Biographies

Martin Sajdik, President of ECOSOC

His Excellency Martin Sajdik became President of the Economic and Social Council on 14 January 2014. Ambassador Martin Sajdik, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations in New York, presented his credentials on 4 January 2012. Prior to his appointment to New York, he served as Austria’s ambassador to the People’s Republic of China, Mongolia and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. From 2003 until 2007, Ambassador Sajdik was Director General for Economic Affairs and European Integration. Between postings at the Austrian Embassy in Moscow (1980-1985 and 1989-1991) and with the Executive Secretariat of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe in Vienna (1986-1987), he held executive positions at a major Austrian construction company and an Austrian Bank in Moscow. Earlier in his career, he served at the Permanent Representation of Austria to the United Nations Office at Geneva. Ambassador Sajdik studied law, international law and international relations in Vienna, Moscow and Bologna, and received his doctorate degree in law in Vienna in 1971. He is the author of several books on the “enlargement process of the EU,” published in Austria, Germany, USA and most recently in China.

Sam Kahamba Kutesa, President of the General Assembly of the sixty-ninth session

His Excellency Sam Kahamba Kutesa was elected President of the United Nations General Assembly’s sixty-ninth session on 11 June 2014. During his tenure as Uganda’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, Uganda hosted the Commonwealth Heads of Government Summit in 2007, the Council of Ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in 2008, and the African Union (AU) Heads of State Summit in 2010. Mr. Kutesa also hosted the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). He chaired the ICGLR’s Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee from 2011 to 2014. Mr. Kutesa played a key role in the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Mr. Kutesa was the Chairman of Uganda’s Constituent Assembly’s Political Systems Committee, where he contributed to drafting a new Constitution for the country adopted in 1995. From 2001 to 2005 he served as Minister of State for Finance, Planning and Economic Development, and from 1996 to 2000 as Minister of State for Planning and Economic Development. He was Uganda’s Attorney General from 1985 to 1986. In the private sector, Mr. Kutesa worked as Legal Secretary for Lonrho East Africa, and served on the Uganda Advisory Board of Trade and on the National Textiles Board.

Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General

Ban Ki-moon is the eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations. Mr. Ban took office on 1 January 2007. On 21 June 2011, he was unanimously re-elected by the General Assembly and will continue to serve until 31 December 2016. Highlights of his tenure include: promoting sustainable development, empowering women, supporting countries facing crisis or instability, generating new momentum on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, and strengthening the UN. At the time of his election as Secretary-General, Mr. Ban was his country's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade. His 37 years of service with the Ministry included postings in New Delhi, Washington D.C. and Vienna, and responsibility for Foreign Policy Adviser to the President, Chief National Security Adviser to the President, Deputy Minister for Policy Planning and Director-General of American Affairs. Mr. Ban worked for the Foreign Ministry's United Nations Division in 1975. His assignments included service as Chairman of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization and Chef de Cabinet during the Republic of Korea’s 2001-2002 presidency of the UN General Assembly.
His Excellency Mohamed Diare, Minister of Economy and Finance, Republic of Guinea


His Excellency Kaifala Marrah, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Republic of Sierra Leone

His Excellency Mounir Siaplay, Deputy Minister for Economic Management, Ministry of Finance and Development, Republic of Liberia

Dr. Mounir Siaplay is the Deputy Minister for Economic Management at the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. As Deputy Minister, he serves as the principal advisor to the Government of Liberia on Economic Policy and drives the Agenda for Transformation and Liberia’s Vision 2030. Prior to his appointment to the current post, Dr. Siaplay served as the Economic Advisor to the President of the Republic of Liberia, Her Excellency Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. As Economic Advisor, he advised the President on issues relating to domestic and international economic policies. Also, Dr. Siaplay was the Country Economist for the International Growth Centre (IGC) Programme in Liberia directed by the London School of Economics and Political Science and the University of Oxford where he contributed immensely to the creation and delivery of high quality policy and research outputs. These include policy briefs, research papers, synthesis papers and growth events for dissemination of research/analytical work. On the academic front, Dr. Siaplay served as a lecturer at the Oklahoma State University teaching Principles of Microeconomics, Managerial Economics, Money and Banking, and Economics of Sport. He was also a research assistant at the North Dakota State University and the Oklahoma State University, working and publishing on a range of topics from price volatility and hedging strategies in the wheat market, to economics of food safety and the economics of dual citizenship while research paper on the impact of social cash transfers on youth labor force participation and schooling is pending publication.

His Excellency Dianguina dit Yaya Doucouré, Chargé d’affaires a.i., Permanent Mission of the Republic of Mali to the United Nations
Dr. David Nabarro, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Ebola

Dr. David Nabarro is the Special Envoy on Ebola. His appointment follows the unanimous adoption of General Assembly resolution 69/1 on 19 September, and the adoption of Security Council resolution 2177 (2014) on the Ebola outbreak. In his vital role as Special Envoy on Ebola, Dr. Nabarro will provide strategic and policy direction for a greatly enhanced international response and will galvanize essential support for affected communities and countries. He has more than 30 years’ experience of public health, nutrition and development work at country, regional and global levels, and has held positions in non-governmental organizations, universities, national Governments and the United Nations system. He serves as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Food Security and Nutrition and Coordinator of the SUN Movement. Dr. Nabarro’s other recent positions include Senior Coordinator for Avian and Pandemic Influenza from 2005 to 2014 and coordinator of the United Nations High Level Task Force on Global Food Security from 2009 to 2014. He was appointed as Senior United Nations Coordinator for Ebola.

Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General, World Health Organization

Dr. Margaret Chan is the Director-General of WHO, appointed by the World Health Assembly on 9 November 2006. The Assembly appointed Dr Chan for a second five-year term at its sixty-fifth session in May 2012. Dr Chan’s new term began on 1 July 2012 and will continue until 30 June 2017. Before being elected Director-General, Dr Chan was WHO Assistant Director-General for Communicable Diseases as well as Representative of the Director-General for Pandemic Influenza. Prior to joining WHO, she was Director of Health in Hong Kong. During her nine-year tenure as director, Dr Chan confronted the first human outbreak of H5N1 avian influenza in 1997. She successfully defeated the spate of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in Hong Kong in 2003. She also launched new services to prevent disease and promote better health.

Dr. Paul Farmer, Co-Founder of Partners in Health and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Community Based Medicine and Lessons from Haiti (Moderator)

In December 2012, Dr. Paul Farmer was appointed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon as the UN Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Community Based Medicine and Lessons from Haiti. Dr. Farmer served as Deputy Special Envoy for Haiti (2009-2012). Dr. Farmer holds an M.D. and Ph.D. from Harvard University, where he is a University Professor. He is also the Chair of the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School, and Chief of the Division of Global Health Equity at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. He is an author of numerous books and articles on health and human rights and social inequality. He is the subject of Pulitzer Prize winner Tracy Kidder’s bestseller *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World*, which chronicles the development of Dr. Farmer’s work in Haiti and beyond. Dr. Farmer is a founding director of Partners In Health (PIH, 1987), an international non-profit organization that provides direct health care services, supports the building and strengthening of local health systems, and undertakes research and advocacy activities on behalf of those who are sick and living in poverty. Dr. Farmer began his lifelong commitment to Haiti in 1983 when still a student, working with villages in Haiti’s Central Plateau. Dr. Farmer is the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including the Margaret Mead Award from the American Anthropological Association, the Outstanding International Physician (Nathan Davis) Award from the American Medical Association, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation “Genius Award.” He is a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences and has recently been elected to membership in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.
Her Excellency, Ambassador Febe Potgieter-Gqubule, Special Advisor on Strategy Planning and Monitoring, Office of the African Union Commission Chairperson

Febe Potgieter-Gqubule is an advisor to the African Union (AU) Commission Chairperson Dlamini-Zuma at the African Union Headquarters. She has been a Ministerial appointee to the Council of Mangosuthu University of Technology Council since September 2012, as well as Deputy Chairperson on the Board of Directors at State Information Technology Agency (SITA) since April 2010. She is a founding member, a project leader and on the Board of Governors of Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA) in Johannesburg since March 2010. Ms. Potgieter-Gqubule was a member of the African National Congress (ANC)’s National Executive Committee (NEC). She served ex-officio on ANC NEC from 1996 to 1998 in capacity as ANCYL Secretary General. She was elected to NEC from 2007 to 2012. She served on the ANC’s Political Education Committee and National Disciplinary Committee during this period. She was an advisor to the AU commission in Addis Ababa from 2012 to 2013 and served as the Ambassador of South Africa to Poland from 2005 to 2009. She is also a former member and the first female secretary-general of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL).

Mr. Abdalla Hamdok, Deputy Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Africa

Dr. Abdalla Hamdok is a policy analyst and economist with over twenty five years of experience in addressing development challenges in Africa at the national, sub-regional and continent-wide levels. Over the years, he has developed an interest in policy-oriented research and analysis, focusing on issues of Governance, Institutional Analysis, Public Sector Reforms, regional integration and Resource Management. Dr. Hamdok is the primary author of many publications on Africa development challenges including governance and other related issues. He most recently served as the Director of the Governance and Public Administration Division, UNECA (2009 – 2011). Dr. Hamdok was also the director of NEPAD and Regional Integration Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) 2008 – 2009, and the Regional Director for Africa and the Middle East, International IDEA (2003- 2008). From 2001 to 2003 he served as the Senior Governance Expert/Coordinator of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. Dr. Hamdok was also acting Director of the Development Policy Management Division, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. From 1997 to 2001, Dr. Hamdok served as the Principal Policy Economist, African Development Bank, Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire. During 1995 to 1997, he was Chief Technical Advisor, International Labour Organization/Southern Africa Multidisciplinary Advisory Team (ILO/SAMAT), and UNDP, Harare, Zimbabwe. From 1993 to 1995 he was Principal Consultant, Head of Public Sector Group (PSG) and a member of the Management Committee of Deloitte & Touche Management Consultants, Zimbabwe. From 1981 – 1987 was a senior official with the government of Sudan (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning).

Mr. Mead Over, Senior Fellow, Center for Global Development

Mead Over is a Senior Fellow at the Center for Global Development researching the economics of efficient, effective, and cost-effective health interventions in developing countries. He has served on PEPFAR’s Scientific Advisory Board, the UNAIDS/World Bank Economics Reference Group and the Steering Committee of the HIV/AIDS modeling Consortium. He has adjunct appointments at Sciences-Po and at William and Mary. Previously, Over taught health economics and econometrics for 11 years at Williams College and Boston University and then worked for 20 years at the World Bank where he co-authored the Bank’s first comprehensive treatment of the economics of AIDS in the book, Confronting AIDS: Public Priorities for a Global Epidemic (1997, 1999). Over served in the Peace Corps in Burkina Faso (1967-69), and completed a PhD in economics at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.
Dr. Melanie Walker, Director of the Delivery Unit and Senior Adviser to President Jim Yong Kim at the World Bank Group

Dr. Melanie Walker is the Director of the Delivery Unit and Senior Adviser to President Jim Yong Kim at the World Bank Group. Prior, she was Deputy Director for Global Development Special Initiatives at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and served in several field-based roles with the World Health Organization focusing on macroeconomics and health. She received her medical doctorate and bachelor degrees from the University of Texas and completed residency and fellowship training at Harvard Medical School, Huntington Memorial Hospital, and University of Washington.

Mark Roland Thomas, Practice Manager, in the Macroeconomics and Fiscal Management Global Practice World Bank

Mark Roland Thomas is Practice Manager in the Macroeconomics and Fiscal Management Global Practice at the World Bank. Since joining the World Bank in 1999, he has worked for clients in Africa, Latin America, Europe, and Asia, including assignments based in Brasilia and Ankara. He served as Lead Economist for Côte d'Ivoire (2011-12), for Kazakhstan (2011), and for Turkey during the financial crisis (2008-11). He had earlier led programs on debt relief and debt management (2005-08) and on Brazil (2000-05). Dr. Thomas has published numerous peer-reviewed articles and book chapters covering economic growth, macroeconomic crises, debt, labor markets, and regional policy. He is a recognized global expert on developing country sovereign debt. Experience in the private sector informs his approach to many issues: early in his career he helped build a Paris-based start-up management consultancy. He has also served as adjunct faculty at Georgetown University Public Policy Institute, the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University, and the École des Hautes Études Commerciales at the University of Montreal.

Ms. Aleesha Taylor, Deputy Director, Open Society Education Support Programme, Open Society Foundations

Ms. Aleesha Taylor is deputy director of the Open Society Education Support Program. Taylor’s areas of expertise include policy development and systemic reconstruction in post-conflict states and innovative financing for education. Prior to joining the Open Society Foundations in July 2007 as a senior program manager, she was a lecturer in the Department of International and Transcultural Studies at Teachers College, Columbia University, where she also completed her doctoral studies. Taylor also holds degrees in psychology from Spelman College and the Graduate Faculty for Political and Social Sciences of the New School for Social Research. She is the coeditor of the forthcoming Partnership Paradox: The Story of Liberia’s Post Conflict Educational Recovery (2006–2010) and a term member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Mr. Alan Knight, Chair of the Ebola Private Sector Mobilization Group (EPSMG) and General Manager for Corporate Sustainability ArcelorMittal

Alan has over 25 years’ experience of working with global and national companies and governments on sustainability. He joined the world’s largest Steel company ArcelorMittal in April 2014 as their General Manager for Corporate Responsibility. Alan help create and currently chairs the Ebola Private Sector Mobilisation Group, which is a collation of over 50 companies sharing best practice and coordinating the corporate respond to Ebola in West Africa. Previous to that he was Sustainability Director for Business and the Community (BITC) where he oversaw all their Corporate
Sustainability Programmes. He advised the Virgin Group on sustainable development for seven years and is still involved in the Virgin Earth Challenge: Sir Richard Branson’s $25m prize for scalable, sustainable ways of removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. Previously he has worked with global companies as diverse as B&Q, Kingfisher and SABMiller. He chairs the UK Task Force on Sustainable Growing Media. For nine years he was a commissioner with the Sustainable Development Commission and he introduced the concept of “choice editing” into the product policy debate. He was also chairman of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Nature Partnership on which he remains a board member. He is a Senior Associate of the Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership. He was awarded the OBE in June 1998, in 2005 the US-based Rainforest Alliance presented him with a lifelong award and in 2013 he was made an Honoury Fellow of the Society for the Environment.

Mr. Maged Abdelaziz, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa

Mr. Maged Abdelaziz was appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General as his Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) on 17 May 2012. Prior to his appointment, Mr. Abdelaziz served as the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations in New York since 2005. He brought to his new position more than 33 years of experience in the multilateral diplomacy and direct engagement in promoting global development and socio-economic agenda from an African perspective, including representing the continent as the co-chair of the negotiations of the Financing for Development Review Conference in 2008, the Rapporteur General of the Conference on the Economic and Financial Crisis and Its Impact on Development in 2009. Mr. Abdelaziz also represented Africa in both the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly as their Vice President and played a leading role as the African member of the bureau of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as Rio+20. As Special Adviser on Africa, Mr. Abdelaziz has been playing an active role in enhancing the United Nations’ role in Africa’s development, with particular emphasis on the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), ensuring the nexus between peace and security and development, the implementation of the outcome document of major United Nations Summit Conferences related to Africa, as well as the preparatory process for shaping the post 2015 development agenda of the United Nations.

Mr. Sunil Saigal, Principal Coordinator of UNDP’s Response to the Ebola Outbreak, UNDP

Mr. Sunil Saigal has been appointed the Principal Coordinator of UNDP’s Response to the Ebola Outbreak in September 2014. Mr. Sunil Saigal served until recently as Director of the Security Office within the Bureau of Management. Prior to this position, he served as Deputy Assistant Administrator and Deputy Regional Director, Regional Bureau for the Arab States (RBAS). From 2005 to 2009, Sunil served as RC/RR in Djibouti (2005-2009), having served as Officer-in-Charge in Chad (November 2004-March 2005) and in Guinea (August-October 2004). From 2003 to 2004, Sunil served as RC/RR/HC and Director of UNIC in Burundi. Prior to this, he was Director, Office of Legal and Procurement Support, BoM (2000-2003); Chief, Policy and Control Unit, Bureau for Financial and Administrative Services (1999-2000); Deputy Director, Division for Resources Mobilization, Bureau for Resources and External Affairs (1994-1998); Assistant Resident Representative, Somalia (1993-1994); Assistant Regional Representative, Thailand (1989-1993); Evaluation Research Officer, Central Evaluation Office, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation (1987-1989); and Programme Officer, Somalia (1985-1987). He holds a candidatus juris from the University of Copenhagen in Denmark.