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FROM
the editor's desk

Activities related to the national budget and analysis of the Bangladesh economy remained on the forefront during this busiest quarter of CPD. In May, CPD prepared a set of recommendations in view of the Budget FY2015 taking cognisance of the macroeconomic developments in FY2014. CPD's flagship report on State of the Bangladesh Economy (third review) released in this period particularly underscored the need for a congenial political environment to lost investment dynamism needed for restoring growth acceleration.

Following the announcement of the Budget FY2015 by the Finance Minister, in keeping with its tradition, CPD came up with its quick response and analysis. CPD noted that fiscal framework was weak, many of the macroeconomic correlates in the proposed budget were inconsistent, and key fiscal targets did not reflect the realities on the ground. In view of these concerns CPD proposed to establish four independent commissions that are expected to raise the efficacy of economic governance and effective implementation of the budget.

Detailed discussion on CPD's FY2015 budget analysis took place at a national dialogue in Dhaka, and also later in Sylhet, with a diverse range of stakeholders. For broader outreach CPD also hosted a live TV talk show series focusing on governance of the economy and the budget.

A number of other CPD dialogues in this period included democratic polity in Bangladesh, Bangladesh's trade opportunities with India and *Jamdani* as a geographical indications (GI) product. The dialogue on GI discussed how Bangladesh could establish its GI claim regarding *Jamdani* as a unique product of Bangladesh.

The quarter also saw CPD's activism concerning follow-up activities on Rana Plaza Monitoring Initiative. A number of meetings and a dialogue engaging its partners and various stakeholders revealed that a high-level standing commission should be constituted to monitor implementation of the tripartite Action Plan.

Under its global programmes CPD partnered with Southern Voice on Post-MDGs to debate South-South Cooperation on the sidelines of the GPEDC in Mexico. CPD senior researchers participated at the stock taking workshop as part of Post-2015 Data Test initiative, led by the CPD, in partnership with Southern Voice and North South Institute, Ottawa. In this quarter, CPD professionals also participated in the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.



The analysis was prepared overnight following the Finance Minister's budget speech

Immediate reaction to proposed FY2015 Budget Right fiscal measures within weak framework

Fiscal measures in the proposed budget were largely in order and tuned to budgetary objectives but inadequate to attain 7.3 per cent GDP growth while private investment maintained a continuous declining trend.

The basis of achieving such growth remains a suspect as it would require Tk. 75 thousand crore additional investments a year, underscored the analysis of the National Budget for FY2015, presented during a media briefing at BRAC Centre Inn on 6 June 2014.

The analysis flagged that macroeconomic correlates in the proposed budget were inconsistent and key fiscal targets did not reflect reality in designing of the framework, noted CPD Distinguished Fellow *Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya*, on behalf of the CPD-Independent Review of Bangladesh's Development (IRBD) team.

CPD identified that the budgetary measures aimed to attain fiscal consolidation backed up by high growth revenue, revitalise economic growth momentum, revert the downturn of investments and further control inflation. However, the budget did not provide for necessary institutional reforms towards improved fiscal-budgetary management as well as supportive policy environment.

A review of the fiscal framework identified domestic borrowing, ADP implementation and non-tax revenue as the most volatile components. Concerns remained that domestic borrowing at an average cost of 8.75 per cent for deficit financing would burden interest payment, consuming one-third revenue earnings. In case of ADP, almost 700 projects remained without approval while critically important projects fell short of timely implementation and desired outcome, resulting wastage of money.

The expectation of mobilising over USD 4 billion foreign resource to finance 71.3 per cent incremental deficit seemed unrealistic in

the analysis. Increased public expenditure at 7 per cent of GDP did not reflect quality of work as spending and block allocation lacked transparency.

Positive measures such as new tax bracket for high-income, higher surcharge on wealth of the rich, health surcharge on tobacco products, green tax, new VAT imposition areas, increased source tax for land registration, and steps such as allowance increment for Liberation War fighters and other groups, tax exemption for small industries, tax holiday and rebate facilities for decentralising industrialisation, separate district budget received appreciation in the CPD analysis.

However, the analysis found declining trends in the allocations for agriculture and allied sectors; education and health sectors as percentage of GDP; for ADP projects concerning development of children; and the real value of allowance under social safety net programmes in last few fiscal years.

Among salient recommendations, CPD proposed to establish an Agricultural Price Commission to ensure fair price for agricultural commodities and incentive for producers while maintaining market stability; an Independent Statistical Commission to validate the macroeconomic correlates as well as a Local Government Financing Commission and a Public Expenditure Review Commission. Capacity development of IMED was also considered crucial for implementation of major infrastructural projects.

CPD researchers maintained their stance against the provision of whitening black money, which, according to them, contradicted the revised strategies for revenue collection. They also urged to phase out quick rental power plants and called for effective measures to restrict capital flight which was supposedly on the rise.

CPD activities related to the economy and the National Budget

The challenge of balancing resource availability with expenditure expansion

Post-election upsurge yet to be seen

Fiscal policy package for FY2015 will require consolidation of public expenditure with prudent prioritisation, an intensification of revenue mobilisation drive, and closer attention to financing of fiscal deficit with emphasis on foreign financing.

The expected fiscal policy measures should create an enabling environment for Bangladesh economy, and improve investment scenario to regain the growth momentum lost due to political volatility during the first half of FY2014.

The recommendations emerged from “A Set of Proposals for the National Budget FY2015,” prepared as part of the CPD-IRBD programme, during a media briefing at BRAC Centre Inn on 4 May 2014.

CPD Distinguished Fellow *Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya* opined that Bangladesh’s GDP growth accelerated by one per cent each decade over the past years irrespective of changes in governments, but the trend might discontinue amid the prevailing lacklustre investment scenario. He urged the government to strategise its institutional and political measures to tackle the situation.

In view of an assessment of macroeconomic developments in FY2014, CPD Research Director *Dr Fahmida Khatun* identified declining growth in revenue income, exports, private credit, remittance, foreign aid and lower ADP, implementation during the third quarter. Noting that the economy was likely to experience slower growth for the third consecutive year without adequate private investment, *Dr Khatun* observed that fiscal measures for boosting investment and reorienting the Board of Investment with a better investment agenda should be put in place.

Fiscal measures for public investment should cover enhanced ADP allocation for railway and speedy implementation of fast-track projects on



(left) Towfiqul Islam Khan, Debapriya Bhattacharya, Mustafizur Rahman, Fahmida Khatun and Khondaker Golam Moazzem

highway and power plants, expansion of gas connection, leather processing zone and relocation of tanneries, she added.

In view of the ambitious revenue collection target at around Tk. 1,50,000 crore, CPD opposed corporate tax cuts, already among the lowest in South Asia, noting that it would have little impact on enhancing investment. On the contrary, CPD recommended rationalisation of tax incentive structure, phasing out of tax holiday facility, curbing tax defaulting and evasion through mispricing and misdeclaration, implementing wealth tax collection and formulation of leasing policy to tap non-tax revenue.

Some salient recommendations from the proposals included subsidised credit facility and increased VAT exemption for SMEs for recovery from damages due to political turmoil; incentives for non-RMG export-oriented industries for improved competitiveness and expand export development fund; allowing nationalised commercial banks to mobilise capital from capital market; reducing import duty on raw materials for furniture and pharmaceuticals; exit plans for quick rental power plants; and establishing an agricultural price commission to curb retail level price of agricultural commodities, etc.

Professor Mustafizur Rahman, Executive Director, CPD urged the policymakers to pay attention to non-economic issues such as capacity enhancement of Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED), and improvement of reform and weak oversight capacity of institutions belonging to the ‘national integrity system.’ The government needs to make sure that the non-economic factors do not impede the potential of quality and quantity of investments from turning into desired economic growth, he added.

State of the Bangladesh Economy in FY2014 (Third Reading)

Restore entrepreneurs’ confidence through conducive politics to accelerate investment



The review particularly emphasised return to democratic polity, institutional strengthening, targeted reforms and good governance at all levels

An enabling political environment through inclusive and participatory political culture will be key to regain investors’ confidence for enhanced private investment and GDP growth, both being undermined by political uncertainties.

Despite an unreliable political climate for investment coupled with malfunctioning institutions and persistent structural weakness, Bangladesh’s economic performance was characterised by relative macroeconomic stability in the backdrop of contained inflation, sustained exchange rates, high foreign exchange reserves and high export earnings.

Aside from sustaining a higher GDP growth between 8 to 10 per cent, non-economic factors such as good governance, strengthening institutions and local government, and conducive political environment will be key drivers for Bangladesh to become a middle-income country by 2021, underscored the third IRBD review on the State of the Bangladesh Economy in FY2014, presented at a media briefing at BRAC Centre Inn on 1 June 2014.

While presenting the study, *Professor Mustafizur Rahman*, Executive Director, CPD maintained that Bangladesh economy during the first half of FY2014 was confronted with severe disruption in production, transport and service delivery; while in the second half, political

uncertainties caused deceleration in the investment growth, particularly in the private sector.

Professor Rahman noted that the projection of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) on service sector of attaining higher growth in the current fiscal did not conform to how political violence laid damage on all nine subsectors including land transport, wholesale, retail trade, hotel, restaurant, real estate, renting and business activities.

In the above backdrop, major challenges for the government include reinvigorating the investment environment, and financing public expenditure, particularly if the negative trends in revenue collection and foreign aid disbursement remain unchanged.

Government therefore needed to pay attention to prioritising foreign aid over domestic resources for deficit financing; increase revenue collection by almost 35 per cent; and devise cost-effective and efficient strategy for power generation keeping in mind rising requirement; resolve emerging issues such as negative growth of remittance, manpower export and lacklustre performance of non-RMG sectors.

The IRBD review also came up with suggestions for setting up a task force to address pending reforms; ensure further fiscal autonomy, more effective devolution of power for local governments, capacity enhancement of implementation agencies for major public sector investment projects, and transaction costs reduction for contract enforcement, etc.



Expert Group Meeting on the review of the economy on 29 May 2014

CPD activities related to the economy and the National Budget

Dialogue on National Budget FY2015
Ambitions in abundance, fiscal framework not in tune

The ambitions set in the proposed budget need to be attuned to the realisation of budgetary targets, observed discussants during a CPD dialogue on Analysis of the National Budget FY2014-15 held at Lakeshore Hotel in Dhaka on 14 June 2014.

Alongside successful budget implementation, Bangladesh's target to become a middle-income country by 2021 would call for addressing infrastructural deficiency as well as ensuring good governance and agreeable political climate, they noted.

During the keynote presentation, CPD Research Director *Dr Fahmida Khatun* highlighted that CPD has iteratively suggested economic reforms and an enabling institutional and policy environment to realise budgetary target and implementation, resulting into desired macroeconomic performance.

Establishing an Independent Statistical Commission to validate the



(left) Fahmida Khatun, Akbar Ali Khan, A H M Mustafa Kamal, Rehman Sobhan, M A Mannan, Salehuddin Ahmed and Mustafizur Rahman

macroeconomic correlates; setting up an Agriculture Price Commission, a Local Government Financing Commission and a Public Expenditure Review Commission, were other recommendations.

Highlighting the government's success in achieving previous revenue targets, Chief Guest *Mr A H M Mustafa Kamal*, MP, Minister for Planning hoped for a more inclusive budget in future with reforms in the NBR and materialisation of wealth tax to make the economy more sustainable. Special Guest *Mr M A Mannan*, MP, State Minister for Finance and Planning, felt that the projected 7.3 per cent GDP growth rate would not be impossible to achieve.

CPD Distinguished Fellow *Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya* opined that budgeting for a fiscal year differs greatly from ambitious planning and therefore expectations centring ambitious targets

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Analysis of the National Budget FY2014-15
Local Level Dialogue in Sylhet

Deliberations on the CPD analysis of the National Budget gained regional outreach through a local-level dialogue in Sylhet, in association with Sacheton Nagorik Committee (SANAC), held on 22 June 2014.

In the keynote presentation, CPD Additional Research Director *Dr Khondaker Golam Moazzem* focused on the state of the national economy, the long-term implications of the budget on the economy and the local economy of Sylhet. He underscored ten critical issues from the proposed national budget, including public finance framework, efficiency in public expenditure, revenue generation by tax administration, incentives for reverting private investment and district budget allocation for Sylhet.

Chief Guest *Mr M A Mannan*, MP, Hon'ble State Minister for Finance and Planning; Special Guests *Mr Ariful Haque Chowdhury*, Mayor, Sylhet City Corporation and *Professor Dr Md Aminul Haque Bhuyan*, Vice Chancellor, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) addressed the event chaired by CPD Executive Director *Professor Mustafizur Rahman*.

Discussants drew upon national and regional issues including suggestions towards revenue and expenditure; rise of tax base instead of tax rate;



Floor discussants highlighted Sylhet's potential as a business hub and the region's contribution to the economy through remittance and tourism

allocation for private schools particularly for improving vocational and technical education; better allocation for development of the disadvantaged groups; special allocation for NGOs, and reduction of corruption in tax collection process, etc.

During the floor discussion, participants highlighted issues related to development of Sylhet region including lack of allocation for infrastructure development in Sylhet

include Dhaka-Sylhet four-lane highway; meager allocation for the tourism development in the region; insufficient allocation for education and health sectors; little attention for the improvement of the livelihood of the tea-workers; immediate implementation of SEZs; lack of allocation for developing the *haor* area of Sunamgonj district.

The event was also addressed by Guest of Honour *Mr Md Shahidul Islam*, Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet; two Designated Discussants *Mr Mohammad Sadiqunnabi Chowdhury*, Assistant Professor of Economics, SUST and *Advocate Irfanuzzaman Chowdhury*, President, SANAC, Sylhet, and also Coordinator, BLAST, Sylhet Unit; local academics, civil society representatives, government officials, former civil servants and lawyers.

CPD-Channel 24 Live Talk Show Series

Bangladesh Economy and National Budget (A_১০২ | etRU)

Ahead of the National Budget for FY2015, CPD conducted a five-episode TV series on issues namely macroeconomic context and fiscal framework, rural economy, investment, poverty and employment and non-economic factors during 18-21 May 2014.

Apart from CPD senior researchers, panellists also included *Dr Muhammad Abdur Razzaque*, MP, Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Finance and Former Minister for Food; *Mr Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury*, Member, Advisory Council, BNP; *Dr A B Mirza Azizul Islam*, Former Advisor to the Caretaker Government; *Dr Salehuddin Ahmed*, Former Governor, Bangladesh Bank; *Professor M A Sattar Mandal*, Former Member, Planning Commission; *Dr Zahid Hussain*, Lead Economist, The World Bank; *Dr Hassan Zaman*, Chief Economist, Bangladesh Bank; *Dr Ahsan Habib*



The show was aired in partnership with Channel 24

Mansur, Executive Director, Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh; *Dr Rushidan Islam Rahman*, Research Director, BIDS; *Dr M M Akash*, Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka and *Mr Latifur Rahman*, Chairman and CEO, Transcom Limited.

The panel discussions were joined through video conferencing by experts from outside Dhaka including *Mr Md Abu Bakker Ali*, President, Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce and Industry; *Mr Mahubul Alam*, President, Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry and *Mr Mostofa Sohrab Chowdhury Titu*, President, Rangpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The talks were moderated by *Mr Towfiqul Islam Khan*, Research Fellow and *Ms Khaleda Akhter*, Senior Research Associate, CPD. The Daily Samakal was the print media partner.

Dialogue on Jamdani as a GI Product

Operationalise Geographical Indication Act, protect Jamdani legacy

The government should operationalise the Geographical Indication Act without any further delay to claim the authenticity of Jamdani as a Bangladeshi heritage product with Geographical Indication (GI).

Lapses in the recently enacted Geographical Indicative Products (Registration and Protection) Act 2013 must also be identified so that Bangladesh could settle parallel enlisting of same products with countries such as India, which already has taken the advantage of its GI Act to entitle Uppada Jamdani sarees as an authentic Indian product.

The observations emerged from a Dialogue on "Protecting Geographical Indication Products in the Context of Bangladesh and the Way Forward," organised by CPD and National Crafts Council of Bangladesh (NCCB) at CIRDAP Auditorium on 17 June 2014.

Operationalisation of the GI Act would require finalisation of the draft rules, establishment of a GI unit, recruitment of a registrar and human resource as well as financial support, observed the discussants. Acknowledging the loopholes in the current Act, patent and foreign ministry officials present at the dialogue hoped for effective steps to defend Jamdani for Bangladesh when the rules are finalised.

Dr Iftekhar Iqbal, Associate Professor of History, University of Dhaka, in his field-level study "Protection of Jamdani as a Geographical Indication in Bangladesh," showed that academic references on social and cultural contexts, trading documents, historical events and oral testimonies from weavers fully support the authenticity of Jamdani as a Dhaka-based "surviving variety of the world renowned muslin from ancient period." The origin of Jamdani can be traced back to craftsmanship of Bengali mercantile community of the 15th century Sonargaon in Dhaka.

"Jamdani should be named as Jamdani, not 'Dhakai Jamdani', as one of the foremost GI products in Bangladesh," argued *Dr Iqbal*. He informed that the traditional art of weaving Jamdani muslin in Bangladesh was included in



(left) Iftekhar Iqbal, Monira Emdad, Debapriya Bhattacharya, Hameeda Hossain and Shukla Siraj

UNESCO's list of the "Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity" in 2013.

Designated Discussant *Barrister Shukla Sarwat Siraj*, Bangladesh Supreme Court underscored that the government should make the Bangladesh GI Act competent to protect authentic products and pave support for dispute settlements in this regard in the international context. She mentioned that India could have taken an initiative for a reciprocal arrangement with Bangladesh to

settle conventions on Jamdani between the two countries.

Once the Jamdani is registered as a unique GI product, Bangladesh should even take actions through WTO for the settlement with India, stressed CPD Distinguished Fellow *Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya*, also Chair of the event. He added that promulgation of the recently enacted GI Act would ensure that the trade profit from GI products is reaching the local weavers and producers.

Eminent fashion designers and boutique owners *Ms Bibi Russell*, Founder of Bibi Production and *Mr Shahid Hussain Shamim*, CEO of Prabartana Ltd and also General Secretary of NCCB, voiced concerns on protecting the local Jamdani weavers and their unique craft and raising awareness about counterfeit Jamdani variations.

The floor discussion was addressed by *Dr Hameeda Hossain*, Former Chair, Ain o Salish Kendra; *Ms Khushi Kabir*, Member, CPD Board of Trustees; *Mr Selim Ahmed Chowdhury*, Examiner (GI and WTO), Department of Patents, Designs and Trademarks; *Mr S M Nurul Alam*, Director, WTO Cell, Ministry of Commerce; *Ms Shanchita Haque*, Director, Economic Affairs Wing, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; *Mr Suhel Ahmed Chowdhury*, Former Commerce Secretary; *Ms Monira Emdad*, Executive Member, NCCB; *Ms Ruby Ghuznavi*, Vice President, NCCB; *Dr Mohammad Abu Yusuf*, Senior Research Fellow, BFTI; *Ms Mahua Zahur*, Lecturer of Law, BRAC University; *Mr Saiful Islam*, CEO, Drik, among others.

Sustainable democracy requires

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while electing leaders at all levels and refraining from boycotting the Parliament could lead towards the way out of one-man-centric politics.

Designated discussant, *Professor Imtiaz Ahmed* of International Relations, University of Dhaka, argued that good governance could be restored through dissolution of the politics-business nexus that is profitable for a vested quarter in Bangladesh.

Political activism should be in line with the Representation of the People Order (RPO), suggested another Discussant *Dr Badiul Alam*

Majumder, Member Secretary of SHUJAN. Promoting honest and competent candidates for nominations and getting rid of people enjoying impunity due to their political alliance would restore democratic culture, he added.

The floor discussion was also addressed by *Ms Shirin Akhter*, MP, Member of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Labour and Employment; Ambassador *Mr Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury*, BNP Vice Chairman; *Mr Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury* and *Mr Enam Ahmed*

Chowdhury, both Advisory Council Members of BNP Chairperson; Former Chief Election Commissioner *Dr A T M Shamsul Huda* and Former Election Commissioner *Brig. Gen. (Retd) Sakhawat Hussain*; *Mr M Hafizuddin Khan*, Former Advisor, Caretaker Government; *Ambassador Munshi Faiz Ahmad*, Chairman, BISS; *Dr Binayak Sen*, Research Director, BIDS; *Mr S M Akram*, Former Member of Parliament; and *Ms Munira Khan*, Former Member, Human Rights Commission, among others.

Embassy officials visit CPD



H E Christian M Fotsch, Ambassador of Switzerland in Bangladesh visited on 7 April 2014



H E Pankaj Saran, High Commissioner and Sujit Ghosh, Counsellor (Political & Information), Indian High Commission visited on 8 April 2014

Post-Rana Plaza Monitoring: A Civil Society Initiative**Dialogue on One Year after the Rana Plaza Tragedy
Long-term needs of Rana Plaza victims unaddressed**

The Rana Plaza victims are in need of long-term support regarding compensation, treatment and alternative employment scheme, despite yearlong attention given to some of their immediate concerns.

A coordinated plan and approach to address short to long-term issues concerning the post-Rana Plaza follow-ups and the RMG sector are yet to be developed, observed

discussants at the dialogue organised as part of the Post-Rana Plaza Monitoring: A Civil Society Initiative, in partnership with a number of civil society organisations and eminent citizens, at BRAC Centre Inn on 23 April 2014.

CPD Additional Director *Dr Khondaker Golam Moazzem*, in his presentation, "One Year after the Rana Plaza Tragedy: Where Do We Stand? the Victims, the Sector and the Value Chain," underscored speedy enactment of legal measures against those responsible for the collapse; standardising factory inspection; time-bound refurbishment of factories; turning 'sub-contracting' factories compliant and viable for business; capacity upgradation of the Ministry of Labour, Fire Service and Civil Defence authority; and building local ownership of reform and restructuring activities.

The discussants observed that lack of coordination, improper implementation and disorganised governance are undermining the envisaged initiatives in the context of post-Rana Plaza follow-up.



(left) Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Shirin Akhter, Rehman Sobhan, Mikail Shipar and Mustafizur Rahman

Through an audio conference, *Dr Moazzem* spoke with two affected persons, *Ms Reema* and *Mr Altaf*, undergoing treatment at Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) and at a hospital in Savar, respectively. They noted that the short-term support and compensation they received following the collapse ran out shortly.

Over 70 per cent of the affected workers in the

tragedy could not find reemployment while over 50 per cent were heavily indebted without adequate support during the last year, informed *Mr Asgar Ali Sabri*, a Director at ActionAid during the floor discussion.

Guest of Honour *Mr Mikail Shipar*, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment reported that 962 people affected in the tragedy received about Tk 15 crore in compensation while 173 people were yet to receive any compensation and the government received 206 DNA test results out of 291 unidentified workers. The government has acquired land in Munshiganj to gradually relocate the shared and converted RMG factories, he added.

Trade union and labour leaders urged the Prime Minister's Office for speedy distribution of aid received in forms of donation and compensation for the victims and further distribution of compensation from the ILO Trust Fund and the BGMEA. Calling for the workers' welfare, they insisted BGMEA to arrange alternative employment for the affected workers, and also raised concerns that production pressure was rising at the RMG factories after the minimum wage increased.

Guest of Honour *Ms Shirin Akhter*, MP, Member, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Labour and Employment expressed hope that her ministry will address complaints and recommendations related to the Rana Plaza tragedy with greater responsibility.

Professor Mustafizur Rahman, Executive Director, CPD urged the government for transparent account of all resources, disbursements as well as proper identifications of workers on a legally recognisable website. On behalf of the CPD, he proposed to declare 24 April as 'Labour Safety Day,' and also establishing a memorial and a workers' safety institute at the crash site.



During the dialogue, an affected woman Sona Banu shares the inadequacy of the compensation she received



Stalls of the Initiative's partnering organisations demonstrate ongoing activities concerning the follow-up

Chair of the event, *Professor Rehman Sobhan*, Chairman, CPD proposed the formation of a high-level standing commission on the victims and the follow-ups to bring together relevant experts for periodical review and implementations of internationally-compliant short to long-term action plans.

**Meetings ahead of one year since the tragedy
Post-Rana Plaza Development and Future Agenda**

CPD organised three expert group meetings to follow up on the overall progress of Post-Rana Plaza Monitoring: A Civil Society Initiative throughout one year since the Rana Plaza collapse on 24 April 2013.

The discussions on "Post-Rana Plaza Development and Future Agenda" aimed to have an updated scenario about the activities being undertaken by government, buyers, different associations and development partners. The meetings were held with Accord, Alliance, ILO and representatives from National Tripartite Committee (NTC); BGMEA and BKMEA; and with development partners on 2, 3 and 7 April 2014 respectively.

Discussants raised issues such as reforms in immediate and long-term initiatives; determining sustainability of the initiatives; hastening inspections



The meetings invited development partners, monitoring authorities, trade bodies, as well as RMG owners and trade union leaders

processes; ascertaining future ownership accountability of private monitoring initiatives; maintaining effective transparency exercise; improving coordination at all levels; exploring the impact of minimum wage implementation; ensuring workers' safety security and improve livelihood; monitoring RMG subcontracting activity; reviewing judicial process for industrial dispute resolution; and training and education for those involved in the RMG sector.

The meetings also sought to improve understanding of the challenges faced by the RMG sector in view of the current initiatives, reform measures and attempts of restructuring. Discussants also identified potential research areas for CPD to undertake in support of the export-oriented RMG sector's need to address the attendant concerns in view of the Rana Plaza tragedy.

Dialogue on Bangladesh's export opportunities to India Trade facilitation, supply-side capacity both critical

Bangladesh will need to diversify its export basket in order to enhance export competitiveness and take full advantage of the duty-free market access (DFMA) offer of India for the SAARC LDCs.

Deepening bilateral relationship with India covering the spectrum of trade, investment, transport and people-to-people connectivity is also crucial for Bangladesh to realise the potential opportunities emerging from the DFMA.

The observations surfaced at the CPD dialogue on "Utilising Indian Market Access Offer through Promotion of Trade Facilitation," held at Lakeshore Hotel in Dhaka on 22 April 2014.

The event's Chair, *Professor Rehman Sobhan*, Chairman, CPD underscored that the realisation of the DFMA facilities has a historical significance as previous leaders and politicians had talked over this issue during various Indo-Bangladesh dialogues and meetings during the last three decades.

Presenting major findings of the study, *Professor Mustafizur Rahman*, Executive Director, CPD recommended investment in land port and infrastructure development to overcome infrastructure-related bottlenecks. He stressed the necessity of 'Single Window' facilities and electronic data interchange in simplifying inadequate customs and port facilities.

The study also suggested Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) between India and Bangladesh as regards testing, certification and licensing of products to resolve and overcome non-tariff barriers and procedural complexities of export and trade-related documentation.

The study, co-authored by CPD Senior Research Associate *Ms Khaleda Akhter*, was undertaken in partnership with the Asia Foundation.

Guest of Honour *Mr Abdul Awal Mintoo*, Former President of FBCCI underscored that Bangladesh is in need of exportable products with brand popularity in terms of price and quality to increase the export volume to India,



(left) Mahbub Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Md Shahriar Alam, MP, Rehman Sobhan, Abdul Awal Mintoo, Abdul Matlub Ahmad and Syed A Al-Muti

which has plummeted in recent times despite the DFMA facilities.

In this regard, Designated Discussant *Mr Abdul Matlub Ahmad*, Immediate Past President and Special Adviser, India-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IBCCI), stressed that large Indian brands can invest in Bangladesh to produce quality products to be exported to India. Investment from India will, however, require adequate supply of gas and power as well as land at reasonable price, he added.

Mr Bijay Selvaraj, First Secretary (Commerce), Indian High Commission urged Bangladeshi entrepreneurs to consider the Indian population and market size for potential export opportunities. He noted that trade and investment dialogues in future should touch upon containerisation and multimodal transport issues.

Strengthening Bangladesh's diplomatic and business presence in Indian market would be crucial to realising trade potentials, noted *Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya*, Distinguished Fellow, CPD. He identified lack of initiatives, discontinuity of business ventures, lack of political leadership and coordination among the ministries as the major drawbacks impeding the expansion of Bangladesh's trade to India.

Chief Guest *Mr Md Shahriar Alam*, MP, Hon'ble State Minister for Foreign Affairs mentioned the government's initiatives to facilitate Indo-Bangladesh trade and visa procedures. Among other initiatives, establishment of a Bangladesh Mission in Guwahati is underway and awaiting final approval from the Indian government, he added.

The dialogue was also addressed by *Mr Syed A Al-Muti*, Programme Director, The Asia Foundation; *Ambassador Farooq Sobhan*, President, Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI); *Major General (Retd.) Amjad Khan Chowdhury*, CEO, Pran Group; *Mr Arshad Jamal Dipu*, Director, BGMEA; *Mr Manzur Ahmed*, Advisor, FBCCI and a number of prominent entrepreneurs.

Ambitions in abundance

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should not exceed the reality of implementation challenges since budgeting was subject to critical planning within a precise framework.

As regards budget reviewing, CPD Chairman *Professor Rehman Sobhan* underscored the necessity of introducing performance-based budgeting in Bangladesh instead of a hypothetical discussion over the budgetary measures as to the goals and achievements.

Guest of Honour *Dr Akbar Ali Khan*, Former Advisor to the Caretaker Government opined that parliamentary discussion on the budget was inadequate in terms of time and reviewing system as required by a Westminster-style democracy.

Guest of Honour *Dr Salehuddin Ahmed*, Former Governor, Bangladesh Bank particularly urged the government to finish the incomplete ADP projects

related to infrastructure and reinvigorate the IMED. He also highlighted major challenges for the government such as sluggish employment creation; increasing inequality and regional disparity in personal income; probable food and non-food inflation hike etc.

Dr Shamsul Alam, Member, GED, Planning Commission noted that the FY2015 Budget has been made pro-people and pro-poor as revenue target and social safety net allocations were higher for people's welfare while high volume of import tax was exempted to favour entrepreneurs.

The floor discussants urged the government to favour enabling political environment over policy measures for drawing foreign investment; expand tax net and address the weaknesses in tax administration; implement PPP to enhance private

investment, a main budgetary challenge; and focus more on agriculture for increasing production and ensuring fair price for farmers.

The dialogue was also addressed by *Mr Md Tazul Islam*, MP, Chair of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources; *Mr Kazi Akramuddin Ahmed*, President, FBCCI; *Mr Abdul Mannan Howlader*, Member, Socio-economic Infrastructure Division, Planning Commission; *Professor Abu Ahmed* of Economics, Dhaka University; *Dr Hussain Monsur*, Chairman, Petrobangla; *Dr Rafiqul Islam Mondal*, Director General, BARI; *Ms Taleya Rehman*, Founder Executive Director of Democracywatch; *Mrs Priti Chakraborty*, Chairman, Aysha Memorial Hospital; among others.

Meetings



IMF officials Rodrigo Cubero, Deputy Division Chief, Souvik Gupta, Economist and Sohrab Rafiq, Economist, Asia and Pacific Department visited CPD on 1 April 2014



Stefan Dercon, Chief Economist, DFID speaking at a CPD meeting organised in his honour at The Dhaka Westin on 29 May 2014

International and Regional Activities

GPEDC Mexico Ministerial on Global Development Cooperation CPD debates South-South Cooperation

CPD senior researchers drew upon conceptual clarity and practical insights on South-South Cooperation (SSC) at the first High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership of Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) in Mexico on 15 April 2014.

The Focus Session “Locating South-South Cooperation within Emerging Development Cooperation Architecture,” deliberated on core issues such as the importance of SSC in the evolving context of international development cooperation; the necessity and possibilities of developing a framework and a set of general principles as regards SSC; and whether the OECD/DAC-centred development cooperation framework can be improved upon by building on, learning from and leveraging SSC experiences.

The core objective of the session was to seek ways and means to integrate the SSC in the GPEDC. Being one of the important elements of the emerging global development cooperation architecture, SSC requires a closer and



The session was organised by the Southern Voice on Post-MDGs, in association with CPD and National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), New Delhi

rigorous examination from multi-stakeholders’ perspectives.

The CPD delegates were *Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya*, Chair, Southern Voice on Post-MDGs and Distinguished Fellow, *Professor Mustafizur Rahman*, Executive Director and *Dr Fahmida Khatun*, Research Director.

The session was addressed by *H E Jaime Miranda*, Foreign Minister of El Salvador; *Ambassador Omar Abou Eich*, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for International Cooperation for Development of Egypt; *Ms Mariam Mahamat Nour*,

Minister of Economy, Planning and International Cooperation of Chad; *Ms Tomoko Nishimoto*, Director on South-South Cooperation, UNEP and *Dr Shekhar Shah*, Director-General, NCAER.

Earlier Southern Voice on Post-MDGs along with CPD and NCAER organised a regional outreach in New Delhi during 27-28 March 2014 to generate a South Asian perspective on SSC. The outcome of this event was also disseminated in the Mexico Ministerial.

United Nations High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development Effective global partnership emphasised

Strengthened and effective global development cooperation is desired to improve the global governance and institutions so that low-income countries can accelerate national efforts to reduce poverty, inequality and discrimination, noted *Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya*.

The CPD Distinguished Fellow, also Chair, Southern Voice on Post-MDGs, was addressing the opening plenary of the United Nations High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development at UN Headquarter, New York on 30 June 2014.

The theme of the HLPF meeting was “Achieving the Millennium Development Goals and Charting the Way for an Ambitious Post-2015 Development Agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals”.

Dr Bhattacharya in his speech emphasised the need to mobilise additional



(left) Antonio Patriota, Permanent Representative, Brazil to UN; Bénédicte Frankinet, Permanent Representative, Belgium to UN; Csaba Kőrösi, Co-Chair, Open Working Group on SDGs; Martin Sajdik, President, ECOSOC; Jennifer de Laurentis, Council Secretary; Manish Bapna, Moderator, World Resources Institute; and Debapriya Bhattacharya

public finance, particularly domestic revenue resources and concessional foreign assistance to endow the ambitious goals of post-2015 agenda. For this, he pointed out that the global development community has to look beyond financial resources and generate efficiency gains by concluding international negotiations in a number of areas, including multilateral trade, climate change,

technology transfer, international tax agenda and financial architecture.

Created at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in June 2012, the HLPF on Sustainable Development seeks to provide political leadership, technical guidance and policy recommendations towards adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of the post-2015 international development agenda.

Post-2015 Data Test Midterm stock-taking workshop for country studies

To take stock of the implementation process across country studies so far in the Post-2015 Data Test, a two-day workshop was hosted by Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) during 28-30 April 2014, in Nairobi, Kenya.

With the support of the International Development Research Centre’s Think Tank Initiative, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and PASGR, the Post-2015 Data Test Initiative aims to apply a select set of potential post-2015 goals, targets and indicators to a number of low, middle and high income countries – Bangladesh, Canada, Ghana, Peru, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Tanzania and Turkey.

Representatives from each country team, the UN, the OECD and research institutions such as the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) participated at the workshop as part of the initiative.



The initiative is led by CPD and the North-South Institute (NSI), Ottawa in association with Southern Voice on Post-MDGs and PASGR

Researchers met with experts on the post-2015 development agenda and the data revolution to discuss experiences to date, lessons learned, ways to address challenges arising from the implementation of the study and next steps.

The initiative will assess the adequacy of data available for measuring post-2015 progress at the country level, seeking to inform debates and decisions on the architecture and priorities of the “data revolution.” It will also identify opportunities and challenges that may arise from a universal, country-relevant post-2015 framework.

Through the process, the initiative also seeks to enhance the capacity of Southern think tanks – that will conduct the country studies – to contribute to the global policy debates shaping the post-2015 agenda, while also ensuring that the global processes are informed by country-level realities.

Workshop on Research Communication Digital channels for wider research dissemination

Combining research communication with digital channels is crucial in giving visibility to think tank research, suggests *Enrique Mendizabal*, an independent researcher and advisor on think tanks and policy research networks.

Think tanks also need to monitor their inputs and outputs and incorporate communication skills in the researchers' jobs to be able to communicate research timely and effectively via the right channels.

To improve communication capacity of think tanks and help them identify appropriate communication channels and tools for wider communication outreach, *Mr Mendizabal* conducted a workshop on Research Communication in Dhaka, during 18-21 May 2014.

CPD Dialogue and Communication team, and participants from BRAC Institute of Governance and Democracy (BIGD), Dhaka (previously Institute of Governance Studies, IGS) and Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad took part in the workshop.

The workshop emphasised an objectives-based strategy with an approach styled 'communications as an orchestra' that intended to strategise communication channels and tools on the basis of circumstance, opportunity and capacity. The idea of an 'orchestra' envisaged the head of communications as a conductor and the communications officers as musicians for deploying the right communication tools in a synchronised manner.

During the workshop, participants reviewed their respective think tanks' roles and functions; re-evaluated their tools and channels by clustering them



The workshop was organised under Think Tank Initiative (TTI) Matching Grant and Policy Engagement and Communications (PEC) programme

into a pool of categories. Using the 'orchestra' metaphor, the unique communication approach aimed to put forward the most effective combination of items from the pool as per the need of communication campaigns for particular events and research outputs, keeping in mind the target audience in individual country context.

The workshop focused on SWOT analysis of the think tanks communication teams, monitoring and evaluation of communication activities and underpinned required skills for communication personnel to have a thorough understanding of best ways and means to deliver the aforesaid approach.

Following the workshop, *Mr Mendizabal* also met with the research team at CPD office and exchanged views that young researchers at think tanks need to have inspiring ideas ahead to envisage positive changes in the realm of policymaking.

Participants and facilitators of the communication workshop also included *Ms Siobhan Duvigneau*, Information Literacy Manager at British Library for Development Studies and *Ms Yaso Kunaratnam*, Network and Partnership Coordinator of Knowledge Services, on behalf of the PEC programme.



In-house Discussion

China's role in South Asia: SA countries need own 'balancing' act

China is emerging as a 'balancer' in the context of the evolving economic, strategic and geopolitical scenario in South Asia vis-à-vis the role played by the traditional superpowers on the one hand and India on the other.

Through aid, trade and investment in infrastructure and other forms of influences, China is making in-roads to South Asia in somewhat of a way that Japan did in earlier years in East Asia, mainly through FDI.

China's 'balancing act' between diverse interests at play in South Asia was featured in a study by *Dr Saman Kelegama*, presented at CPD on 7 May 2014. Taking the case of Sri Lanka in a presentation on "China as a Balancer in South Asia: An Economic Perspective," *Dr Kelegama* drew upon China's growing trade partnership with most South Asian countries (SACs), its regional collaborations, growing trade with India, Chinese development aid flow to SACs, and Chinese labour in Sri Lanka.

According to *Dr Kelegama*, SACs have more complementarities with China than India, which is demonstrated in trading patterns where USD 5.7 billion



Eminent Sri Lankan economist Dr Saman Kelegama, Executive Director, Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) with invited experts and CPD researchers

trade (import and export) between China and South Asia in 2011 increased to USD 97 billion by 2011. In contrast to Indian FDI flow directed at the US, EU, Middle East and East Asian countries, Chinese FDI has been increasingly directed to SACs, particularly in developing the infrastructure.

Commenting on the study, CPD Chairman *Professor Rehman Sobhan* observed that smaller SACs would need to do their own

'balancing' in various configurations between China, India and the US in order to safeguard their own interests.

The discussion was also complemented by observations from CPD Distinguished Fellow *Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya* and Executive Director *Professor Mustafizur Rahman*; *Dr Binayak Sen*, Research Director, BIDS; *Ambassador Munshi Faiz Ahmad*, Chairman, BIIS; *Professor MM Akash* of Dhaka University Department of Economics; *Mr Iqbal Ahmed*, Director (EA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and CPD senior researchers and research associates.

Visits



Participants from the Royal College of Defence Studies, UK visited CPD on 7 June 2014



Korean Study Team under the Asia Development Fellowship of the Asia Foundation visited CPD on 22 May 2014

Major Research Activities during April-June 2014

Independent Review of Bangladesh's Development (IRBD):

Third Reading

The report attempted to present CPD's assessment of the emerging economic scenario in Bangladesh. Four thematic areas have been taken up for closer scrutiny which include an analysis of allocational patterns, prioritisation and efficacy of public expenditure, an assessment of financing of the public expenditure, an evaluation of the evolving power sector scenario and an analysis of the export sector performance from the perspective of product composition and market destination. The report observes that reinvigorating the investment environment to regain the lost momentum of accelerated GDP growth has emerged as a major concern from the perspective of macroeconomic management in FY2014 and in view of the upcoming budget for FY2015.

As part of IRBD initiative, CPD also prepared a set of recommendations in view of the then upcoming budget for FY2015 in June 2014. These were presented at a press briefing in May 2014 and disseminated to the relevant authorities of budget preparation including the Ministry of Finance. Following the announcement of the national budget CPD analysed the budget proposals of FY2015 made by the Finance Minister and presented at a media briefing. The budget analysis was also presented during a national dialogue and a local-level dialogue in Sylhet where a larger set of stakeholders participated.

Estimating Women's Contribution to the Economy:

The Case of Bangladesh

CPD is implementing the study in collaboration with Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) with an objective to facilitate policy advocacy based on empirical results. Following a literature review and preparation of a methodological framework, CPD is currently collecting information from household-level survey, based on an in-depth questionnaire to solicit information from both male and female household members. The survey design was prepared using the BBS sampling frame; the master sample of the BBS' Labour Force Survey 2013, prepared from the 2011 Population Census, is also being used. A number of expert group meetings were held while preparing the concept note and questionnaire design. Led by *Dr Fahmida Khatun*, Research Director, the study team comprises *Mr Towfiqul Islam*, Research Fellow, and *Ms Shahida Pervin*, Research Associate, CPD.

Post-2015 Data Test:

Unpacking the Data Revolution at the Country Level

The initiative is being implemented by CPD and the North-South Institute (NSI), Canada in association with Southern Voice on Post-MDGs. CPD is undertaking this study as part of a multi-country study including reports from Bangladesh, Canada, Ghana, Peru, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Turkey. It intends to road test the post-2015 development agenda and identify data challenges for its implementation and measurement. The data test

initiative seeks to encourage, capture and promote analytical inputs from the global South in post-2015 deliberations to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda truly reflects universal priorities. The team members of Bangladesh study are: *Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya*, Distinguished Fellow, CPD and Chair, Southern Voice on Post-MDGs and *Professor Mustafizur Rahman*, Executive Director, *Mr Towfiqul Islam*, Research Fellow, and *Mr Md. Zafar Sadique*, Senior Research Associate, CPD.

Financing and other means of implementation in the Post-2015 context: Bangladesh Country Illustration

As part of the European Report on Development (ERD) 2014, this ongoing research examines the availability of resources during the post-2015. The outcome paper will examine the availability of finance from various sources, their relative importance in the economic transformation of Bangladesh. The study will also discuss types of transformation that the country has gone through since its independence, explore financial trends from public and private sources in a disaggregated manner and highlight how enablers of Bangladesh's growth such as infrastructure and exports have been financed. The paper will discuss the role of complementary policies both at the national and global context in contributing to the economic transformation of the country. The research is being undertaken by *Dr Fahmida Khatun*, Research Director, CPD as part of multi-country research collaboration. Earlier on 19 February 2014, a Country Illustration Workshop for the ERD 2014 titled "Financing and other means of implementation in the Post-2015 context" was organised in Dhaka by Southern Voice in association with CPD, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), German Development Policy Institute (DIE), European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM).

Regional Investment Cooperation under the Proposed South Asia Economic Union

Despite liberalisation of the FDI regime and undertaking initiatives for deepening trade integration, FDI flow in South Asia remain at low level. Moreover FDI is concentrated to limited locations and share of intra-regional investment is minuscule. In this backdrop, a further deepening of trade integration would not make significant changes in investment unless well-structured strategies are identified. Asian Development Bank (ADB) in collaboration with a number of researchers specialised on regional issues has undertaken a study on "Regional Investment Cooperation under the Proposed South Asia Economic Union". The objective of the study is to identify the bottlenecks for building investment cooperation between South Asian countries and to put forward suggestions for effective investment cooperation within the region. The study is led by *Dr Khondaker Golam Moazzem*, Additional Research Director, CPD with *Ms Mehruna Islam Chowdhury*, Senior Research Associate, and *Ms Farzana Sehrin*, Research Associate, CPD.

Long-term needs of Rana Plaza victims

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The dialogue was also addressed by *Dr Hameeda Hossain*, Former Chairperson, Ain o Salish Kendra; *Mr Md Shafiul Islam Mohiuddin*, Former President, BGMEA; *Brigadier General Nayeem Olive*, Adviser, Disaster Environment and Climate Change, BRAC; *Brigadier General Ali Ahmed Khan*, psc, Director General, Department of Fire Service & Civil Defence; *Mr Syed*

Sultanuddin Ahmed, Assistant Executive Director, Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies; *Mr Rafez Alam Chowdhury*, President, Bangladesh Garments Accessories and Packaging Manufacturers and Exporters Association; *Ms Shireen Haq*, Member, Naripokkho; *Mr Jafrul Hasan Sharif*, Program Manager, Manusher Jonno Foundation; *Mr Abdul Quayum Mukul*, Joint

Editor, Prothom Alo; *Mr Moshir Rahman Khandoker*, Chief Executive, Safety Assistance for Emergencies; *Ms Kamrun Nahar*, Physiotherapist, Gonoshasthya Kendro; *Mr Towhidur Rahman*, President, Bangladesh Poshak Shilpa Sramik Federation; *Ms Nazma Akter*, President, Shommilito Garments Sramik Federation, among others.

Visits



Snehal Soneji, Country Representative, Oxfam, Bangladesh and Michael McGrath, Country Director, Save the Children visited CPD on 24 April 2014



Officials from the Policy Analysis and Development Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Indonesia visited CPD on 29 April 2014



CPD Professionals at International Fora

Rehman Sobhan, Chairman

- Attended the *Second Asia Think Tank Summit on Promoting Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration*, co-hosted by Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) and University of Pennsylvania, during 21-22 May 2014, in Tokyo, Japan.

Mustafizur Rahman, Executive Director

- Made a Presentation on “Bangladesh Country Study” at the Midterm Stock Taking Workshop of *Post-2015 Data Test: Country Level Experiences Initiative*, organised by CPD, North South Institute (NSI), Southern Voice on Post-MDGs and Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR), during 28-30 April 2014, in Nairobi, Kenya.
- Participated in the Inaugural Panel Discussion on “Envisioning South Asia” at the launch of the *SARCist Initiative* of Centre for Policy Research (CPR), supported by Asia Foundation, on 15 May 2014, in New Delhi, India.
- Was a Panellist at a Session on “Four years of TTI: Integrating Learning within Organisations Reflecting on Achievements and Challenges,” at the 4th TTI Regional Meeting *Asia in the New World: Emerging Research Themes*, organised by Institute of Social and Environmental Transition (ISET)-Nepal, during 9-10 June 2014, in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Was a Discussant on “China’s New Development and its Regional Implications – China and Asia as Partners in Development” at the International Conference *China’s New Development: Common Visions for Asian – European Co-operation*, organised by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and Chinese Association for International Understanding (CAFIU), during 16-19 June 2014, in Tutzing, Germany.

Debapriya Bhattacharya, Distinguished Fellow

- Attended Midterm Stock Taking Workshop of *Post-2015 Data Test: Country Level Experiences Initiative*, organised by CPD, NSI, Southern Voice on Post-MDGs and PASGR, during 28-30 April 2014, in Nairobi, Kenya.
- Attended European Report on Development (ERD) 2014 *Country Illustration Workshop: Tanzania*, organised by Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF), on 9 May 2014, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- Attended ERD 2014 *Country Illustration Workshop: Moldova*, organised by European Business Association, on 15 May 2014, in Chisinau, Moldova.
- Made a Presentation on “Post-2015 International Development Agenda: Issues Related to Means of Implementation” as an Invited Expert at the *Post-2015 Development Orientation and Briefing Programme IX*, organised by United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), on 20 May 2014, in New York, USA.
- Made a Presentation on “Post-2015 International Development Agenda: Other Means of Implementation” as an Invited Expert at the *Post-2015 Development Orientation and Briefing Programme VII*, organised by UNITAR, on 22 May 2014, in Geneva, Switzerland.
- Was a Panellist at the Session “The global partnership to deliver post-2015: Making it count” at the Conference on *International Cooperation in the 21st Century: Partnerships for Delivering the Post-2015 Agenda*, organised by Chatham House, London in association with the Overseas Development Institute, the Korea International Cooperation Agency and with support from Rockefeller Foundation, during 27-28 May 2014, in London, UK.
- Participated in ERD 2014 *Part B Synthesis Workshop*, at the Athens University Faculty Club, during 2-3 June 2014, in Athens, Greece.
- Was a Discussant at a Policy Session on “International Development Research Centre: Think Tanks: Promoting Local Solutions, Influencing Regional And Global Thinking” at *17th World Congress* of the International Economic Association, during 7-12 June 2014, in Amman, Jordan.
- Played the role of a Provincial Leader to examine water security challenges in South Asia, organised by CNA Corporation and Skoll Global Threats Fund, during 25-26 June 2014 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- Was a Panellist at the Dialogue “From Rio+20 to Post-2015: Towards an Integrated and Universal Sustainable Development Agenda” at the Second

Meeting of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, held under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at the UN Headquarters, during 30 June-9 July 2014, in New York, USA.

Mustafizur Rahman and Debapriya Bhattacharya

- Participated at a Focus Session on “Locating South-South Cooperation within Emerging Development Cooperation Architecture,” organised by Southern Voice on Post-MDGs, in association with CPD and National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), at the *First High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC)*, on 15 April 2014, in Mexico City, Mexico.

Anisatul Fatema Yousuf, Director, Dialogue and Communication

- Attended a series of Meetings with the Communications Team of Institute of Development Studies (IDS) during 6-7 May 2014, in Brighton, UK.

Fahmida Khatun, Research Director

- Made a Presentation at the Session “Deconstructing South-South Cooperation: A Southern Perspective on Experience and Challenge” at the Focus Session on “Locating South-South Cooperation within Emerging Development Cooperation Architecture,” organised by Southern Voice on Post-MDGs, in association with CPD and NCAER, at the *First High-Level Meeting of the GPEDC* on 15 April 2014, in Mexico City, Mexico.
- Made a Presentation on “Emerging Challenge and Agenda for South South Cooperation for Enhancing Human Development” at the International Symposium *Human Development In Global South: Emerging Perspectives in the Era of Post-Millennium Development Goals*, organised by Institute for Human Development (IHD) and Wada Na Todo Abhiyan (WNTA) in association with UNESCAP, during 28-29 April 2014, in New Delhi, India.
- Made a Presentation on “Building Resilience to Nutrition Insecurity and Weather Shocks” an International Conference *Building Resilience for Food and Nutrition Security*, organised by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), during 15-17 May 2014, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Was a Panellist at a Session on “Organisational Adaptation in the Changing Eco-systems” at 4th TTI Regional Meeting *Asia in the New World: Emerging Research Themes*, organised by ISET-Nepal, during 9-10 June 2014 in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Made a Presentation “Energy and Social Policies: Energy Subsidies in Bangladesh” at Regional Dialogue on “What kind of energy for a socially just, resilient and green dynamic growth in Asia?” as part of FES Economy of Tomorrow (EoT) Project, during 23-24 June 2014, in Bali, Indonesia.

Mr M Shafiqul Islam, Additional Director, Admin and Finance, Mr Uttam Kumar Paul, Deputy Director, Accounts and Mr Mohammad Shamimur Rohman, Accounts Associate

- Participated in a Peer Exchange Visit on Best Practices, Ways of Working, Systems and Structure of Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), under TTI Matching Fund during 13-16 April 2014, in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Additional Research Director

- Participated at the *28th Biannual Research and Training Workshop*, organised by South Asian Network for Development and Environmental Economics (SANDEE), during 16-20 June 2014, in Thimpu, Bhutan.

Md. Humayun Kabir, Deputy Director, Administration

- Participated in a course on “Human Resource Management in an International Context,” organised by MDF Training & Consultancy, during 19-23 May 2014, in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Ms Nazmatun Noor, Deputy Director, Dialogue and Outreach

- Participated in an Exchange Visit, organised by CAFIU, during 9-18 April 2014, in Beijing, Fujian and Yunnan, China.

Towfiqul Islam Khan, Research Fellow

- Attended the Steering Committee Meeting of Regional Research Programme *Tax Policy and Enterprise Development in South Asia*, coordinated by Governance Institutes Network International (GINI), Islamabad with support from International Development Research Centre (IDRC), on 30 May 2014, in Bangkok, Thailand.

Visits



Stuart Davies, Economic Adviser, DFID Bangladesh visited CPD on 5 May 2014



Jamie Terzi, Country Director, CARE Bangladesh visited CPD on 21 April 2014



CPD Professionals at National Fora

Rehman Sobhan, Chairman

- Was a Discussant at re-launch of *Shomaj Orthonity and Rashtira*, organised by Shomaj Gobeshona Kendra (Social Research Centre), on 5 April 2014.
- Delivered a Lecture on “The Economy and Development: Road to Progress for Bangladesh,” at National Defense College, Mirpur, on 16 April 2014.
- Was a Discussant at the Launching Ceremony of *International Law and Developing Countries: Essays in Honour of Kamal Hossain*, organised by Dr Kamal Hossain and Associates, on 20 April 2014.
- Was a Discussant at Launching Ceremony of *Development Constraints and Realisations: Essays in Memory of Mosharaff Hossain*, organised by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), on 30 April 2014.

Mustafizur Rahman, Executive Director

- As a Panellist, presented “NAMA Issues: Development Implications for LDCs and low income countries in Asia” at a Regional Workshop on *WTO and Post-Bali Work Program for Asia*, organised by South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM) in collaboration with the Commonwealth, Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI), African EXIM Bank and Center for WTO Studies, New Delhi, during 5-6 May 2014, in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- Was a Distinguished Guest Speaker at a *Policy Dialogue with Stakeholders on the World Development Report 2013*, organised by The World Bank Group and CAMPE, on 5 May 2014.
- Delivered a Lecture on “Economy of Tomorrow: Bangladesh Perspective,” at Jagannath University Department of Economics, on 12 May 2014.
- Was a Discussant at a Seminar on *Reducing Vulnerability: The Export Diversification Challenge in Bangladesh*, organised by BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University and International Growth Centre (IGC), on 26 May 2014.

Rehman Sobhan and Mustafizur Rahman

- Attended a Pre-Budget Discussion with the Finance Minister on the National Budget 2014-2015, organised by Ministry of Finance, on 7 April 2014.
- Participated at *Vision 2030: A Framework for Economic Policy Making and Strategy Formulation in Pluralistic Democracy*, co-organised by Bangladesh Economists' Forum (BEF), BIDS, Policy Research Institute and Bangladesh Bank, during 21-22 June 2014.

Debapriya Bhattacharya, Distinguished Fellow

- Was a Discussant at *The Upcoming Budget: Promises and Challenges*, organised by Economic Reporters' Forum (ERF), on 26 April 2014.
- As Chief Guest, addressed a Seminar on *Students' Thoughts on National Budget for FY2015*, organised by Eastern University, on 15 June 2014.
- Addressed a Panel Discussion on *Budget 2014-2015*, organised by BRAC University Economics Club (BUEC), on 17 June 2014.

Rounaq Jahan, Distinguished Fellow

- Presented a Keynote Paper at a Seminar on “আয়োজিত রাজনৈতিক ঐক্য ও জবাবদিহিমূলক প্রশাসন দুর্নীতি দমন ও প্রতিরোধের প্রধান নিয়ামক,” organised by দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন (দুদক) on 1 April 2014.
- Delivered a Lecture on “Political Parties in Bangladesh and Challenges of Democratisation,” at Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, on 19 April 2014.
- Presented a Paper on “Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment,” at 40th Anniversary of Women for Women (WFW), on 27 April 2014.
- Was a Discussant at a Roundtable on বাংলাদেশে গণতন্ত্রের পরিস্থিতি: কিছু ভাবনা, organised by SHUJAN, on 12 June 2014.

CPD Publications

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Available at: www.inspired-democracy.eu/cases/post-rana-plaza-monitoring-civil-society-initiative-394

Newspaper and Magazine Articles

- Khatun, F. 2014. বাংলাদেশে বিদেশি সাহায্যের ভূমিকা. *The Daily Ittefaq*, 3 April.
- Khatun, F. 2014. Expectations from New Budget. *The Daily Star*, 4 June.
- Khatun, F. 2014. এবারের বাজেট: কী চাই কেন চাই. *The Daily Ittefaq*, 5 June.
- Khatun, F. 2014. Implementation will be put to test: An Immediate Reaction to Budget for FY2015. *The Daily Star*, 6 June.
- Rahman, M. 2014. রাজস্ব আদায়ের লক্ষ্য অর্জন কঠিন হবে. *Shokaler Khobor*, 8 June.
- Moazzem, K.G. 2014. বাজেট প্রস্তাব: মতামত ও সুপারিশ আমলে নিন. *Samakal*, 9 June.
- Rahman, M. 2014. দেশের উন্নয়নে তাঁর অবদান স্মরণীয়. *Bonik Barta*, 28 June.

Newspaper Interviews

- Bhattacharya, D. 2014. Unrealistic policy inflates GDP. *The Daily Observer*, 18 April.
- Rahman, M. 2014. রানা প্লাজা-পরবর্তী উদ্যোগে সমন্বয়হীনতা রয়েছে. *Shokaler Khobor*, 22 April.

Fahmida Khatun, Research Director

- Was a Discussant at a Seminar on *Sustainable Business Model for SME Banking*, organised by the SME Foundation, on 6 May 2014.
- Delivered lectures on “World Trade Organisation and International Trade Alliance: Impacts on Bangladesh Economy and Way Forward,” “Employment Dynamics of Bangladesh,” and “Women Entrepreneurship Development in Bangladesh,” at National Defense College, Mirpur, respectively on 4, 26 May and 10 June 2014.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Additional Research Director

- Was a Discussant at a Dialogue on *Remembering Rana Plaza Victims*, organised by ActionAid Bangladesh, on 20 April 2014.
- Addressed a Discussion on *Civil Aviation and Tourism*, organised by the Aviation and Tourism Journalists' Forum of Bangladesh (ATJFB) and Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh (TOAB), on 16 May 2014.
- Was a Discussant at *Budget for 2014-15: Will it Boost Growth and Investment*, organised by Economic Reporters' Forum, on 8 June 2014.
- Was a Discussant at a Roundtable on *Macro Review of the RMG Sector*, organised by CARE Bangladesh, on 24 June 2014.
- As Keynote speaker, addressed a Roundtable on *Inclusive Business in the context of Bangladesh: Prospects and Challenges*, organised by Katalyst, Ministry of Commerce, Swiss-contact and GIZ, on 29 June 2014.
- Presented Keynote Paper at a Seminar on *Export-Oriented Plastic Industry of Bangladesh Challenges and Opportunities*, organised by Bangladesh Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) and Bangladesh Plastic Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BPMEA), on 30 June 2014.
- Presented Keynote at a Roundtable on *Poultry Industry-Media Cooperation*, organised by Bangladesh Poultry Industries Coordination Committee (BPICC), on 9 July 2014.

Towfiqul Islam Khan, Research Fellow

- Made a Presentation on “Transfer Pricing in the Context of Bangladesh,” at a Seminar on *Introduction to Transfer Pricing*, organised by University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, on 1 April 2014.
- Was a Designated Discussant at a Policy Roundtable Meeting on *Unveiling Tax, Tackling Poverty: Some Policy Considerations*, organised by ActionAid Bangladesh, on 3 April 2014.
- Attended a Seminar on *Tax Power Campaign*, organised by ActionAid Bangladesh, on 5 April 2014.
- Attended an International Conference on *Global Expert Meeting on Migration in the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda*, organised by Government of Bangladesh, during 28-29 April 2014.
- Was a Discussant at a Roundtable on এমডিজি (২০১৫) পরবর্তী টেকসই উন্নয়ন লক্ষ্যমাত্রা নির্ধারণে শিশুদের অবস্থান, organised by Prothom Alo, on 8 June 2014.
- Delivered a Presentation on “Addressing Inequality through National Budget for FY2015” at a Seminar on *Quest for an Inclusive Budget*, organised by Daily Ittefaq, Fortnightly Anannya and clickititefaq.com, on 10 June 2014.

Khaleda Akhter, Senior Research Associate

- Addressed a Discussion on *National Budget 2014-15: Gender Sensitivity*, organised by Steps Towards Development, on 8 June 2014.

Mustafizur Rahman, Towfiqul Islam Khan and Khaleda Akhter

- Were Trainers on *Capacity Building on International Trade*, arranged by BFTI at Bangladesh Tariff Commission (BTC), during 22-26 June 2014.

- Jahan, R. 2014. We will be able to get over our temporary setbacks. *The Daily Star*, 26 April.
- Bhattacharya, D. 2014. বাস্তবসম্মত বাজেটের জন্য চাই গতিশীল অর্থনীতি. *Alokito Bangladesh*, 11 May.
- Rahman, M. 2014. বাজেটের গুণগত উৎকর্ষের দিক মাথায় রাখতে হবে. *Kaler Kantho*, 27 May.
- Rahman, M. 2014. বিনিয়োগে আস্থার সংকট কাটাতে হবে. *Bangladesh Protidin*, 3 June.
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Video Interview

- Rahman, M. 2014. One year of Rana Plaza tragedy. *The Daily Star Online*, 22 April.

Roundtable Discussion Supplementary

- Moazzem, K.G. 2014. Macro Review of the RMG Sector: Gains, Challenges and Policy Responses. *The Daily Star*, 24 June.

Dialogue on Political Parties and Democracy in Bangladesh Sustainable democracy requires intra-party democratic practice

Democratic practices and participatory culture must be revived within the political parties in order to achieve transparent and stable democratic governance in Bangladesh.

Good political leadership and democratised state institutions are of paramount importance to do away with the culture of confrontational politics, corruption and other malfunctions prevailing since the restoration of electoral democracy in the 1990s.

The deliberations emanated from a dialogue on the study “Political Parties and Democracy in Bangladesh,” authored by CPD Distinguished Fellow Professor Rounaq Jahan, at BRAC Centre Inn on 17 May 2014.

In her keynote presentation, Dr Jahan drew upon the evolution of political parties in Bangladesh and the challenges that impeded democratic practices such as failure in establishing post-election democratic governance; the tradition of dynastic ruling and criminalisation of politics through the



(left) Rounaq Jahan, Badiul Alam Majumder, Moudud Ahmed, Tofail Ahmed, Rehman Sobhan, Anisul Islam Mahmud, Mustafizur Rahman and Imtiaz Ahmed

emergence of political musclemen; clientelism and illegitimate funding sources; rising inter and intra-party feud; decay of ideals and erosion of intra-party democratic practices.

Chief Guest Mr Tofail Ahmed, MP, Hon'ble Minister for Commerce underscored that good political leadership must develop from the grassroots-level and this requires participatory politics – a culture slowly perishing away. He also emphasised that the scope for emerging youth leadership has been undermined in Bangladesh politics.

Echoing similar concerns, Special Guest Barrister Moudud Ahmed, Member of National Standing Committee of BNP opined that Bangladesh's future largely hinges on devolution of power and the two major leaders' political will to return to democratic values and practices.

Special Guest Barrister Anisul Islam Mahmud, MP, Hon'ble Minister for Water Resources pointed out that ensuring proportional representation with functioning democratic practices; holding secret ballot (Continued on page 4)

CPD Publications

Books



CPD. 2014. *Bangladesh Economy in FY2013-14: Third Interim Review of Macroeconomic Performance* Dhaka: Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

In view of the National Budget FY2015, the first chapter presents the third and final review of state of the economy by CPD for the current fiscal year. The second chapter contains a set of proposals that CPD prepared for the National Budget FY2015.

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Journal Articles

- Bairagi, S. and Azzam, A. 2014. “Does the Grameen Bank Exert Market Power over Borrowers?” *Applied Economics Letters*, DOI: 10.1080/13504851.2014.894623.
- Pervin, S., Khan, M.A. and Shah, M.M.H. 2014. “Household-level Analysis of Women’s Power Practice in Old Dhaka City, Bangladesh.” *Journal of Comparative Asian Development*, 13(1):174-203. DOI:10.1080/15339114.2014.899070.
- Moazzem, K.G. and Sehrin, F. 2014. “বাংলাদেশের পোশাক খাতের প্রতিযোগিতা সক্ষমতা এবং সামাজিক অগ্রগতির একটি বিশ্লেষণ”. প্রতীচিন্তা: সমাজ, অর্থনীতি ও রাষ্ট্র বিষয়ক ত্রৈমাসিক, 4 (2). April-June 2014.
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Working Papers

- Bhattacharya, D., Monem, M. and Rezvana, U.S. *Finance for Local Government in Bangladesh: An Elusive Agenda*. CPD-CMI Working Paper 6. Dhaka: CPD and Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI).
- Khatun, F. and Ahamad, M.G. *FDI in the Energy and Power Sector and Economic Growth in Bangladesh*. CPD-CMI Working Paper 7. Dhaka: CPD and Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI).
- Moazzem, K.G., Chowdhury, M.I. and Raz, S. *Bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs): Opportunities and Challenges for Bangladesh – Framework Issues*. CPD Working Paper 107. Dhaka: CPD.

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CPD Output as Southern Voice on Post-MDG International Development Goals Secretariat

Series Editor: Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Distinguished Fellow, CPD

- Kwakye, J.K. 2014. *Looking Beyond Aid to Fund Africa’s Development*. Paper 7. Dhaka: Southern Voice on Post-MDGs.
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