

The Asia-Pacific Peace Conference on "Peace and Security, Stability, Co-operation and Progress" (04-05 June, 2011)

A. Introduction

Bangladesh Peace Council has organized a 2-day Asian Peace Conference on “**Co-operation for Peace and Security, Stability, Co-operation and Progress**”.

This conference has been held in the background of changing international scenario which is marked by (a) crisis of world capitalism, (b) drum-beating by war-mongering imperialist forces, and (c) rise of fundamentalism combined with various forms of terrorism particularly in south and central Asia.

The conference was aimed at consolidating the forces for peace and security, stability, co-operation and progress in Asia-Pacific region.

It may be mentioned that the focus of development in the 21st century is expected to be shifted to Asia; with this is associated - the possibility of shifting the focus of international politics and tension to Asia. The imperialist forces will not sit idle to watch that Asia prospering and the progressive forces gaining.

In the event of increasing threat of state terrorism from imperialist countries, spread of fundamentalist ideas combined with terrorism, the Asia-Pacific countries will be confronted with new challenges for peace and security, co-operation and progress. In this context, the Asia-Pacific Peace Conference carries immense importance.

In recent years, situation has worsened in Asia and the Pacific. Imperialism is brewing conspiracies in various ways; increasing use of religion as a political weapon and spread of political terrorism in the guise of fundamentalism is jeopardizing peace, stability and good neighbourly relations among the countries in this region.

Liberation war of the Bangladeshis remains incomplete till the trial of liberation-war-criminals is complete. The anti-liberation forces spearheaded by the reactionary political forces are desperate to reverse the process of democracy and secularism by political killing, conspiracy and subversive activities in different ways.

Participating Countries: Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, DPRK, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestine, Sri Lanka, WPC (President from Brazil, Executive Secretary from Greece).

No. of Participants:

- a. *Total:* 210
- b. *Foreign:* 37 (Australia-1, Vietnam-1, India-10, Bhutan-1, Sri Lanka- 1, Nepal-17, Pakistan-1, Palestine-1, Brazil-1, Greece-1,)
- c. *Bangladeshi:* 173 (representing major political parties, civil society, economic and cultural leaders , professionals like agriculturists, doctors, engineers, lawyers, journalists etc)

Brief Programme:

The conference had two plenary sessions (Inaugural & Closing), six theme-based business sessions where the main thematic papers were presented.

Inaugural Session:

Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh was kind to inaugurate the inaugural session. About 900 invitees attended the inaugural session.

In the Inaugural Session - the guests were welcomed and programme of the Conference was introduced by the General Secretary of the BPC. President of the WPC, President of the BPC and representatives of the Country-Peace Committees spoke on the occasion. and The and representatives of international and peace councils will briefly speak. Hon'ble Prime Minister opened the Conference with a fascinating speech – with rich anti-imperialist content and call for united struggle for peace and progress - acclaimed by all.

Business Sessions:

Topics of the Business Sessions have been decided considering the present international development, particularly the situation in Asia. There were Business Sessions on the following Topics:

- Topic - 1. Need for a new world order for sustainable peace and development.
Topic - 2. Freezing the hot zones of conflict and Combating Militarism.
Topic - 3. Combating rise of fundamentalism and terrorism.
Topic - 4. For A Just Peace in Palestine.
Topic - 5. Peace for an environment-friendly world.
Topic - 6. For unity, consolidation and strengthening of Peace Movement.

Topic - 1. Need for a new world order for sustainable peace and development

It is stressed that the issue of peace in countries, regions and the world as a whole is dependent on the resolution of the present economic crisis of the so-called free market economy. Establishment of a stable world economic and social order, based on equity and justice for all, is crucial for ensuring sustainable peace at all levels – country, region and global.

Topic - 2. Freezing the hot zones of conflict and Combating Militarism

This theme stressed on - socio-economic-cultural causes of conflict in the hotbeds, obstacles to establishment of peace and ways forward. It is necessary to campaign against arms race, arms business and arms movement; and, in favour of diverting the war budgets to reach the MDG targets for peaceful socio-economic and cultural progress of mankind – in particular, the billions of poor around the world who are fighting against hunger and poverty, for shelter and health care, for education and progress.

Topic - 3. Combating rise of fundamentalism and terrorism

This session focused on the rise of terrorism which has been threatening peace, stability and progress worldwide. The causes of and ways to “combat terrorism and use of terrorism in politics” - at country, regional and global levels were discussed in the session. Need for socio-economic development to ensure food, shelter, water and sanitation, education and health care was stressed for combating the social, economic and cultural basis of terrorism..

Topic - 4. For A Just Peace in Palestine

This Session was dedicated to “solidarity with the Palestinian People” and special lecture and discussion were arranged to focus on the Palestinian issue.

Topic - 5. Peace for environment-friendly world

Indiscriminate human interference with nature has brought the world to brink of disaster. For Bangladesh, it is severe most. It is estimated that even with the present rate of sea level rise, Bangladesh will have 35 million climate refugees by 2050, which will be a human catastrophe. This theme dealt with the importance and need for an environment-friendly world – both from the perspectives physical environment as well as from socio-economic environment.

Topic - 6. For the unity, consolidation and strengthening of Peace Movement.

This session focused on the immense importance of forging unity of the peace forces, their consolidation and strengthening of the peace movement - not only in the Asia-Pacific, but also throughout the world.

Closing Session:

His Excellency the President of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh was kind to grace this session as the Chief Guest. This session adopted the “Dhaka Declaration”, which calls upon all peace and solidarity organizations, all mass organizations of students, youth, trade Unions and other civil society organization to build a strong movement against the policies of imperialist globalizations and war and to build Asia-Pacific a continent of peace, stability, democracy, human rights, justice, equality and developments as well as get rid of foreign bases, colonization, terrorism, fundamentalism and weapons of mass destructions of all kinds.