



## **ECOSOC Dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system Civil Society Hearing**

**Tuesday, 28 April 2015, 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm  
Conference Room 3**

### **Panelist Biographies**



#### **Ms. Debra Jones, Director and UN Representative, Save the Children**

Ms. Debra A Jones serves as Save the Children's Director and UN Representative in New York, engaging with UN agencies, delegations, and civil society partners to create lasting positive change for the world's poorest and most vulnerable children. Her portfolio includes: child protection, child rights, humanitarian reform, health, nutrition, post-2015, and more. She is Vice-chair of the Advisory Board for the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict; Co-chair of the Beyond 2015 UN Working Group; and an Advisory Group member for the NGO Committee on UNICEF. She serves as an Adjunct Professor at the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University. Prior to joining Save the Children, she was Director of Global Advocacy for Family Care International, where she also held an earlier role as the Country Director in the Dominican Republic. She co-founded the Paraíso Assistance Program and the International Organization for Adolescents. She has also worked with the Rockefeller Foundation among others. She has a Masters in International Affairs and a Masters in Public Health from Columbia University.

#### **Ms. Marina Ponti, Global Policy Forum**

Marina Ponti is representing Global Policy Forum and Social Watch at current UN negotiations for post-2015 and Financing for Development, while writing for civil society blogs and newsletters. Prior, Ponti served for one year as Chief Operating Officer of Catapult, the first crowd-funding platform for girls' and women's rights and development. Previously, Ponti has worked for the United Nations Development Programme for ten years holding several partnership and policy positions. In particular, Ponti was instrumental in the set-up of the UN Millennium Campaign in her role as Deputy Director, in the roll out of the overall outreach and partnership strategy and in the launch of several national Millennium Development Goals campaigns in Europe and Latin America. She also played a pivotal role as Director for Europe in the set-up of the regional office and in leading MDGs advocacy campaigns in Spain, Portugal, Italy, France and Germany. Before joining the United Nations Development Programme, Marina Ponti was Head of Advocacy and External Relations at Mani Tese, an Italian development NGO, where she led coalitions and advocacy initiatives on several development issues (Social Watch, Jubilee 2000, Tobin Tax, Stop Dumping, etc.) from 1996 to 2002. Marina Ponti has participated extensively at international conferences, including the UN Summits Conferences. Moreover, she has addressed the European, Austrian, French, Irish, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish Parliaments. Ponti has also been a lecturer on development and human rights in several institutions including Bard College (USA), the Universities of Milan, Rome, Verona, Pavia, Padua, Brescia and the United Nations Training Centre in Turin. As an expert on development issues, Marina has published several articles in leading magazines, online publications and blogs on matters such as the Millennium Development Goals, aid effectiveness, social development, food price volatility, debt-relief, human rights, Child labor, globalization, trade, Common Agricultural Policy, inequality and gender. Ponti has a master in Political Sciences from the University of Milan and a certificate in Global Management from INSEAD.



**Mr. Roberto Bissio, Executive Director, Instituto del Tercer Mundo**

Roberto Bissio coordinates the secretariat of Social Watch, an international network of citizen organizations from over eighty countries that reports every year on how governments and international organizations implement their commitments on poverty eradication and gender equity. He is executive director of the Third World Institute, a non-profit research and advocacy organization based in Uruguay. Mr. Bissio is a member of the international committee of Third

World Network and he serves as an advisor to ICANN on accountability issues. He has been a member of the civil society advisory group to the UNDP administrator. Bissio has written on development issues since 1973 as a journalist and columnist and he is the author of the reference books "Third World Guide" and "World Guide" published in several languages between 1979 and 2009.



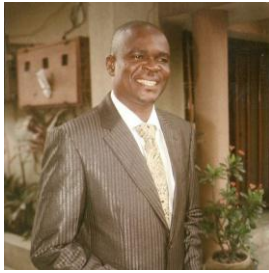
**Ms. Sofia García García, Co-Chair of the Beyond 2015 UN Working Group and Advocacy Advisor on Post-2015 at SOS Children's Villages**

Sofía García García is SOS Children's Villages advocacy advisor on the post-2015 development agenda process. Her role in SOS Children's Villages is to bring the voices of children and young people without parental care or at risk of losing it to the decision making process around the new development agenda. Sofia has recently taken over the position of co-chair of the UN Working Group of the Beyond 2015 Campaign. The group is composed by civil society organizations that are part of the campaign based in NY and ensures that the bridge between the national and regional level and New York is strong

and the flow of information and advocacy asks is ensured.

**Ms. Margo LaZaro, Co-chair of the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development and UN Representative of the International Council of Women and Global Family**

Margo LaZaro, Co-Chair of the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development. Margo was elected Co-Chair of the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development in December of 2013. Through her leadership with her Co-Chair and the current Executive Board, the NGOCD is building a foundation for its members to become key stakeholders across a wide spectrum of topics related to sustainable development. She has organized events and roundtable discussions with leading experts who are well respected in their fields that have produced action agendas nationally and world-wide. Guest speakers include United Nations Ambassadors, UN agency representatives, elected officials, social entrepreneurs, and leading members of academia and civil society. A number of these experts have become honorary advisers to the NGOCD. Margo is a UN Representative for the International Council of Women, which has ECOSOC Consultative Status with the UN and was founded by Susan B. Anthony in 1888. In addition, Margo has represented Global Family, which is associated with UN/DPI, for 25 years. Margo has been involved with the UN Environment Programme, UN/DESA, UNDP, UN/DPI, UN-Habitat, and other NGOs in developing collaborative projects and activities at the UN. Margo was the CEO of a non-profit organization for several years and has served on boards and numerous committees at the UN. Her involvement at the UN has included women's leadership and empowerment, climate change, youth leadership, gender equality, sustainable energy, clean water, human rights, indigenous leadership, social impact projects, disarmament, peace education to build a culture of peace, innovations in infrastructure for sustainable communities, and raising awareness of human trafficking and violence against women and children. She is presently focused on creating social impact projects for women's empowerment. Margo's rewarding career with the entertainment industry in film, theatre and television included work with news and entertainment programs such as Good Morning America, 20/20, Primetime Live, the View, and the Today Show to mention a few. Her years of experience working closely with major celebrities on productions have given her the background and vision to produce positive results for sustainable communities.



**Mr. Afolabi Sam-Adeboye, Chief Operating Officer, Gabasawa Women & Children Empowerment Initiative**

A man of many parts, born on July 31, 1964, Afolabi Sam-Adeboye holds a Bachelor's degree in Botany from the University of Lagos (1991), a post-graduate Diploma in Computer Operations from the same University (1993), and now in view for the Bachelor of Social Work & Applied Psychology from Saxion University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. He has a multi-disciplinary educational and professional background from manufacturing through Corporate Financing and

Communications practice for about 12 years before veering into the operations of humanitarian services and policy analysis in the year 2000. He was pioneering staff of Macedonian Initiative; a Faith Based Non-Governmental Organization established in the year 2000. He rose to become the National Coordinator in February 2006. He set up ARMS OF COMFORT FOUNDATION for Widows & Vulnerable Children in July 2006, serving as the Executive Director and in 2007, he volunteered to support the structuring and development of Gabasawa Women & Children Empowerment Initiative, a complete grassroots organization giving hope to the hopeless women and children found on the streets. He was elected as the Public Relations Officer for National Council of Child Rights Advocates (NACCRAN) Lagos State in May 2009 before he was seconded to the Zonal Council as the Zonal Secretary General for NACCRAN South West Zone. NACCRAN South West has had Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC) since 2011. Afolabi Kolawole Sam-Adeboye served as the Permanent Representative and the Chief Administrative Officer of NACCRAN South West to the United Nations ECOSOC from September 2011 till February 2014. In 2014, Gabasawa Women and Children Empowerment Initiative also gained Special Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC. He was appointed as the Chief Operating Officer/Chief Administrative Officer of Gabasawa Women and Children Empowerment Initiative in 2014. Afolabi Kolawole Sam-Adeboye is a member of the Steering Committee for the ECOSOC Civil Society Hearing on the Longer Term Positioning of the United Nations Development System. He is married to Mrs. Toyin Afolabi with 2 children, Kolade (Boy) and Atilolaoluwa (Girl).