



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs

Virtual EGM on the Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027)

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Bios of Speakers

Ms. Sabina Alkire directs the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI). She is the Associate Professor of Development Studies in the Oxford Department of International Development at the University of Oxford. Her research interests include multidimensional poverty measurement and analysis, welfare economics, the capability approach, the measurement of freedoms and human development. From 2015–16, Sabina was Oliver T Carr Professor of International Affairs and Professor of Economics at George Washington University. Previously, she worked at the Global Equity Initiative at Harvard University, the Human Security Commission, and the World Bank's Poverty and Culture Learning and Research Initiative. She holds a DPhil in Economics from the University of Oxford and is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences.

Ms. Christina Behrendt is the Head of the Social Policy Unit in the International Labour Office's Social Protection Department in Geneva (Switzerland). Her earlier work experience includes assignments as regional social security specialist at the ILO Regional Office for Arab States in Beirut (Lebanon), as consultant for the International Social Security Association (ISSA), and as lecturer and research fellow at the University of Konstanz. Having studied in Konstanz (Germany) and Edinburgh (United Kingdom), she holds a Master degree in Politics and Public Administration and a PhD in Social Policy from the University of Konstanz. She has worked and published on various aspects of social protection in both developed and developing country contexts.

Ms. Benu Bidani is currently the Practice Manager of the Global Unit in the Poverty and Equity Global Practice. Prior to this assignment, she was the Practice Manager in the Poverty and Equity GP in South Asia and the Middle East and North Africa regions. She has also worked on operations, policy advice and analytical activities in Africa, East Asia and Pacific, Europe and Central Asia and the Caribbean. She has over 25 years of experience in development, working on issues of poverty, inequality, labor markets, gender equality and distributional impacts of public policy in a range of country contexts. She holds a Ph. D in Economics from Vanderbilt University.

Mr. Gaurav Datt is the Deputy Director of the Centre for Development Economics and Sustainability (CDES) at Monash University. Gaurav joined Monash University in 2011 with over twenty years of research and operational work experience in the development sector, including positions at the World Bank and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). His research focuses on poverty, income distribution, education, labour and social policy issues, and his work encompasses several countries including India, China, Egypt, Laos, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste. He has published widely in development and applied economics journals.

Mr. Bobo Diallo is an Economics Specialist on Macroeconomics, in the Economic Empowerment Section at UN Women. Bobo's areas of focus include capacity development/technical support and research on gender, macroeconomics, gender-based inequalities, poverty, the care economy, and social protection. Prior to joining UN Women, he was an actuarial analyst for Manulife Financial in Boston, a research fellow at the

Schwartz Center for Economic Policy Analysis in New York, a consultant with the World Bank's Governance and Public Policy Division, a policy specialist for UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa in New York, and the UN Economic Commission for Africa in Ethiopia. Bobo holds a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics from Salem State University (Boston, Massachusetts) and a Ph.D. in Economics, with a focus on Development, Growth, and Econometrics from the New School for Social Research (New York City, NY).

Mr. Pedro H. G. Ferreira de Souza is a tenured researcher at the Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (Ipea), the main research institute of the federal government in Brazil. He conducts academic and policy-oriented research on poverty, inequality, and economic development. He earned his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Brasília in 2016. His Ph.D. dissertation received the Capes/Ministry of Education Prize for Best Ph.D. Dissertation in Sociology and the National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in the Social Sciences (ANPOCS) Prize for Best Ph.D. Dissertation in the Social Sciences. His book "Uma História de Desigualdade: A Concentração de Renda entre os Ricos no Brasil (1926-2013)" ("A history of inequality: the concentration of income at the top in Brazil, 1926-2013") was won the Book of the Year award in the 2019 Jabuti Awards, the most prestigious prize in the Brazilian publishing industry.

Ms. Monica Jahangir-Chowdhury is the UN representative of the International Movement ATD Fourth World, a global movement working in partnership with individuals, families and communities living in persistent poverty in over 30 countries and accompanying them in the realization of their rights. At the United Nations, her main mission is to promote a rights-based approach to poverty eradication as well as to create spaces for people living in poverty to share their knowledge and direct experience of poverty. From 2020 to 2022, Monica served as co-Chair of the NGO Committee for Social Development in charge of organizing civil society participation and advocacy at the UN Commission for Social Development. Monica holds a Masters in International Relations from Panthéon Sorbonne University (France) and Bachelors degrees in French Law and Common Law from Paris Nanterre University (France). She was born and raised in Paris, France, with family roots in Bangladesh.

Mr. Hiromichi Katayama works at the Education Sector of UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France. His work focuses on strengthening national education and training systems and he is, among other activities, leading UNESCO's policy reviews in different countries. He has also been coordinating the development of skills assessment and anticipation in the Middle East and North Africa region, and the advancement of management information systems in sub-Saharan Africa. He has also coordinated situation analysis of education and training systems in Asia and Africa. Before joining UNESCO headquarters, he worked at the OECD in Paris on the assessment of PISA financial literacy. He also worked at the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) in Montreal, Canada, on the collection, analysis and dissemination of education data and statistics.

Mr. Amir Lebdioui is a Lecturer in the Political Economy of Development at SOAS, University of London, and a Visiting Fellow at the Latin America and Caribbean Centre of the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). His research lies at the crossroads between industrial policy, natural resource management, inequality and the sustainable development agenda, and he regularly provides analysis for governments, multilateral organisations, and civil society. He holds a PhD in Development Studies from the University of Cambridge. He is an Algerian national.

Mr. Ian Mitchell is a senior policy fellow and co-director for CGD's Europe programme. He leads two of CGD's flagship development policy benchmarking exercises – the Quality of ODA; and the Commitment to Development Index. He's currently researching the future development landscape, and the effectiveness of climate finance. Before CGD he was a senior civil servant and economist in the UK Government working mainly on international agriculture, environment and trade policy. He also chaired the G20's Agricultural Markets Information System Initiative (AMIS). He is an associate at Chatham House.

Ms. Josephine Muchiri is an Economic Affairs Officer in the International Tax and Development Cooperation (ITDC) Branch, of the Financing for Sustainable Development Office, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Her work includes policy analysis and support to intergovernmental processes and capacity building on tax, development cooperation and other financing for development issues. The ITDC Branch carries out DESA's capacity development programme on tax and other financing for development matters and serves as Secretariat to both the United Nations Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters and the Development Cooperation Forum. She is a lawyer by profession and previously worked for the Kenya Revenue Authority heading the policy arm of the International Tax Office. In this role, she participated in treaty negotiations, MAP discussions, dispute resolution as well as other treaty management and administration functions. In her role heading the International Tax Office she coordinated Kenya's implementation of the BEPS project and participation in the Inclusive Framework.

Mr. Werner Obermeyer is Director of the World Health Organization (WHO) office at UN Headquarters in New York. His portfolio includes the promotion of health in the General Assembly and other inter-governmental processes, the WHO's relations with the UN system entities based in New York, as well as non-governmental organizations that focus on public health issues. He was responsible for the negotiations which culminated in adoption of the 2011, 2014 and 2018 Political Declarations on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases, the 2016 Political Declaration on Anti-Microbial Resistance, the 2018 Political Declaration on Tuberculosis and the 2019 Political Declaration on Universal Health Coverage. He oversees initiatives related to the SDGs, global health and foreign policy, universal health coverage, health security and social protection, road safety, malaria, climate change and health, disabilities, narcotics and drugs, mental health and tobacco control. Prior to joining the World Health Organization he was the representative of the UN Environment Program (UNEP) in New York, responsible for environmental governance, health determinants and sustainable development. Before joining the United Nations he served in the South African Foreign Service, holding various senior diplomatic assignments.

Mr. Patrick Osakwe holds a Ph.D. degree in Economics from Queen's University, Canada. He is currently Chief of the Trade and Poverty Branch at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development based in Geneva, Switzerland. He has also served as Chief of Finance, Industry and Investment at the UN Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Before joining the United Nations, he worked as a Senior Analyst at the Bank of Canada, Ottawa. Dr. Osakwe has done extensive research in international and development economics and has refereed publications in major economic journals and books. He has won several academic awards, prizes, and fellowships. He is a valedictorian, a fellow of the Cambridge Commonwealth Society, and a member of the editorial boards of the "Journal of African Development", published by Penn State University Press, and the "International Development Policy" published by the Graduate Institute, Geneva.

Ms. Lauren M. Phillips is an international political economist and currently Deputy Director for the Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. Prior to joining FAO in 2021 she worked in a variety of policy, strategy and advisory roles at the International Fund for Agricultural Development from 2015-2021, as an Assistant Professor in the Department of International Relations at the London School of Economics (2008-2014), as a Research Fellow at the Overseas Development Institute (2005-08), and in a variety of private finance roles in the City of London and New York. She holds a PhD in International Political Economy from the London School of Economics and master and undergraduate degrees from Stanford University. Lauren is also an Adjunct Professor at Johns Hopkins SAIS Europe and has published widely on finance and development.

Mr. Daniel Platz is a Senior Economic Affairs Officer with over twenty years of experience working as a development economist at the United Nations. He currently serves as the Team Leader of the Development Cooperation Forum Unit and coordinates technical assistance and capacity development work on infrastructure asset management for local and national governments. He has made key contributions to UN intergovernmental processes, research and analytics and technical assistance in support of the implementation of the UN Development Agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals. He has published widely on issues of development corporation and development finance, municipal finance and infrastructure finance. Mr. Platz holds a Ph.D. in Economics and an M.A. in Global Political Economy and Finance from The New School University. He received Bachelor's degrees in Political Science and Economics from Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany.

Mr. Daouda Sembene is the CEO of AFRICATALYST, a global development advisory. He was an Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund where he represented 23 African countries on the Executive Board. During his IMF board tenure, he chaired the statutory Board Committee that was tasked with strengthening collaboration at the board level between the IMF and other international institutions, notably the World Bank Group, the United Nations, and WTO. He was also a senior economic advisor to the President of Senegal with ministerial rank. More recently, he provided consulting services to the G20 Saudi Secretariat, the IMF, and the World Bank. In addition, he is affiliated with the Center for Global Development as a Distinguished Nonresident Fellow. Daouda served as a senior advisor to the Minister of Economy, Finance, and Planning in Senegal. In that capacity, he was appointed as the IMF and World Bank Alternate Governor for Senegal and sat on a number of boards on behalf of the ministry. He also served briefly as Head of the Financial Sector and Competitiveness General Directorate in the same ministry. He began his career at the World Bank in Washington as part of a team of lecturers in macroeconomic management. Daouda holds a PhD in development economics from American University in Washington and master's degrees from George Washington University, the University of Montreal, and the University of Dakar. He has authored, and contributed to several publications, including a book on macroeconomic policy in fragile countries published by Oxford University Press. Daouda has been invited to provide an expert testimony at a US Congressional hearing on the role of the International Monetary Fund in a changing global landscape.

Mr. Matthias Schmale of Germany is currently the RC/HC (a.i) in Nigeria and has devoted almost 30 years to humanitarian and development work. He previously served for 6.5 years as Director for UNRWA Affairs first in Lebanon and New York, and then for more than 3.5 years led UNRWA's 13000 staff delivering quasi government like education, health and social services as well as a large-scale humanitarian programme for more than 1.4 million Palestine refugees in Gaza. Between August and November 2021, he worked as UNRWA's acting Chief of Staff as well as from early October to mid November 2021 as OiC Deputy Commissioner General. Prior to joining the UN System in 2015, he worked with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, and non-government organizations such as Save the Children International at regional and global level as well as based in countries including Ethiopia, Kenya, the Sudan, Switzerland and the United Kingdom focusing on running and coordinating humanitarian operations as well as planning and delivering development services with and to vulnerable people. He obtained his PhD in Development Economics from Berlin's Free University in 1992 and a master's degree in Macroeconomics from the same university in 1988.

Ms. Iman Shankiti was appointed WHO Representative for the WHO Lebanon country office effective 1 July 2018. She holds a BSc in pharmacy from Jordan University and a Master's Degree in health system management from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She began her career with the organization in the Iraq country office, focusing on strengthening the country's Primary Health Care system and fostering partnerships in health. This was followed by her appointment as the Emergency Coordinator for Sudan for a period of five years. In 2014, she was reassigned as the Emergency Coordinator to Kabul. In both Sudan and Afghanistan, Dr Shankiti focused on building national preparedness capacity and organizational readiness for emergencies, in addition to ensuring an effective response to natural disasters and conflict related emergencies.

In April 2017, Dr Iman Shankiti was appointed as emergency operations manager in the new WHO Health Emergencies Programme, based in the Regional Office in Cairo. From April 2017 to May 2018, Dr Shankiti supported the regional response to 10 graded emergencies, including 4 Grade 3 emergencies.

Mr. Heriberto Tapia is the Research and Strategic Partnership Advisor in HDRO, UNDP. Heriberto has been a member of the HDRO writing-research team since 2014, working on the main flagship report and in expanding the office's capacity to develop new knowledge products. Previously, he served in the Executive Office of UNDP (2012-2014) and in the Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (1998-2005). He has worked as a consultant to the IMF, UNDP and ECLAC. Furthermore, he has been a Lecturer at Columbia University (New York), University of Chile (Santiago) and University Diego Portales (Santiago). Heriberto holds a Ph.D. in Economics from Columbia University, a Master's degree in Economics, and a Commercial Engineering degree from the University of Chile.

Mr. J. Chris Toe is Senior Advisor for Corporate and Country Strategic Engagement in the Strategic Partnerships Division of the World Food Programme (WFP), and Senior Advisor for Programmes and Priority Initiatives at WFP's Africa Union Global Office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He has served as Minister of Agriculture of Liberia (2006 – 2009), President of Strayer University in the United States (2003 – 2006), Visiting Associate Professor of Economics and Agricultural Economics at Texas Tech University, and Assistant Professor of Economics and Management at the University of Liberia. Dr. Toe is also Executive Chairman of Agrifore Advisory and Investment Services (AAIS) and a farmer; and he earned a Ph.D. in Economics from Texas Tech University in 1984.

Mr. Sher Singh Verick is Head of the Employment Strategies for Inclusive Transformation Unit with the Employment Policy Department with the ILO in Geneva. Prior to this position, he was Manager of the Employment Policy and Analysis Programme (EPAP) of the International Training Centre of the ILO and Deputy Director of the ILO Decent Work Team for South Asia and Country Office for India. Including other roles with the ILO, he has also worked for the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and various research institutions in Europe and Australia. He holds a master's degree in development economics from the Australian National University and a doctorate in economics from the University of Bonn. Since December 2004, he is a Research Fellow of the Institute for Labor Economics (IZA). Through various roles, he has led and undertaken policy-oriented research and training to promote the formulation and implementation of more effective employment policies. He has published in a range of journals and has authored or edited a number of volumes including, Transformation of Women at Work in Asia: An Unfinished Development Agenda (2016), Perspectives on Labour Economics for Development (2013), and the Labour Markets of Emerging Economies (2013).