Education Adviser Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman, speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural function, said, "Degradation of ecology, population, rapid urbanisation and poverty are the major issues in the case of Bangladesh. It is of immense importance that the universities of Bangladesh get linked with those of other countries for more collaboration in researches and innovations, he said, urging both the public and private universities to take the opportunities of partnerships and achieve excellence."

Asian University of Women in Chittagong is an excellent example of partnership at regional level, he added.

The Education adviser also said that it is not only the partnership in terms of resources, but for sharing experiences and mobilising alumni of the educational institutions, which empower the institutions. But so far such initiatives have not been touched upon in significant manner.

A key focus should be ethical issue that is to uplift the underprivileged, he said, adding, "This is a bigger social support." Teachers' training is another important area to be focused on.

The adviser said Bangladesh's focus so far has been on primary education to build a foundation, but now it is also putting focus on higher education and is formulating a law for the private universities, a newly flourishing area of higher education in the country.

In the opening ceremony of the summit, US Ambassador to Bangladesh James F Moriarty was also present. He said higher education institutions make vital contributions to national and international development. In many ways, American higher education community represents the US traditions of enterprise, pluralism, diversity, compassion and humanitarianism.

In recent years, traditional relationships between the US and primarily European higher education institutions have expanded in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, he said, adding this expansion has included the formation of stronger and more prevalent linkages with multinational corporations, non-government organisations and foundations.

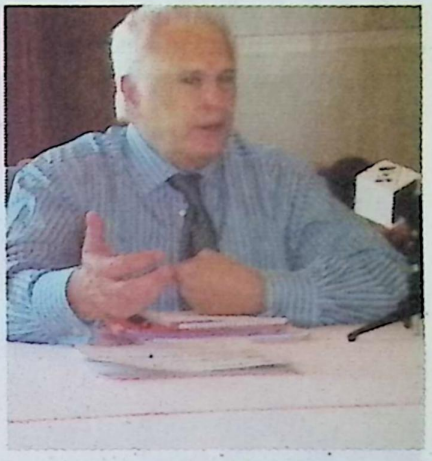
"I firmly believe that these trends will contribute significantly to reducing global poverty in the coming years," the Ambassador said.

USAID Bureau of Asia Acting Assistant Administrator Mark Ward in his keynote said the US aid from private sector to the developing world now is much more than that of the official aid.

This calls for partnerships in terms of higher education as we, he said, adding that ways should be found out how the national and multinational corporations can be partnered for the development of higher education systems and researches.

Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz and BUET Vice Chancellor Prof AMM Safiullah also spoke at the inaugural programme.

Thomas Farrell, US deputy assistant secretary of state for education and cultural affairs said that the US is keen to extend higher education programmes to Asian countries,



including Bangladesh, to help face global challenges such as food security, disaster management and poverty reduction. "The number of visas issued to Bangladeshi students has increased recently, We welcome them... we want to see more students,"

The US may award five more Fulbright scholarships to Bangladeshi students a year in the areas of food security and disaster management, he added.

Presently, the US awards 18 to 20 Fullbright scholarships to Bangladeshi students and sends 14 to 16 academics for teaching or researches to Bangladesh, according to a newspaper report.

