

SECRA Colombo Symposium

The SECRA project's Colombo Symposium, hosted by the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka, was successfully held on 15th-17th March 2022 at Pegasus Reef Hotel, Wattala, Sri Lanka.

The symposium was led by Prof. Rukmal Weerasinghe, the Country Lead of the project, and Prof. Lasith Gunawardena, the Program Chair from the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce. The inauguration ceremony was attended by members from academia, industry, and representatives from international agencies.

Keynote speakers for the day included Snr. Prof. Sampath Amaratunge, Chairman of the University Grants Commission; Snr. Prof. Ananda Jayawardane, Chairman of the Commercial Bank PLC; Mr. Supun Weerasinghe, Director/Group CEO of Dialog Axiata PLC; and Dr. Bapon Fakhrudin, Technical Director Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Resilience of Tonkin and Taylor, New Zealand, who joined online.

The evening constituted of an expert panel discussion on 'University Enterprise Collaboration for Disaster Resilience: Opportunities in the Sri Lankan Context' moderated by Dr. Upuli Perera from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. The distinguished panelists were Prof. Dilanthi Amaratunga, Head of Global Disaster Resilience Centre from the University of Huddersfield, United Kingdom; Mr. Abdur Rahim Siddiqui, Country Director and Representative of the UN World Food Programme, Sri Lanka; and Mr. Victor Antonypillai, Country Officer for the International Finance Corporation, Sri Lanka.

At the inauguration ceremony, Snr. Prof. Sudantha Liyanage stated that building and maintaining close university-industry ties and inculcating entrepreneurial skills in our students is of crucial and timely importance. Snr. Prof. Sampath Amaratunge spoke on an overview of university enterprise collaboration in Sri Lanka, highlighting the gap between graduates against industry requirements.

Dr. Fakhrudin, who has contributed to establishing the tsunami early warning system in Sri Lanka and is also a pioneer in setting up the National Disaster Management Center in Sri Lanka, elaborately spoke on the Domino Effect: cascading disasters and risk management.

Sharing his experience from an academic perspective, Snr. Prof. Ananda Jayawardane discussed the many practical implementations done at the University of Moratuwa to build long-term productive collaborations with the industry. Mr. Supun Weerasinghe, sharing industry experiences on effective university-enterprise collaborations for DRR, stated that managing resilience involves: 1) Risk reduction; 2) Effective recovery; and 3) Resilience through empowering the community.

Prof. Evangelia Petridou from the Risk and Crisis Research Center of Mid Sweden University presented the working outcomes of the Social Network Analysis produced during the early stages of the SECRA Project. The study has adopted a network-based approach focused on relations and actors/institutions related to university-enterprise collaborations.

Later on in Day 1, Ms. Hannah Singer, Resident Coordinator of the UN in Sri Lanka, stated that the last year's report by the climate change panel was, as the UN Secretary-General called it, a quadratic for humanity, and emphasized the urgent need for gender-inclusive science back solutions to tackle environmental issues and climate change. Mr Abdur Rahim Siddique stated that within the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, one of the main pillars is enhancing resilience to climate change and disasters and strengthening environmental management.



The second day of the symposium started off with a panel discussion themed on 'Experience Sharing on Industry Linkup for University Enterprise Collaborations Related to Disaster Risk Resilience.' The session was moderated by Mr. Rohan Cooray, a Risk Information Management Specialist from the UN and the expert panellists were Prof. Ranjith Dissanayake, University of Peradeniya; Ms. Anoja Seneviratne, Director of Mitigation, Research and Development of the Disaster Management Center; Mr. Malith Fernando, a meteorologist from the Department of Meteorology; and Mr. Charitha Ratwatte, Jr, Head – Group Sustainability at Dialog Axiata PLC.

Speakers for the day included Mr. Liu Yang Sloan, Secretary-General and Chief Researcher of NeoChina Center for International Development; Mr. Darren Lumbroso, Technical Director at HR Wallingford Ltd, United Kingdom; Prof. Richard Haigh and Dr. Kinkini Hemachandra from the Global Disaster Resilience Centre, University of Huddersfield, United Kingdom.

Ms. Sasha Cohen Ioannides, the Candidate and Cofounder of Ecotone Renewables and EIT EU Future Foodmaker, spoke on Young Sustainable Innovation: Failures and Successes of Solution-Building on the third day.

Mr. Liu Yang Sloan spoke on Effective Network Building toward successful UEC, and highlighted that youth centred collaborative programs need to be shaped around passion; emotion; imagination; and professionalism, and the need to combine rural development and sustainable development through cutting edge digital economic solutions. Mr. Darren Lumbroso shared lessons on Low and High Tech Ways to Increase Communities' Resilience to Floods. He discussed learnings from low-income countries regarding how they have improved resilience to hurricanes and coastal flooding, and how Agent-Based Models can be used to predict the consequences of floods to save lives.

Prof. Richard Haigh and Dr. Kinkini Hemachandra presented an overview of the Global Disaster Resilience Centre (GDRC), drawing upon their 2021 Annual Report. International collaborations; co-production, whereby they formulate research ideas with end users; and creating an impact are central to their achievements. Dr. Hemachandra discussed GDRC collaborations with Sri Lankan institutions, academia and practitioners.

The second day afternoon was dedicated to internal project discussions among coordinating and partner universities, and the event successfully concluded after many fruitful discussions.





Photograph of the participants at the SECRA Project Colombo Symposium on 15th to 17th March 2022, Wattala, Sri Lanka.

A keynote address at the 18th ICBM Conference, Sri Lanka

SECRA's co-lead, Prof Evangelia Petridou, was invited to deliver the keynote address at the 18th ICBM conference hosted by the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, with the general theme "Managing in Crisis: Brace for Challenges Ahead to Ensure Sustainable Growth". Petridou's address, entitled "Managing Crisis for Resilience: A Networked Governance Approach", outlined how an inclusive, good governance approach can promote resilience in public management. Petridou also highlighted some early results from the SECRA project, focusing on the importance of University-Enterprise Collaborations. For more information, please see the conference web site here: <https://icbm.sjp.ac.lk>



A special session at the 12th ICSECM Conference, Kandy, Sri Lanka

A special session was dedicated to SECRA at the Kandy Conference, the 12th International Conference on Structural Engineering and Construction Management (ICSECM) 2021. An introductory session presenting results on university-enterprise collaborations (UEC) in the project's three Asian countries was followed by a panel discussion, aptly consisting of representatives from universities (University of Ruhuna and University of Peradeniya), the National Building Research Organization (NBRO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Dialog Axiata. The panel discussed aspects of UEC and their impact on climate change action and disaster resilience. For more information, please see the conference web site: <http://icsecm.org>

The Special Session on Strengthening University Enterprise Collaborations (UEC) for Resilient Community was organized by SECRA team from the University of Peradeniya along with other two partner institutes. Resource Persons:

1. Dr Sarita Robinson, University of Central Lancashire, UK.
2. Prof. Sarintip Tantanee, Naresuan University, Thailand.
3. Prof. Ranjith Dissanayake; Senior Professor, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.
4. Prof. Nandasiri Weerasinghe; Senior Professor, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka.
5. Dr. Asiri Karunawardena; Director General, National Building Research Organization (NBRO), Sri Lanka.
6. Mr. Rohan Cooray; Climate Risk Information Management Specialist, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Sri Lanka & Solomon Islands.
7. Mr. Asith De Silva, Senior Manager - Social Innovation, Group Sustainability, Dialog Axiata PLC.

Multi-sectoral roundtable discussion on resilience in Philippines

As part of its initiatives, the SECRA Philippine partner schools, Ateneo de Manila University, Malayan Colleges Laguna, and Philippine Normal University, held a series of roundtable discussions (RTDs) with representatives of different sectors to facilitate a better understanding of what climate and disaster resilience mean in each sector, and how the academe can more meaningfully work with enterprises in the different sectors.

These activities were carried out as part of the SECRA Colombo Symposium held during 14-18 March 2022 and were attended by teams, faculty, and staff from the Philippine SECRA partner universities, along with representatives from various sectors. The sectors involved in the roundtable discussions were local government units (LGUs), fisherfolk community, business sector, agriculture sector, and industry sector.

