

Nobel Laureate Addresses GMO Crop Policies at NSU Seminar

Dhaka, 28 October 2023: North South University's South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) and NSU-UWA Agribusiness Centre of Excellence (ACE) today hosted a Talk by Nobel Laureate at the Syndicate Hall, NSU. The seminar centered on the crucial topic of 'GMO Crops in Bangladesh: Policies and Practices,' aiming to assess and discuss the current policies and practices related to GMO crops in the country, along with identifying the significant challenges and advancements in research and production.

The keynote speaker for this prestigious event was none other than Sir Richard J. Roberts, a distinguished Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine. Professor Atiqul Islam, the Vice Chancellor of NSU, chaired the session. The distinguished panel of experts included Mr. Anwar Faruque, Former Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of Bangladesh; Professor Dr. Abdul Khaleque from the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology at NSU; Dr. M Mahfuzul Haque, Associate Professor at SIPG, NSU; and Dr. Md. Shawkat Islam Sohel, Assistant Professor in the Department of Environmental Science and Management at NSU.



Sir Richard J. Roberts shed light on what he perceives as contradictions within the anti-GMO movement. He also addressed the pressing issue of global hunger, presenting GMOs as a potential solution. Roberts emphasized the need for a nuanced perspective on the term 'Genetically Modified Organism,' highlighting that evolution has continually shaped all life forms on Earth, and genetic modification has been an integral part of plant and animal breeding practices for centuries. He further stressed the importance of awaiting scientific validation when considering innovation with potential risks without conclusive safety evidence.



Professor Atiqul Islam underlined the challenges in persuading policymakers regarding GM food and its potential to address prevalent vitamin deficiencies among the Bangladeshi population.

Mr. Anwar Faruque delved into the challenges of ensuring food security in Bangladesh, while Prof. Dr. Abdul Khaleque highlighted the role of biotechnology in fostering agricultural innovations in the country. Dr. M Mahfuzul Haque provided insights into the GMO policy regime in Bangladesh. Dr. Md. Shawkat Islam Sohel highlighted the environmental concerns of releasing GMO crops in the country.

Professor Sk Tawfique M. Haque, Ph.D., Director of SIPG and Chair of the Department of Political Science and Sociology at NSU moderated the talk. Professor Nazrul Islam of NSU-UWA Agribusiness Centre of Excellence (ACE) delivered the welcome speech, setting the stage for the thought-provoking discussions. The vote of thanks was extended by Professor Dr. Hasan Mahmud Reza, Dean of the School of Health & Life Sciences at North South University.

