

DRIVING SUSTAINABLE FUTURES FOR ALL

Website



3 – 4 April
Nairobi, Kenya

Biographies of Speakers

Hosts



Partners



Knowledge partners



Supporters



In alphabetical order (by surname)

Mirey Atallah

Chief of the Adaptation and Resilience Branch at UNEP's Climate Change Division

Mirey Atallah is Chief of the Adaptation and Resilience Branch at UNEP's Climate Change Division, leading efforts on ecosystem-based adaptation, national adaptation planning, REDD+, and loss and damage. She also drives initiatives to mobilize public and private finance for climate action. With over 20 years of experience across the Arab States and Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Central Africa and the Congo Basin, she has worked in private industry, public administration, NGOs, and the UN.



Before UNEP, she advised the Minister of Finance in the Democratic Republic of Congo and held key roles at UN-REDD and UNDP. Mirey holds postgraduate degrees in Land Use Planning and Environmental Management.

Zainab Hawa Bangura

Director-General, United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON)

Mrs. Zainab Hawa Bangura, a relentless advocate for conflict resolution and reconciliation and human rights champion, was appointed by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres as Director-General of UNON on 30 December 2019, at the level of Under-Secretary-General.

Mrs. Bangura has over 30 years of policy, diplomatic and practical experience in the fields of governance, elections, corruption, gender, international cooperation and relations, peace operations, and conflict resolution and reconciliation.



Before joining UNON, Mrs. Bangura was United Nations Under Secretary-General and Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict from 2012 to 2017. She served as Minister of Health and Sanitation (2010 to 2012) for the Government of Sierra Leone and was previously Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (2007 to 2010).

Mrs. Bangura began her United Nations career with on-the-ground experience in peacekeeping operations in the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), where she was responsible for management of the largest civilian component of the Mission, including promoting capacity-building of government institutions and community reconciliation.

As a Minister in the Government of Sierra Leone, Mrs. Bangura was instrumental in developing national programmes on affordable health, advocating for the elimination of genital mutilation, managing the country's Peace-Building Commission and contributing to multilateral and bilateral relations with the international community. She has deep experience engaging with State and non-State actors on issues relevant to sexual violence, including engaging with rebel groups.

Mrs. Bangura has been globally acclaimed for her achievements as a civil society, human and women's rights campaigner and democracy activist, notably as Executive Director of the National Accountability Group, as well as Coordinator and Co-founder of the Campaign for Good Governance. Nominated as one of the 100 most Influential Africans, Mrs. Bangura has been the

recipient of many awards, including the IHL Dialogs – Joshua Heinz Award for Humanitarian Achievement, the Human Rights Award from the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, the National Endowment for Democracy's Award, the African American Institute's Distinguished Alumna Award, the Hillary Rodham Clinton Award for Advancing Women in Peace and Security from Georgetown University, and the Harvard School of Public Health, Kennedy School of Government award for Harvard 2012 Health Leader.

Mrs. Bangura is a former fellow of the Chartered Insurance Institute of London, possessing Diplomas in Insurance Management from the City University Business School of London and Nottingham University, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone. She also holds Honorary Doctorates in Law (from Syracuse University, USA 2019, Aberdeen University, UK 2015, Oxford Brookes University, UK 2015, Ursini College, USA 2014) and an Honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters (Florida Atlantic University, USA 2015).

Francesc Pont Casellas

Head of the International Economy and G20 Unit, Office of the Prime Minister of Spain

Francesc currently heads the International Economy and G20 Unit at the Office of the Prime Minister of Spain, where he leads on bilateral and multilateral economic issues and EU economic affairs. Francesc also leads and coordinates Spain's overall participation in the G20, as its Sous-Sherpa, since 2020. Before joining the Prime Minister's Office, Francesc worked for over six years at the Council of the European Union, where he held various roles in EU foreign, security and defence policy, including as a direct senior advisor to the Director-General for Foreign Affairs and various policy leadership roles on legislative and non-legislative files.



He holds a Master's degree in European Integration, a Postgraduate degree in Political Analysis, and two Bachelor's degrees in Advertising and Public Relations, and in Translation and Interpreting – including study periods in various European universities, America and Asia.

Cristina Díaz

Ambassador of Spain to Kenya, Somalia and Uganda, Permanent Representative of Spain to UNON, UNEP and UN HABITAT

Cristina Díaz is a career diplomat with more than thirty years of experience in the Spanish diplomatic service. She has been Ambassador to Ivory Coast and to Senegal and has served as Deputy Head of Mission in Pakistan and Kenya and as Counselor in the Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations and International Organisations in Geneva.



In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Díaz has been working in the Departments of the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa and in the Diplomatic Information Office. While posted in Madrid, she has also held different positions in the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, including that of Director for Cooperation with Africa and Asia.

Obiageli “Oby” Katryn Ezekwesili

President of Human Capital Africa (HCA) and Founder of School of Politics, Policy, and Governance (SPPG)

Obiageli “Oby” Katryn Ezekwesili is the Founder of SPPG - School of Politics, Policy and Governance which is spreading across Africa as an unconventional and replicable franchise model for public leadership development to tackle Africa’s governance problems. She is also the President of Human Capital Africa addressing the “learning crisis” among African children in foundational levels of education. She was a candidate for office of the President of Nigeria in the 2019 election and became the Founder- Chairperson of #FixPolitics Initiative a research-based citizens led initiative. FixPolitics envisions “A country where politics is inclusive, the needs of citizens are prioritized, democratic principles are respected, such that good governance is the norm”. Ezekwesili is also a co-founder of Transparency International - the Berlin-based global anti-corruption body and was one of the pioneer directors of its Board from 1994-1999.



Ezekwesili was a Vice President of World Bank- Africa Region in Washington DC between 2007 and 2012. She served in the Government of Nigeria between 2000 and 2007. She was the Minister of Minerals and later of Education. She was a presidential aide and headed the Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit which later became the Bureau for Public Procurement- BPP. She was concurrently the pioneer Chairperson of the Nigerian Extractive Industry and Transparency Initiative - NEITI in which capacity she successfully designed and implemented the global principles for Nigeria.

Ezekwesili also worked as the Director of the Harvard-Nigeria Economic Strategy Project at the Center for International Development at the Kennedy School of Government, Massachusetts. A Chartered Accountant and Consultant; She holds an MA in International Law and Diplomacy, an MA in Public Policy and Administration from the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. She’s an honorary Doctor of Science degree, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta Nigeria and in 2016 the University of Essex Business School awarded her an honorary Doctorate Degree in Business in recognition of her role in promoting economic and social justice in African countries. Ezekwesili was recognized as one of Time-100 Most Influential People and by New York Times as one of the 25 Women of Impact, 2015. Albert Einstein Foundations named her one of 100 visionaries featured in the 3D book “Genius:100 Visions of the Future.” Ezekwesili was a Richard von Weizsäcker Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin Germany between 2019 and 2020.

She has received numerous awards and on boards of numerous local and international organizations such as; Board of Trustees, the International Bureau of Fiscal Documentation (IBFD); Honorary Member, Committee of the Crans Montana African Women’s Forum; Board of Director of the Economic Policy Think Tank, AfriHeritage; Ambassador, International IDEA; Member of the Global Advisory Board for Facebook’s Community Leadership Program; Global Board of Governors, NCMG International; Member of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)’s Advisory Group on Gender, Forced Displacement and Protection; Member of the Advisory Board of the Atlantic Dialogues; Independent Director, Board of Bharti Airtel India; Member of Board, Tufts University-Global Leadership Center Boston; International Advisory Board, Tel Aviv University Hartog School of Public Policy, Tel Aviv, Israel; Central European University-School of Public Policy, Budapest Hungary; Global Board, WWF Switzerland; Commissioner, Global Ocean Commission - United Kingdom; IC Publications; Democracy Ambassador - International IDEA and several others. The PRIO- Peace Research Institute Oslo listed her as one of potential candidates for the 2018

Nobel Peace Prize. She was decorated with the national award of Commander of the Order of the Federal Republic (CFR) by her country and was selected as a 2020 Global Leadership Awards Honoree by Vital Voices for her leadership role in the fields of human rights, economic empowerment and political reform.

Ezekwesili is the current Board Chair, Women Political Leaders (WPL), Brussels – Belgium, she was a Senior Fellow at Yale Jackson Institute for Global Affairs, USA and was also a Richard von Weizsäcker Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin Germany. She is a globally renown Speaker and contributor to numerous studies and publications on Economic Policy, Transparency, Accountability and Governance, Human Capital Development and Africa Economic prospects.

Isabel Ferreira

Executive Director, AYA Earth Partners

Isabel Ferreira is a distinguished expert in international relations, law, and environmental sustainability, with extensive experience in policy development, climate diplomacy, and sustainable development initiatives. She has held key leadership roles, including Executive Director at Associação Rede ILPF, Legal Advisor at Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Coordinator at Centro Xingó de Convivência com o Semiárido. Her work has been instrumental in advancing policies related to agroforestry, climate resilience, and rural development.



Currently, she serves as a consultant for the United Nations, focusing on the 2030 Agenda, climate diplomacy, and energy transition. In addition to her consulting work, she holds advisory positions at institutions such as FIESP (Federation of Industries of the State of São Paulo) and is the Executive Director of Instituto AYA, where she champions sustainable business models and environmental advocacy. As the Director of AYA Earth Partners, she continues to drive forward innovative solutions in sustainability, fostering collaboration between public and private sectors to address global environmental challenges.

Nilanjan Ghosh

Vice President, Development Studies, Observer Research Foundation (ORF)

Dr Nilanjan Ghosh is Vice President – Development Studies at the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in India, and is also in charge of the Foundation's Kolkata Centre. His career trajectory in reverse chronological order includes roles such as Senior Fellow at ORF, Senior Vice President & Chief Economist at the Multi Commodity Exchange of India Limited, and faculty positions at TERI School of Advanced Studies. From 2015 to 2020, he advised WWF India in establishing their Ecological Economics practice. His other roles also included Member of the Global Future Council on the Future of Nature and Security at the World Economic Forum (2023-24), Co-Chair of Task Force 3 on International Financial Architecture for Think20 under Brazil's G20 Presidency (2024), Member of the Board of Country Representatives for the European Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (EAERE, 2024-25), and Member of the Research Advisory Committee for WWF India (2023-24).



Nilanjan was the President of the Indian Society for Ecological Economics (INSEE, 2022-24) and the Director of the Think20 India Secretariat during India's G20 Presidency in 2023. He was also a Member of the Expert Committee constituted by the Supreme Court of India in 2021, formulating the Net Present Value criteria for forest land diversion.

Nilanjan has taught at institutions including Linnaeus University (Sweden), the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta, and Jadavpur University, and visited Uppsala University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Stanford University. A natural resource economist with over two decades of experience, Nilanjan holds a Ph.D. from the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta. He has authored/ edited 15 books and monographs and has written over 100 peer-reviewed papers and several commentaries/ op-eds. His advisory work spans organisations like IUCN, USAID, FORMAS, UNCTAD-India, WWF-UK, IWMI-WLE, etc.

Pamla Gopaul

Senior Programme Officer, African Union Development Agency (NEPAD)

Ms. Pamla Gopaul is the Head of the Africa Policy Bridge Tank Programme and leads the Economic Analysis and Foresight Unit at the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD. She oversees strategic planning and program implementation, aligning the organization's strategic plan with execution. Previously a Senior Policy Officer and Coordinator to the CEO, Ms. Gopaul also serves as a Policy Advisory Sub-Committee Member for Global Citizen and an associate of the Women in Finance Network. Her global roles include senior fellow at the South Asian Institute for Advanced Research & Development (SAIARD) and co-leader of the T20/G20 Taskforce sub-committee. She represents AUDA-NEPAD at the G20 Development Working Group and stewards the Global Alliance for Life Economy on Research and Innovation (GALERI) on the Life Economies study.



Stephen Jackson

UN Resident Coordinator in Kenya

Dr. Jackson brings close to 30 years of experience in international development, peacebuilding, and humanitarian affairs to the position, including more than 10 years in Sub Saharan Africa. At the UN, he most recently served as Resident Coordinator in Gabon, after holding leadership positions at the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and with UN Peacekeeping. In DPA, he served as Chief of Policy Planning and Guidance, headed the Secretariat to the High-Level Review of United Nations Peacebuilding in 2015, worked as Team Leader of the Mediation Support Unit, was Chief of Staff of the UN Office in Burundi (BNUB), led the Policy Planning Unit as well as the Africa Great Lakes Team, and worked as Special Adviser to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes. With Peacekeeping, he served as a Senior Political Adviser with the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). Prior to joining the Organization, Dr. Jackson was the Deputy Director of the Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum (CPPF) at the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) in New York and served as the Director of the International Famine Centre and a Lecturer in Sociology at the National University



of Ireland in Cork after working in humanitarian relief and development in Angola, Rwanda and Somalia. He holds a doctorate in cultural anthropology and a master's degree in public affairs from Princeton University, USA, as well as a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland.

Hyginus 'Gene' Leon

Executive Director, Development Bank for Resilient Prosperity

Hyginus 'Gene' Leon is a Saint Lucian national and an International Development advocate for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). He focuses on access to adequate and affordable finance to achieve resilient prosperity in those countries. He is currently the Executive Director of the Development Bank for Resilient Prosperity (DBRP), a new development bank for SIDS. In 2024, Dr Leon was appointed Ambassador-at-Large for the Government of Saint Lucia, focusing on development finance and SIDS-related issues.



Dr Leon served as the sixth President of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the regional development finance institution based in Barbados, where he championed a systems approach to economic development based on the notion of social justice. With over 30 years of experience in economic development, Dr. Leon has directed macroeconomic and financial policy support to government authorities in Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Caribbean. A former Associate Professor, Dr. Leon worked with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for more than 24 years, functioning as Mission Chief in parts of Africa, The Bahamas, and several Gulf States, as well as IMF Senior Resident Representative in Jamaica and Nigeria. Dr. Leon also served as Director of Research at the Central Bank of Barbados and was Country Economist at CDB.

Dr. Leon's academic background is a testament to his expertise and credibility in the field of economics. He holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Southampton in the United Kingdom (UK) and a Bachelor of Science Degree (B.Sc.) in Economics from the University of London.

Sandra Guzmán Luna

Founder and Director General, Climate Finance Group of Latin America and the Caribbean

Sandra Guzmán Luna is an international specialist in low carbon development and climate finance. She is the Founder and General Director of the Climate Finance Group for Latin America and the Caribbean. She was the former General Director of Climate Change Policies at the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico. She holds a PhD in Politics by the University of York in the United Kingdom, a master's degree on Environment Policy and Regulation at the London School of Economics and Political Sciences, a Diploma on Sustainable Finance at the University of Oxford and a Degree on International Relations by the National University of Mexico. She is the first Mexican of the Homeward Bound Project visiting Antarctica to document the impacts of climate change in the territory. She was awarded as the intellectual of the year in 2018 by the Marie Claire Magazine; and she was selected as one of the 34 global changemakers by the Chevening scholarships of the UK Government.



Sofía Martínez

Global Policy Director, Green Economy Coalition

Sofía Martínez is the Global Policy Director of the Green Economy Coalition (GEC), in the International Institute for Environment and Development Europe. She is a senior expert in energy, climate, energy, sustainable finance, policy-making and international cooperation, boasting two decades of experience engaging with governments, international organizations, private sector, civil society and communities across a range of sectors, from climate policy to innovative financial instruments in the EU, Asia, Africa and Latin America.



With a background in Chemical Engineering and Environmental Technology, she started her career in research on efficient cooling and the impact of climate change on wetlands. As a public official, she made significant contributions at the European Commission (DG INTPA), the Spanish Energy Agency (IDAE) and the Spanish Office for Climate Change, where she played a pivotal role in policy, planning, regulatory initiatives, climate diplomacy, capacity building or programme delivery. She led large teams and projects, working in international consultancy and bringing a holistic perspective on global value chains, intersections and local impacts and engagement. She possesses a profound working knowledge of EU policies and instruments, development cooperation, the United Nations system and the international climate change negotiations, as well as of G20, G7, multilateral institutions or development banks.

Ali D. Mohamed

Special Climate Envoy Office of the President of Kenya

Ali Daud Mohamed is Kenya's Special Climate Envoy in the Executive Office of the President, where he advises on climate change policy and represents the nation in regional and international forums. With over 30 years in public service, Mohamed has held significant roles, including Principal Secretary in the Ministries of Environment and Special Programmes. His expertise encompasses environmental policy development, international treaty negotiations, and integrated resource management.



In March 2024, Mohamed was elected Chairperson of the African Group of Negotiators (AGN), succeeding Zambia's Ephraim Mwepya Shitima. Under his leadership, the AGN has championed equitable climate finance and effective adaptation strategies, emphasizing the need for developed countries to support Africa's climate resilience efforts. Mohamed's commitment to sustainable development is further demonstrated through his involvement in South-South cooperation initiatives, aiming to enhance knowledge sharing and technical assistance among developing nations.

Nathaniel Mong'are

Director of Political Affairs, Resource Mobilization & Diaspora for United Democratic Alliance (UDA) Party and Member of Club De Madrid's WYDE Network

Nathaniel is a political leader, an advocate of social justice, a generational leader, and philanthropists. He currently serves as the Director of Political Affairs, Resource Mobilization & Diaspora for United Democratic Alliance (UDA) Party, the Speaker, Kenya Young Parliamentarians Association (KYPA).



He started his political career in national politics in 2016 as a grassroots mobilizer for Amani National Congress (ANC), Kenya's 3rd largest political party currently part of the ruling government. He rose in the rank and file of the party hierarchy to the position of Director of ICT and Programs for the party and the 2022 Presidential Campaigns.

Nathaniel is championing for the inclusion of youth in political, social, and economic processes. Through the Political Parties Liaison Committee (PPLC), he lobbied for the amendment of Kenya's Political Parties Act 2011 to increase the nomination of youths to Kenya's Parliament and County Assemblies.

Academically, Nathaniel holds Master of Arts in Project Planning and Management (PPM) from the University of Nairobi. He also graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Strategic Management from Moi University. Professionally, Nathaniel completed Section 6 of the Certified Securities and Investments Analysts (CSIA) from Kenya Accountants and Secretaries Examinations Board (KASNEB).

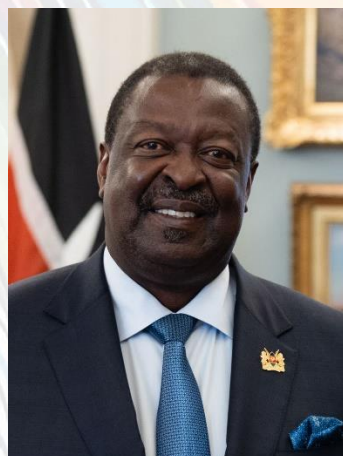
In 2022 General Elections, he ran for Member of Parliament for North Mugirango Constituency, in Nyamira County and emerged first runners up in a hotly contested parliamentary elections. Among the key nationalistic issues Nathaniel focuses on is the amendment of the Tea Act to create fair conditions for the tea farmers from Nyamira County. Enhancement of value addition of agricultural value chains specially to create jobs for the young people. He represented Kenya and Global South in COP28 Dubai as a panelist in the topic of "climate financing and what a just transition means for the Global South."

Nathaniel has ambitions for higher political offices in the future. He currently works with Kenya's Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Musalia Mudavadi. He deals with Strategic Projects.

Musalia Mudavadi

EGH Prime Cabinet Secretary and Minister for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Government of Kenya

Wycliffe Musalia Mudavadi, born on September 21, 1960, in Sabatia, Vihiga County, Kenya, is a seasoned politician and land economist currently serving as Kenya's Prime Cabinet Secretary and Minister for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs. He assumed the role of Prime Cabinet Secretary on October 27, 2022, marking a significant milestone as the first individual to hold this position in Kenyan history. In 2023, his portfolio expanded to include responsibilities as the Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs.



Mudavadi's political career spans several decades, commencing in 1989 when he was elected unopposed as the Member of Parliament for Sabatia Constituency, succeeding his late father, Moses Mudavadi. He retained this seat through subsequent elections in 1992, 1997, and 2007. His ministerial appointments have been diverse, including roles such as Minister of Supplies and Marketing, Minister of Finance, Minister of Agriculture, and Minister of Transport and Communications. Notably, he served as Kenya's seventh Vice President in 2002 and as Deputy Prime Minister from 2008 to 2012.

Educationally, Mudavadi attended Nairobi Primary School, proceeded to Jamhuri High School and Nairobi School for his secondary education, and later earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Land Economics from the University of Nairobi. Beyond his political endeavors, he is an enthusiast of sports, having played rugby during his school years, and is a fan of Manchester United Football Club and AFC Leopards. In 2019, he published his autobiography, "Soaring Above the Storms of Passion," offering insights into his life and career.

Chenai C. Mukumba

Executive Director, Tax Justice Network Africa

Chenai Mukumba is the Executive Director at the Tax Justice Network Africa (TJNA). She is based in Nairobi, Kenya and overall provides strategic leadership and direction to deliver on TJNA's mission and vision in its various thematic areas. Chenai has a master's in International Relations from Wits University, Johannesburg and a master's in Taxation from the University of Oxford.



Tax Justice Network Africa (TJNA) is a research and advocacy organisation with a robust network of civil society organisations with the united effort of leading tax justice voices across the continent. Through its Nairobi Secretariat, TJNA collaborates closely with its member civil society organisations to curb illicit financial flows (IFFs) and promote progressive taxation systems. In partnership and collaboration with other regional economic governance institutions, TJNA advocates for tax policies with pro-poor outcomes and tax systems that curb public resource leakages and enhance domestic resource mobilisation. TJNA's vision is to see a new Africa where tax justice prevails and ensures equitable, inclusive, and sustainable development.

Dr. James Mwangi

CBS Group Managing Director and CEO, Equity Group Holdings Plc. Executive Chairman, Equity Group Foundation

Dr. James Mwangi is one of Africa's most renowned thought leaders, a disruptive entrepreneur and philanthropist. As a champion of financial inclusion, James is credited with democratizing financial access, by removing entry barriers in Kenya and the region. As a disruptive and turnaround leader, he pioneered a savings led microfinance revolution giving the largely excluded majority of un-banked households, businesses, enterprises, and communities in the country the opportunity for broader economic participation.



Under his leadership, Equity has made investments in technology and innovation accelerating growth across Africa building a client base of over 16 million in 6 countries (Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Uganda) with a representative office in Ethiopia, and a total asset base of over USD 14 billion. Equity Group has one of the most extensive physical and digital distribution networks in the region with millions leveraging electronic, cards, mobile, and internet self service capabilities.

Driven by the commitment to scale up shared prosperity and social impact interventions that transform lives and livelihoods, James initiated the establishment of Equity Group Foundation (EGF), the social engine of Equity Group, in 2008. EGF implements innovative programs that leverage on the infrastructure of the bank achieving a higher social return on investment. While serving as the Executive Chairman, he has shaped notable EGF programs and mobilized the support of like-minded partners to commit USD 690 million for social impact. Under the Education and Leadership Development pillar, EGF has offered 60,000+ secondary school scholarships to academically gifted but socioeconomically challenged children. James serves as a lead mentor and coach to the youth and is committed to their transition to tertiary education, where they join the Equity Leadership Program of 23,825 scholars who have joined university, with 970 having joined leading global learning institutions.

Based on his vast experience in both social impact and entrepreneurship, James has had an opportunity to provide thought leadership on several global platforms. He has served on boards and in advisory roles at the World Bank Jobs Council, the Council on Foreign Relations Global Advisory Council, Global Advisory Council for VISA Inc., the Global Advisory Council for Mastercard, the Clinton Global Initiative, the G8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, President Barack Obama's Initiative for Global Development, the G20 Advisory Board of Agriculture and Initiative for Global Development, and The Global Agenda Council on New Economic Thinking of the World Economic Forum. He has been instrumental in shaping global development policies by serving on the UN Advisory Group on Inclusive Finance, as well as on Global Sustainability. He also served as an external advisor on a high-level panel on inclusive finance to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Additionally, he is on the Economic Advisory Board to the President of IFC (International Finance Corporation), the Advisory Network to the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, the Nairobi Advisory Board of Columbia Global Centres, Yale University President's Council on International Activities, the Inaugural Board of African Leadership Academy and has been Chair of the Steering Committee of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Regional Leadership Center, East Africa and Robert Smith's Vista Partners. He is a member of UNDP's (United Nations Development Program) African Influencers for Development (AI4Dev), private sector AfroChampions initiative; a board member of Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa (SDGC/A) and the current founding Co-Chair of the UN Global Compacts' 'Africa Business Leaders Council'. Recently Dr. Mwangi was named as the Inaugural Chancellor of Kenya's Open University and the private sector Chair of the Africa Green Industrialization Initiative of the African Union by His Excellency, President William Ruto of Kenya; to the King's Trust Advisory Board, and the Sustainable Markets Initiative founded by HM King Charles of the United Kingdom.

James is a certified international retail banker. He holds 5 honorary doctorate degrees and is the current Inaugural Chancellor of the Open University of Kenya and he is the most recent past Chancellor of Meru University College of Science and Technology in Kenya. He is a frequent guest lecturer at Stanford, Columbia, MIT, Harvard, IESE-Strathmore, and Lagos Business School, where Equity Group has been the focus of over 40 case studies in leading global institutions. Equity Group, with James as its Managing Director and CEO, have developed and are implementing the 'Africa Recovery and Resilience Plan' and are its chief champions and global advocates with worldwide partners, governments, and international institutions.

Javier Niño Pérez

Ambassador of the European Union to the African Union

Javier Niño Pérez is a distinguished Spanish diplomat currently serving as the European Union's Ambassador to the African Union (AU) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), a role he assumed in January 2024. In this capacity, Ambassador Niño Pérez is responsible for representing the EU's interests, enhancing EU-AU relations, and promoting collaborative initiatives between the two entities.



Prior to his current appointment, Ambassador Niño Pérez held several significant positions within the European External Action Service (EEAS). From June 2020, he served as Director and Deputy Managing Director for the Americas, overseeing EU relations with countries in the Western Hemisphere. Earlier, he led the United States and Canada Division (2018-2020) and the Turkey Division (2015-2018) at the EEAS headquarters in Brussels.

His diplomatic career also includes postings as Head of Delegation and EU Ambassador in Haiti (2012-2015) and as Chargé d'affaires heading the EU Delegation in Cuba (2007-2012). Additionally, he has served in political capacities in Burkina Faso and Trinidad and Tobago.

Ambassador Niño Pérez's academic credentials include a law degree from the University of Valladolid in Spain, an LL.M in European Law from the Free University of Brussels, and a Master's in European Studies from the College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium. In recognition of his service, he has been honored with national orders from Burkina Faso and Haiti, as well as the Officer's Cross of the Order of Isabella the Catholic from Spain.

Laura Petrella

Chief of Planning, Finance and Economy Section, Global Solutions Division, UN Habitat

Laura Petrella is a seasoned architect and urban planner with over 25 years of experience in urban development, capacity building for local authorities, and managing local planning processes. She currently serves as the Chief of the Planning, Finance, and Economy Section at UN-Habitat, a position she has held since 2012. In this role, she oversees initiatives such as the Urban Planning and Design Lab, the Public Space Programme, and capacity development activities in urban planning across various countries and cities worldwide.



Petrella's academic background includes a degree in Architecture and Urban Planning from the Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia (IUAV) in Italy, obtained in 1992. She further specialized in urban and territorial planning in developing countries, earning a Master's degree in Urban Planning and Development Studies from IUAV in 1993.

Throughout her career at UN-Habitat, Petrella has held various significant positions. From 2002 to 2010, she led the Safer Cities Programme, focusing on urban safety and crime prevention. In 2012, she established the City Planning, Extension, and Design Unit, emphasizing sustainable urban planning practices. Her work has involved advising and collaborating with local and national governments, civil society, and academia in numerous countries across Africa, Latin America, Asia, and Europe.

Petrella has also contributed to global guidelines on urban planning, public space, and slum upgrading. Her leadership in promoting sustainable planning practices is evident through her active participation in international conferences and forums, including the World Urban Forum.

Aly Zulficar Rahim

Program Manager, Global Partnership for Social Accountability, World Bank

Aly Rahim is a global leader in participatory governance, social innovation, and sustainable development, working to embed civic engagement and accountability into the international financial system. He leads the CIVIC: Civil Society and Social Innovation Alliance, a new World Bank initiative rethinking how civil society participates in development finance. Aligned with the Bank's evolution roadmap and IDA's largest replenishment, CIVIC is institutionalizing new financing and partnership models for social innovation and citizen-driven solutions.



As Program Manager of the Global Partnership for Social Accountability and Global Lead for Citizen Engagement at the World Bank, Aly has driven systemic change by embedding participatory governance across the Bank's portfolio. Under his leadership, the Bank has introduced a corporate scorecard indicator to measure civic engagement in its portfolio—ensuring that citizen voice is systematically integrated into global development. Previously, as Practice Manager for Social Sustainability and Inclusion in West Africa, Aly expanded the Bank's regional portfolio from \$150 million to \$1.1 billion, launching initiatives on conflict stabilization, climate resilience, gender, and social inclusion across 17 countries. His leadership helped establish a regional platform addressing fragility in the Sahel, Lake Chad, and Gulf of Guinea.

Earlier, as Assistant to the President of the World Bank Group, Aly played a key role in advancing the COP21 Paris Climate Agreement, the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF), and global financing mechanisms for forced displacement and fragile states.

Aly began his career as a Foreign Service Officer for Canada, specializing in post-conflict reconstruction in Sudan and Afghanistan. He holds a Master's in International Security from Georgetown University and a Bachelor's in Government and International Relations from Dartmouth College.

Simon Reid-Henry

Research Professor, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

Simon Reid-Henry is a Research Professor at the Peace Research Institute Oslo, where he directs the Multilateral Affairs research group and leads an international team examining the politics of duties in modern political society.

He received his PhD in economic geography from the University of Cambridge before moving to Queen Mary University of London, where he was Professor of Historical and Political Geography and Director of the Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, before becoming Honorary Professor in 2022. He has held a number of visiting positions, including in History at Columbia



University in New York and at the Norwegian Institute of Foreign Affairs. In 2023 he was Visiting Professor in International History and Politics at the Graduate Institute Geneva.

He is the author of numerous books and academic articles, most recently *Empire of Democracy: The Remaking of the West since the Cold War* (Simon & Schuster). Simon is also a well-regarded policy analyst specialising in international and political affairs and the founder and director of Public Interest, a research and policy platform dedicated to developing new ideas for rethinking the common good. He is one of the original thinkers behind the emerging paradigm of Global Public Investment and was co-founder and initial co-chair of the Global Public Investment Network. Simon has advised numerous governments and international organizations, contributing his expertise to policy and practice on a global scale.

Jens Sedemund

Head of the Environment and Climate Change team, Financing for Sustainable Development Division, Development Co-operation Directorate, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Jens Sedemund is Head of the Environment and Climate Change team, Financing for Sustainable Development Division, in OECD's Development Co-operation Directorate, leading a team working on climate change, biodiversity, green finance and sustainable oceans in the context of development co-operation and finance. Prior to this, Jens was Senior Advisor on Development Finance, focusing on blended finance, climate-related development finance and green investment. From 2008 until 2016, he headed the office of the Chair of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), working closely with the Chair on the political dimensions and on the agenda setting of the DAC's work, and taking the lead on developing new initiatives. Earlier at OECD, he set up and led the engagement with emerging economies on international development, while also working on the development dimensions of trade. His experience before joining OECD include working in microfinance and on launching a B2B marketplace for international commodities trade. Jens holds Masters Degrees from Bonn University, Germany, and from Stanford University, USA.



Elizabeth Sidiropoulos

Chief Executive of the South African Institute of International Affairs

Elizabeth Sidiropoulos is the chief executive of the South African Institute of International Affairs. Her areas of expertise lie in South African foreign policy, Africa and external powers, global governance and south-south cooperation. Her most recent publications include co-edited volumes on *Values, Interests and Power: South African Foreign Policy in Uncertain Times* (2020), and *The Palgrave Handbook of Development Cooperation for Achieving the 2030 Agenda* (2021). She is the editor-in-chief of the *South African Journal of International Affairs*, a policy-oriented, peer-reviewed and interdisciplinary forum for discussion on Africa's and South Africa's international affairs. She is a regular commentator in South African and foreign media. In December 2020 she was appointed to serve on the UN's Second High-Level



Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs. She was on the Secretariat of the T20 Brazil's International Advisory Council. She is one of the co-convenors of the T20 South Africa, an official engagement group of the G20.

Vera Songwe

Chair and Founder, Liquidity and Sustainability Facility

Dr Songwe is Chair and Founder of the Liquidity and Sustainability Facility. She has championed the need to focus both on solvency and liquidity issues in Emerging Market economies emphasizing the importance of different instruments needed. She co-chairs the G20 Expert Group on climate, finance and debt (TF Clima). She is also a visiting senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in the department of Global Economy and Development. Dr Songwe is a global climate champion. She is the Co-Chair of the Independent High Level Expert Panel on Climate Finance alongside Lord Nick Stern. Under the last three COP presidencies they have worked to build the climate investment narrative as the growth story of the 21st century.



She is the former United Nations Under-Secretary General and the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the first woman to lead the organization in 60 years. Prior to that she was a Regional Director at the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and a Country Director at the World Bank.

Helga Flores Trejo

Vice President, Special Envoy Sustainability & Multilateral Affairs, Bayer

Helga Flores Trejo is a seasoned foreign policy and development expert. With over 20 years of experience, she has navigated the realms of government, international financial organizations, foundations, think tanks and the private sector. She has worked on strategic outreach and partnerships in Berlin, Brasilia, Belgrade, Guadalajara and Washington DC.



At Bayer she drives sustainability and multilateral affairs, to enable new sustainable business models and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals SDGs. In addition, she advances geopolitical affairs and relations with international organizations such as the G20, UN agencies, Multilateral Development Banks, and key networks such as the World Economic Forum (WEF), and the Munich Security Conference (MSC).

Before joining Bayer, she led open innovation at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), where she established and expanded strategic partnerships to foster innovation and solve development challenges. Previously, she served as Head of External Relations at IDB Invest, where she worked on promoting financial inclusion solutions with a focus on SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean. Within the IDB Group, she held diverse positions, including Chief of the Constituencies Unit – in charge of relations with US Government, NGOs and Parliaments - and Head of Strategic Communications for Sectors. Additionally, she led external relations of the IDB Group in Brazil.

She is the former Executive Director the Heinrich Böll Foundation North America. In this capacity she worked promoting transatlantic policy exchange on sustainable development issues and global affairs. Helga began her career as and an Advisor on Development Policy and Latin America in the German Parliament (Bundestag). In Germany she also worked as Chief of Staff to Hamburg's Representative at the German Bundesrat and as European Affairs advisor. Following that, she was a Senior Advisor for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Belgrade, where she mobilized funds and introduced a program on Parliamentary support.

Helga Flores Trejo is Member the Board of the Business Council for International Understanding (BCIU), Member of the Advisory Council of the Adrienne Arsht Latin America Center and Member of the World Economic Forum's Geopolitical Advisory Group. Former member and deputy Co-Chair of Brazil's B20 Sustainable Food Systems and Agriculture Task Force. She has been a Non-Resident Fellow at the Brookings Institution Center for the US and Europe and has received fellowships from the German Marshall Fund of the United States, the Prince of Wales' Business and Environment Program, and the BMW Herbert Quandt Foundation.

Helga Flores Trejo holds a Master's Degree in Political Science and International Law from Frankfurt's Goethe University in Germany; she speaks fluently Spanish, German, English, French, and Portuguese.

Zeynu Ummer

Director of UNDP Resilience Hub for Africa

Dr. Zeynu Ummer currently serves as the Director of UNDP Resilience Hub for Africa. He has previously served as the Team Leader and Senior Chief Technical Adviser of the UNDP Africa Borderlands Center, based in Nairobi, Kenya.

Prior to joining UNDP, Zeynu worked for the Ethiopian Government as State Minister for Peace, Commissioner-General of the Ethiopian Federal Police, Head of the Ethiopian Refugee Agency and as a diplomat. Zeynu holds a broad experience in peacebuilding and works on the humanitarian-development peace nexus, having worked across East Africa and the Horn of Africa Regions.



He has long-standing experience in addressing the issues of marginalized people residing in conflict-prone areas in Africa. This was demonstrated when he managed and coordinated the daily operations of over a million refugees hosted in Ethiopia. Here, he developed strategies for their integration into national development planning to ensure self-reliance among refugees and host communities. He contributed to the development of new refugee laws and related policies and strategies to overhaul refugee response management.

As Commissioner-General of Police for Ethiopia, during a dynamic and critical period of Ethiopia's transition from a repressive regime towards democracy, Zeynu managed and coordinated the day-to-day operations of over 35,000 strong police force and formulated a strategy for institutional reform to promote respect for human rights. Zeynu holds a PhD in Political Economy from the Swiss Management Centre.

Kevin Chika Urama

Vice President and Chief Economist for the Economic Governance & Knowledge Management Complex, African Development Bank Group

Kevin Chika Urama is Vice President and Chief Economist for the Economic Governance & Knowledge Management Complex of the African Development Bank Group. He previously served at the Bank as a Senior Director for the African Development Institute and as Senior Advisor to the President of the African Development Bank Group on Inclusive and Green Growth Strategy, Policy Development, and Implementation.



A globally recognized development economist with more than 30 years of Africa-wide and global experience in economic policy and knowledge management, Professor Urama is an elected Fellow of the African Academy of Sciences (AAS); and a Distinguished Professor of the University of Nigeria Nsukka. He is a member of the Global Council on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Council on the future of clean air, among others.

Before joining the African Development Bank Group, Prof. Urama served in various executive leadership positions in the academia, international organizations, and the private sector. He holds a Ph.D. in Land Economy from the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom; an MPhil in Land Economy from Cambridge University; a Master of Science in Agricultural Economics from University of Nigeria, and a First-Class Honors bachelor's degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of Nigeria.

Attiya Waris

United Nations Independent Expert on Foreign Debt, Other International Financial Obligations, and Human Rights

Attiya Waris is Kenya's second full female law professor and the first professor from a religious, ethnic and racial minority in the country. She is also the only known Professor of Fiscal law on the African continent. Her original scholarly contribution to this field has been the development and strengthening of the linkages between finance and development through taxation, debt and illicit financial flows and the raising of living standards.



Professor Waris has in the past held the position of Director Research for the University as well as acting Deputy Principal College of Humanities and Social Sciences as the first female Professor to hold both posts separately and simultaneously. She holds several portfolios currently and: is currently serving as the UN independent expert on foreign debt and international financial obligations under implications for human rights globally, a member of the International Tax Taskforce on Climate and Development, the Chair of the Supervisory Board of the Capabuild Foundation based in the Netherlands, a Commissioner on the O'Neill-Lancet Commission on Racism and Structural Discrimination and Global Health and a member of the Editorial board of the Yearbook on Economic Determinants at the WHO a member of the Working Group on Debt at the Madrid Club as well as the Managing Editor of the Journal on Financing for Development housed at the University of Nairobi.

Most recently Professor Waris was quoted in May 2024 by President Higgins of Ireland in his keynote speech in Dublin, Ireland, in the Constitutional Court of Kenya in October 2023 during the debate on housing tax. In addition, her work was cited by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Frederick Mitchell of the Bahamas in his intervention during the recently concluded G77 meeting in Kampala in January 2024. She has been a founding member of several organisations including the African Tax Researcher's Network based in South Africa, the Tax Justice Network Africa, the Capabuild Foundation in Amsterdam and the Committee of Fiscal studies, University of Nairobi and most recently AFRODAD-East and Horn of Africa and the House of Fiscal Wisdom (a new thinktank based in in Nairobi focussing on the International Fiscal Architecture).

Deepak Xavier

Head of Inequality Advocacy and Campaigns, Oxfam International

Deepak is a senior strategic leader with over 20 years of experience in driving impactful change across the globe. He has played an important role in shaping global conversations and policies aimed at addressing inequality. As the Head of Inequality, he has spearheaded initiatives that have established Oxfam as a world leader in the fight against inequality. His expertise lies in leading and executing global strategies which are been instrumental in advancing social justice and fighting inequality.



Deepak's work spans numerous sectors, including inequality, social justice, climate change, taxation, public services, and private sector accountability. He has helped co-found and nurture organisations and influential movements including *the Fight Inequality Alliance*, *Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability*, *People's Budget Initiative* and *the Global Organising School for Young Leaders*.

Deepak's career has also included consulting work for several organizations, including *ActionAid International*, *Water Aid International*, *Christian Aid*, and *State University of New York*, where he has contributed to strategy development, organizational growth, and policy influence.