Global Commission on Democracy and Multilateralism

WORKING GROUP 3 MEMBERS

WORKING GROUP LEADS

- **Joseph Foti**, Principal Advisor for Emerging Issues at the Open Government Partnership

- **Alessandro Bellantoni**, Director of Policy and Partnerships at the Open Government Partnership

- **Aidan Eyakuze**, CEO of the Open Government Partnership

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

- **Ángel Alonso Arroba**, Deputy Director of the Cabinet of the Prime Minister, Government of Spain

- **Elisenda Ballesté Buxó**, Global Democracy Coalition Coordinator, International IDEA

- **Erica Barks Ruggles**, Magro Family Distinguished Fellow in International Affairs, Dartmouth College

- **Nicole Bibbins Sedaca**, Kelly and David Pfeil Fellow, George W. Bush Institute

- **Veronique Choquette**, Foreign Policy Officer, Embassy of Canada in Spain

- **Mantas Adomėnas**, Secretary General, Community of Democracies

- **Larry Diamond**, Professor of Political Science and Sociology, Stanford University

- **Patricia Galdamez**, Senior Advisor to Secretary General, Community of Democracies

- **Lea Kaspar**, Executive Director, Global Partners Digital (Secretariat of Freedom Online Coalition)

- **Julia Keutgen**, Programme Manager, Supporting Team Europe Democracy, International IDEA

- **Michael McFaul**, Director at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University

- **Emilia Saiz Carrancedo**, Secretary General, World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments

- **David Yang**, Former Vice President for Applied Conflict Transformation, United States Institute of Peace

- **Laura Thornton**, Senior Director, Global Democracy Programs, McCain Institute

- **Paloma Dallas**, Senior Program Officer for Democracy around the Globe, Charles F. Kettering Foundation

- **Dina Fakoussa**, Senior Project Manager for Global Issues, Robert Bosch Foundation

- **Ted Piccone**, Content Director of Global Commission on Democracy and Multilateralism, Advisor of Club de Madrid

WORKING GROUP LEADS

Joseph Foti, Principal Advisor for Emerging Issues at the Open Government Partnership

Joseph Foti is the Principal Advisor of Emerging Issues for the Open Government Partnership (OGP). In this role, he leads collaboration and research on new areas of interest to OGP members. Much of his work can be found at OGP Horizons. Topics include anti-corruption, climate change, civil liberties, and new technologies. He has nearly two decades of experience leading research and accountability efforts across a range of sustainable development issues. Prior to this role, he was OGP's chief research officer and leader of the analytics and insights team and before that, he was the founding director of OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism.

Prior to his work at OGP, he was a senior associate for the Access Initiative, a network led by the World Resources Institute (WRI), and a public servant. He is also a nonresident fellow in the Governance Studies program at Brookings.

Alessandro Bellantoni, Director of Policy and Partnerships at the Open Government Partnership

Alessandro Bellantoni is the OGP Director for Policy and Partnerships. In this role, he and his team are dedicated to accelerating partnership-wide collective progress in policy areas prioritized in the OGP's 2023-2028 strategy and in the Open Government Challenge. He focuses on leveraging governments, civil society, thematic and development partners, resources, and events to drive thematic priorities at the global and country level, ensuring the adoption and implementation of specific reforms that respond to country needs, global/regional trends, and political opportunities.

Previously, Alessandro was the Head of the Open Government, Civic Space, and Public Communication Unit at the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), where he supported members and partner countries to design and implement public sector reforms inspired by the principles of transparency, accountability, integrity, and participation. Throughout his career, he worked in the E-government Unit of the Italian Ministry of Public Administration and Innovation, for the United Nations (WFP and ILO), and in civil society as the Head of the Middle East regional office of the Italian NGO "Un Ponte Per", based in Amman.

Aidan Eyakuze, CEO of the Open Government Partnership (OGP)

Aidan Eyakuze is the CEO of the Open Government Partnership. He is the former Executive Director of Twaweza East Africa, working to enable children to learn, citizens to exercise agency, and governments to be more open and responsive in Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda. In May 2016, Aidan joined the OGP Steering Committee as a civil society member. Aidan served as the civil society co-chair for 2021-2022. In June 2017, he was appointed to the Board of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD). Before joining OGP, Aidan was Associate Regional Director of the Society for International Development (SID) and Head of the SID Tanzania office.

He has 15 years of experience as a scenario practitioner, through participation in national scenario-building projects in Kenya (2000 & 2010), Tanzania (2003), South Africa (2004), Nigeria (2007) and East Africa (2005-2008). He co-led the publication of the State of East Africa Reports and facilitated future thinking for the private sector, civil society and public organisations.

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Ángel Alonso Arroba, Deputy Director of the Cabinet of the Prime Minister, Government of Spain

Ángel Alonso Arroba currently serves as Deputy Director of the Cabinet of the Presidency of the Government of Spain, where he contributes to the strategic coordination and policy work of the executive. With extensive experience in international affairs and public management, he has played key roles in both national and multilateral institutions.

Before joining the Presidency, Alonso Arroba served as Vice Dean of IE University's School of Global and Public Affairs, leading strategic development and internationalization initiatives.

He previously held senior positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including as Ambassador-at-Large for Spanish Global Citizenry, where he was part of the Prime Minister's COVID-19 task force and helped draft Spain's Foreign Policy Strategy 2021–2024.

Earlier in his career, he spent over a decade at the OECD in Paris, serving as Head of Management and Communications and Senior Advisor to the Secretary-General, and worked with organizations such as the World Bank and the Open Society Foundations.

Alonso Arroba graduated from Georgetown University´s School of Foreign Service with an M.A. in International Security, and holds degrees in Social Anthropology and Journalism from the University of Seville.

Elisenda Ballesté Buxó, Global Democracy Coalition Coordinator, International IDEA

Elisenda Ballesté Buxó is the Project Coordinator of the Global Democracy Coalition, a strategic multi-stakeholder alliance of organizations to advance and protect democracy.

The Coalition helps to amplify the voices of individual organizations, allows for dialogue across regions, themes and sectors, and enables individual organizations to have greater impact as part of a collective effort to advance and protect democracy. International IDEA is one of the co-coordinators of this initiative.

Prior to this, Elisenda managed the EU co-funded Global Monitor of COVID-19´s impact on Democracy and Human Rights project, an online monitoring tool of Covid-19 measures adopted by the 165 countries covered in the Global State of Democracy Indices. She was also responsible for the Middle East subregion in the Global State of Democracy Report and In Focus, producing analysis and assessment on democratic trends and issues.

Before joining International IDEA, Elisenda was an academic in various universities in Mexico. She has cooperated closely with NGOs and presented lectures at several international conferences.

She holds a M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies from El Colegio de México A.C. and a degree in International Relations from the University of the Americas, Puebla.

Erica Barks Ruggles, Magro Family Distinguished Fellow in International Affairs, Dartmouth College

Ambassador Barks Ruggles served for 33 years in senior leadership and diplomatic positions; most recently leading the successful U.S. effort to rejoin UNESCO, setting up the U.S. Mission from scratch and re-establishing U.S. leadership in the U.N.'s lead institution on AI and emerging technology ethics, education standards, and cultural preservation especially in conflict areas.

She served as the Senior Representative and Head of Delegation to four major International Telecommunication Union conferences in 2022 and oversaw all U.S. policies and relationships with the United Nations while at the Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO).

Prior to that, she was Senior Diplomatic Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center and Acting Chancellor of the College of International Strategic Affairs (CISA) at the National Defense University.

From 2015 to 2018, Barks Ruggles served as the Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Rwanda. Earlier in her career as a diplomat and civil servant, she served as the Deputy to the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations serving on the Deputies Committee of the National Security Council, and as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor overseeing international human rights, and democracy programming in the Middle East and South and Central Asia.

Nicole Bibbins Sedaca, Kelly and David Pfeil Fellow, George W. Bush Institute

Nicole Bibbins Sedaca is the Kelly and David Pfeil Fellow at the George W. Bush Institute. Bringing her expertise on American foreign policy, US and global democracy issues, freedom, human rights, and leadership, Bibbins Sedaca writes and speaks on behalf of the George W. Bush Institute and serves as faculty in our various leadership programs.

She has written on democracy and human rights issues for the Journal for Democracy, CNN, Foreign Policy magazine, The Hill, the Dallas Morning News, and many local media outlets, as well as done a TEDX Talk and been interviewed on CBS News, CNN, National Public Radio, the Council on Foreign Relations, and various podcasts and local news outlets.

Bibbins Sedaca served as the executive vice president and interim president at Freedom House, an organization dedicated to defending and expanding freedom worldwide by promoting accountable government, the rule of law, civil liberties, and political rights.

Previously, she was a Professor in the Practice of International Affairs at Georgetown University's Master of Science in Foreign Service (MSFS) program, and served as the Deputy Director and Chair for the Global Politics and Security Concentration in MSFS.

Bibbins Sedaca has held numerous positions in the public and non-governmental sectors in the United States and Ecuador. She served for ten years in the United States Department of State, working on democracy promotion, human rights, human trafficking, religious freedom, refugees, and counterterrorism.

Veronique Choquette, Foreign Policy Officer, Embassy of Canada in Spain

Véronique Choquette is a Canadian diplomat and policy expert specializing in foreign policy, democracy support, and international governance. She currently serves as Senior Officer for Foreign Policy and Diplomacy at the Embassy of Canada to Spain, where she leads initiatives strengthening Canada–Spain relations in areas such as multilateral cooperation, democratic governance, and international policy engagement.

In addition to her diplomatic work, Véronique is a Faculty Lecturer at Universidad Alfonso X El Sabio in Madrid, where she teaches international security to undergraduate students of Law and International Relations.

Before joining the Embassy in 2022, she spent nearly four years at Club de Madrid, first as Programme Officer and later as Senior Policy and Programme Development Advisor. There, she coordinated strategic and operational planning for an international network of former Heads of State and Government, developing initiatives on democracy, digital governance, and inclusive societies.

Her prior experience includes senior roles at International IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) in Stockholm, where she led strategic planning and institutional development, and several years as a Canadian Foreign Service Officer with Global Affairs Canada, serving in Ottawa, Madrid, and Yaoundé. Early in her career, she worked in environmental policy and sustainable development research at the Université libre de Bruxelles and the Network for Environment and Sustainable Development in Africa in Côte d'Ivoire.

Mantas Adomėnas, Secretary General, Community of Democracies

Dr. Mantas Adomėnas is a Lithuanian scholar and politician who served in the Lithuanian Parliament (2008-2020). At the conclusion of his third parliamentary term, he was nominated as a Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania (2021-2023). In 2023, he was elected a member of the Council of the European Council on Foreign Relations.

Dr. Adomėnas worked on a range of issues, including support for democracy, foreign affairs, migration policy, national security, culture and education. He served on international election observation missions to Georgia, Ukraine, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

He is currently a Chief Strategic Officer / Senior Research Fellow at the Baltic Institute of Advanced Technology, and Associate Professor at the Department of Classics in Vilnius University.

Dr. Adomėnas earned his master's degree as a Classicist at Vilnius University and PhD at Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge University. He publishes essays and scholarly articles on topics ranging from Classics to political philosophy and current affairs, as well as novels.

Larry Diamond, Professor of Political Science and Sociology, Stanford University

Larry Diamond is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and the Mosbacher Senior Fellow in Global Democracy at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies (FSI) at Stanford University. He also chairs the Hoover Institution Project on Taiwan in the Indo-Pacific Region and is the principal investigator of the Global Digital Policy Incubator, part of Stanford's Cyber Policy Center. For more than six years, he directed FSI's Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law, where he now leads its Program on Arab Reform and Democracy.

During 2017–18, he cochaired, with Orville Schell, a working group formed of researchers from Hoover and from the Asia Society Center on US-China Relations, culminating in the report China's Influence and American Interests: Promoting Constructing Vigilance (published by the Hoover Institution Press in 2019). He is the founding coeditor of the Journal of Democracy and also serves as senior consultant at the International Forum for Democratic Studies of the National Endowment for Democracy.

Diamond is professor by courtesy of Political Science and Sociology at Stanford University, where he teaches courses on democracy and American foreign policy. He is currently offering Comparative Democratic Development as a massive open online course (MOOC) on the edX platform.

During 2002–03, Diamond served as a consultant to the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and was a contributing author of its report Foreign Aid in the National Interest. He has also advised and lectured to universities and think tanks around the world, and to the World Bank, the United Nations, the State Department, and other governmental and nongovernmental agencies dealing with governance and development. During the first three months of 2004, Diamond served as a senior adviser on governance to the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad. His 2005 book, Squandered Victory: The American Occupation and the Bungled Effort to Bring Democracy to Iraq, was one of the first books to critically analyze America's postwar engagement in Iraq.

Patricia Galdamez, Senior Advisor to Secretary General, Community of Democracies

Patricia Galdamez is the Senior Advisor to the Secretary General and Civil Society Coordinator at the Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies (CoD), where she plays a key role in promoting civil society engagement and democratic governance at the international level. A Salvadoran lawyer with a specialisation in project management, she previously served as Executive Director of the Democracy, Transparency and Justice Foundation in El Salvador and worked for several years in the Democracy and Governance Office of USAID in El Salvador, where she focused on planning, designing and monitoring rule-of-law and citizen participation programmes.

She also contributed to regional youth and justice initiatives through Creative Associates International under the Central American SAID3SICA project, implementing activities linked to youth empowerment and juvenile justice reform.

Her work at the Community of Democracies extends to coordinating civil society participation in the monitoring and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDG 16, which focuses on peace, justice and strong institutions.

Lea Kaspar, Executive Director, Global Partners Digital (Secretariat of the Freedom Online Coalition)

Lea Kaspar is the Executive Director of Global Partners Digital (GPD), a UK-based organization working at the intersection of digital technology, democracy, and human rights. With over a decade of experience in global digital policy, she focuses on strengthening the legitimacy and inclusiveness of multilateral and plurilateral governance.

Under her leadership, GPD has advanced rights-based and participatory approaches to digital governance across the United Nations system, including the International Telecommunication Union and the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process.

Since 2014, GPD has also served as the Secretariat of the Freedom Online Coalition, a partnership of 42 governments committed to promoting human rights online.

Lea has served in advisory roles across international forums, including the UN Internet Governance Forum Multistakeholder Advisory Group, the UN CSTD Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation, and the Advisory Board of the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise. She is a member of the European Council on Foreign Relations and holds an MSc in Global Governance and Ethics from UCL.

Julia Keutgen, Programme Manager, Supporting Team Europe Democracy, International IDEA

Julia Keutgen is a Programme Manager for the Supporting Team Europe Democracy project (STED) with the Regional Europe Programme in Brussels.

Julia joined International IDEA in April 2022 and will be overseeing the STED project, which provides evidence on democracy and democracy support, and helps to establish a 'Team Europe Democracy' approach towards the Summit for Democracy. As such, she will be working closely with the Democracy Assessment Programme, the Washington DC office, and also regional programmes.

Julia previously worked as a Senior Transparency Advisor at the Westminster Foundation for Democracy advising on issues of openness, participation, civic technology and enhancing the role of civil society in public policy making and government oversight. Julia has over 15 years' experience working on governance issues in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Africa and the MENA region, with long term in country support in Burundi and Morocco.

She previously worked at the UNDP Brussels Liaison Office on inclusive political processes. Before that, she worked at the UNDP headquarters in New York on anti-corruption and rule of law providing policy advice and programme support to UNDP country offices. Her previous positions included advisor in the Cabinet of the Belgian Minister for Development Cooperation and governance programme officer at Enabel.

Michael McFaul, Director at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University

Michael McFaul is Director at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, the Ken Olivier and Angela Nomellini Professor of International Studies in the Department of Political Science, and the Peter and Helen Bing Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution. He joined the Stanford faculty in 1995.

Dr. McFaul also is an International Affairs Analyst for NBC News. He served for five years in the Obama administration, first as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Russian and Eurasian Affairs at the National Security Council at the White House (2009–2012), and then as U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation (2012–2014).

He has authored several books, most recently the New York Times bestseller From Cold War to Hot Peace: An American Ambassador in Putin's Russia. Earlier books include Advancing Democracy Abroad: Why We Should, How We Can; Transitions To Democracy: A Comparative Perspective (eds. with Kathryn Stoner); Power and Purpose: American Policy toward Russia after the Cold War (with James Goldgeier); and Russia's Unfinished Revolution: Political Change from Gorbachev to Putin.

His current research interests include American foreign policy, great power relations, and the relationship between democracy and development. Dr. McFaul was born and raised in Montana. He received his B.A. in International Relations and Slavic Languages and his M.A. in Soviet and East European Studies from Stanford University in 1986. As a Rhodes Scholar, he completed his D. Phil. in International Relations at Oxford University in 1991.

Emilia Saiz Carrancedo, Secretary General, World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments

Emilia Saiz is a lawyer by profession and has devoted her professional life to promoting the role of local governments in development, as well as fostering relationships among cities and their associations around the world. She began her journey as an international advocate for local government in 1997 at IULA, one of UCLG's founding organizations.

She has led programs focused on institutional capacity development and decentralized cooperation, and has been an active promoter of women's empowerment, social inclusion, and international partnerships.

She played a key role in the creation of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments and has represented local and regional authorities in major international processes such as Rio and Beijing +20, as well as the Climate Agreement, the SDGs, and Habitat III.

Furthermore, she has been deeply involved in the institutional development of United Cities and Local Governments as a "network of networks." During her tenure at the World Organization, she has been appointed to numerous panels, both personally and professionally. Notably, she has participated in Cities Alliance, the Global Partnership Alliance, and the Global Compact Cities Programme.

Her term as Secretary General of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) began in 2018. When asked about her priorities for the coming years, she mentions ensuring that global agendas are built upon local priorities, and that international action by local governments is understood as an indispensable means to meet local needs—with solidarity, justice, and accountability at the core.

David Yang, Former Vice President for Applied Conflict Transformation, United States Institute of Peace

Dr. David W. Yang served as Vice President for Applied Conflict Transformation at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) from April 2019 to March 2024, leading the institute's global portfolio of programs focused on preventing, mitigating, and resolving violent conflict. In this role, he oversaw field-based initiatives, research partnerships, and strategic learning efforts designed to advance innovative approaches to peacebuilding and institutional resilience in fragile and conflict-affected environments.

Prior to joining USIP, Dr. Yang held roles across U.S. foreign policy and development institutions.

He led the Center for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance at USAID, served as Deputy Assistant Administrator overseeing DRG and peacebuilding, and worked as a senior advisor at UNDP on governance and peacebuilding issues. Earlier, he also held positions at the U.S. State Department as Senior Coordinator for Democracy Promotion, directed civil society programs through PartnersGlobal, and served as a research fellow at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's Center for the Prevention of Genocide.

Prior to joining USIP, Dr. Yang held leadership positions in international development and human rights, contributing to major initiatives on democratic governance and peacebuilding. He earned his Ph.D. and M.A. in International Relations from Johns Hopkins University, and a B.A. in Politics from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Laura Thornton, Senior Director, Global Democracy Programs, McCain Institute

Laura Thornton is senior director for global democracy programs at the McCain Institute. Thornton leads initiatives to build communities of best practice, advocate support for frontline democracies through policy outreach, and forge alliances across borders. She heads high level working groups on democracy threats and serves in numerous global networks as a leader and expert in the democracy community. Through her work, Thornton continues the legacy of Senator McCain by providing vital outreach and support to those on the frontlines of the fight for freedom.

lPrior to joining McCain, Thornton was senior vice president of the Democracy Hub at the German Marshall Fund. Thornton oversaw the Alliance for Securing Democracy, through which GMF tracks, analyzes, and builds strategies to thwart malign internal and external influence operations that target democracies worldwide. She also led GMF's Transatlantic Trusts, supporting civil society organizations and actors in Central and Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans, Black Sea and Eurasia region, Belarus, and Ukraine that bolster democratic resilience through civic education, media literacy, public awareness campaigns, and media and watchdog activities.

Thornton was also the director of global programmes at International IDEA, a Stockholm-based intergovernmental think and do tank with the mission to advance democracy. She led multiple teams across Europe focused on constitution-building, parliamentary processes, elections, gender and inclusion, political parties, and democracy assessment and analysis. She also spearheaded IDEA's global comparative research, including the Global State of Democracy report measuring the health of democracy around the world. Thornton served more than 20 years overseas at the National Democratic Institute, working across Asia (Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka) and in Georgia (country).

Paloma Dallas, Senior Program Officer for Democracy around the Globe, Charles F. Kettering Foundation

Paloma Dallas is senior program officer for Democracy around the Globe at the Charles F. Kettering Foundation. She leads the foundation's international work at a time of rising authoritarianism and democratic backsliding, focusing on fostering democratic resilience, developing pro-democracy coalitions and alliances, and championing the development of inclusive democratic narratives.

Dallas joined the foundation as an editor and writer and later became a program officer, where she helped pioneer work at the intersection of arts, culture, and civic life.

She went on to lead the foundation's journalism and democracy initiatives, drawing on her own experience as a journalist to convene innovative reporters from around the world. In 2023, she coedited Reinventing Journalism to Strengthen Democracy, a Kettering Foundation essay collection drawn from this work.

Before joining the foundation, Dallas was the founding director of Del Pueblo, a community-based nonprofit connecting Spanish- and English-speaking residents in southwestern Ohio. She previously worked as a freelance journalist, a reporter for Reuters in Bogotá, Colombia, and a researcher for the Americas program at the Committee to Protect Journalists.

Dina Fakoussa, Senior Project Manager for Global Issues, Robert Bosch Foundation

Dina Fakoussa joined the Robert Bosch Foundation in January 2023 as Senior Project Manager Global Issues. She is part of the unit international cooperation, developing strategies and identifying partnerships related to changing dynamics in multilateralism and international cooperation against the backdrop of rising authoritarianism and geopolitics. In parallel she works as an independent analyst and consultant on the MENA region. Her professional career encompasses senior positions at German think tanks and political foundations targeting the MENA region. She served among others for nine years as Head of the MENA Program at the German Council on Foreign Relations in Berlin and as Program Manager at the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Lebanon.

Her areas of expertise and interest which she also addressed in publications are geo-politics, middle powers, the state of democracy and democracy promotion as well as German and EU policies vis à vis the MENA region. Dina is German-Egyptian and lived for more than 25 years in the MENA region, primarily in Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan.

Ted Piccone, Nonresident Senior Fellow at The Brookings Institution, Club de Madrid Advisor & Content Director of the GCDM

Ted Piccone is a nonresident senior fellow in the Strobe Talbott Center for Security, Strategy, and Technology in the Foreign Policy program at Brookings. During his 11 years in residence at Brookings, he was a senior fellow and the Charles W. Robinson Chair, appointed the inaugural fellow of the Brookings–Robert Bosch Foundation Transatlantic Initiative in Berlin, and served as the acting vice president and director and deputy director of the Foreign Policy program. His research has covered global democracy, rule of law and human rights policies; U.S.–Latin American relations, including China's rising profile; emerging powers; and multilateral affairs.

Piccone is the author of "Five Rising Democracies and the Fate of the International Liberal Order" (Brookings Institution Press, 2016), which examined the trajectories of India, Brazil, South Africa, Indonesia and Turkey.

Piccone served eight years as a senior foreign policy advisor in the Clinton administration, including on the National Security Council staff, at the State Department's Office of Policy Planning and the Office of the Secretary of Defense at the Pentagon. From 2001 to 2008, Piccone was the executive director and co-founder of the Democracy Coalition Project, a research and advocacy organization working to promote international cooperation for democracy and human rights globally.

He was also the Washington office director for the Club of Madrid, an association of over 100 former heads of state and government engaged in efforts to strengthen democracy around the world, and continues as an advisor. Piccone's other positions have included chief engagement officer at the World Justice Project, counsel for the United Nations Truth Commission in El Salvador, and press secretary to U.S. Representative Bob Edgar.