professor Jayadeva Uyangoda from Sri Lanka will be the lead authors of the regional reports. The Sri Lanka country report will be prepared by GPPAC – Sri Lanka group.
Dharshani Dias retired from RCSS in March, 2020 after 21 years of service in the capacity of the Secretary and later as the Administrative Officer.

She served under the following Executive Directors at RCSS: Major General (Retd) Dipankar Banerjee (India, 1999 - 2002); Prof. Sridhar Khatri (Nepal, 2002 - 2005); Dr. Syed Rifaat Hussain (Pakistan, 2005-2008); Prof. (Emeritus) Amal Jayawardena (Sri Lanka, 2009 - 2011); Dr. Mallika Joseph (India, 2012 - 2014); Prof. Intiaz Ahmed (Bangladesh, 2015 – 2017); and Prof. (Emeritus) Gamini Keerawella (Sri Lanka, 2017 – Present).

On behalf of all the Directors and Members of RCSS, we are thankful for her for the services rendered and her dedication to the institution during her tenure.

Amali Bamunusinghe is the new Administrative Officer at RCSS. She has a Diploma in Human Resource Management from Sri Lanka. She has prior experience working in the capacity of Personal Assistant to the Director, National Integration Programme Unit, Ministry of Justice Law Reforms and National Integration of Sri Lanka, and Confidential Secretary in private business ventures.

Natasha Fernando, Programme Officer (RCSS) and the Regional Liaison Officer at GPPAC South Asia, bid goodbye to RCSS in March. She holds an LLB honors from the University of London and a BA honors in International Studies from the University of Kelaniya. She is currently pursuing her Masters in Strategic Studies, at S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, in Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. RCSS wishes her the very best in her future endeavors.

Tilia Samarasinghe, is the incoming Regional Liaison Officer at GPPAC South Asia and the Programme Officer at RCSS. She is a Project Management professional specialized in ICT4D / Digital Transformation with experience of managing various technical and non-technical projects in Public and Private Sector at International, National and Local levels. She holds a BSc. (Hons-IT), PGDip.IT (SLIIT), MBS (Colombo), PMP ®.

Revival of RCSS E-Multilogue

With the launch of the new RCSS Website, RCSS also revived the E-Multilogue platform. The E-Multilogue aims to engage with a wide cross section of individuals in discussing and sharing thoughts, analysis and viewpoints on contemporary international events and issues.

Recent posts include:

*Preserving Nature's Gift in the New Normal by Dr. Sarala Fernando*

*COVID-19 – Future Strategic Relations by Vijay Prasad Jayshwal*