

## SPEAKERS



**H.E. Mr. E. Courtenay Rattray**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Jamaica to the United Nations, is an Attorney-at-Law, who became his country's representative to the UN in 2013. He is well recognized for his leadership in enhancing the interest of his country and region and goals of the UN. He recently spearheaded the UN Group of Friends (GoF) of SDG Financing in tandem with the Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations, to promote solution-oriented ideas to mobilize the global pool of private capital required to finance the investment needed to implement the SDGs. Ambassador Rattray is a former Chair of a number of processes including those on Security Council Reform, Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Committee on Disarmament and International Security. He also co-facilitated negotiations on the political declaration of the 2017 UN High Level Political Forum on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. He was conferred with an Honorary Doctorate from his alma mater, West Virginia Wesleyan College, at which he gave the Commencement Address in May 2017.



**Reverend Michael Livingston**, Senior Executive Minister, The Riverside Church, is the Executive Minister at the Riverside Church in Manhattan. He is the former IWJ National Policy Director and served as the Director of IWJ's Washington, D.C. office. He has helped organize the faith community across the country to stand with workers against corporations that are not people-centered and a Congress that refuses to legislate for the common good and advocated for national policies that advance the rights of working families. He spent years in executive leadership with the International Council of Community Churches (ICCC) and the National Council of Churches (NCC), and completed missions of peacemaking, reconciliation, interfaith dialog and prophetic engagement. The Rev. Livingston is a graduate of theological education at Princeton Theological Seminary.



**Imam Shamsi Ali**, Nusantara Foundation, is a prominent moderate Muslim Scholar known for promoting interfaith dialogues among Abrahamic Religions in the United States. He is the Chairman of the Al-Hikmah Mosque and Director of Jamaica Muslim Center. Named as one of seven most influential religious leaders in New York City by New York Magazine, he is also one of 100 recipients of the 2009 Ellis Island Medal of Honor Award for endless dedication in building bridges between religious communities, one of the highest awards recognized by the US government to native-born and naturalized U.S. citizens with tremendous contributions to American society and the world. He was also chosen as one of The 500 Most Influential Muslims in the world in 2009, 2010, and 2011 by the Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Center in Jordan and Georgetown University.



**Rabbi Alvin Kass**, chief chaplain of the New York City Police Department, was honored by the New York Police Department for 50 years of service and promoted him to three-star chaplain, a first for the police force. Former head of the New York Board of Rabbis, he has served seven mayors and 16 police commissioners, and was on call during the ultimate test of 9/11. Also revered for resolving a

hostage situation involving the now-closed Carnegie Deli, Kass, 80, said, “I don’t have a secret. I just do this instinctively. I enjoy life, I love life, I’m thankful for each day.”



**Swami Sarvapriyananda** has been appointed as a Minister and Spiritual Leader of the Vedanta Society of New York, assuming his duties on January 6, 2017. He has spoken on karma and self and not-self-waking and dreams. Previously, he served as assistant minister of the Vedanta Society of Southern California. Swami joined the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in 1994 and received Sannyas in 2004. Before being posted to the VSSC’s Hollywood Temple, Swami served as an acharya (teacher) of the monastic probationers’ training center at Belur Math. He has served the Ramakrishna Math and

Mission in various capacities including as Vice Principal of the Deoghar Vidyapith Higher Secondary School, Principal of the Shikshana Mandira Teacher Education College at Belur Math, and the first Registrar of the Vivekananda University at Belur Math.

**Venerable Yuwang**, BLIA, The Buddha’s Light International Association, also known as the International Buddhist Progress Society, is associated with the new religious movement Fo Guang Shan (FGS), a monastic and lay organization, the largest Buddhist organization in Taiwan whose hope is to spread joy to and the concept of integration to the world. In 2003, BLIA was granted the NGO association status by the United Nations Economic and Social (ECOSOC) and the Department of Public Information (DPI). She followed Venerable Master Hsing Yun, the founder of FGS, learning Buddhism for many years. She was fully ordained in 2008 at Hsi Lai Temple, the FGS North America headquarters, in Los Angeles, California. Previously, she was a volunteer at FGS Xiang Yun Temple (IBPS-Austin) in Austin, Texas, and joined the Austin chapter of Buddha’s Light International Association (BLIA) and was elected by all members as the president Her professional specialty is in teaching Chinese as a second language and in early childhood education. After becoming a monastic, Venerable Youwang served as the executive director at Buddha’s Light Hsi Lai School under the Hsi Lai Temple system for four years; in 2012, she was assigned to FGS Xiang Yun Temple as the director of general affairs. In November 2014, Venerable Youwang was assigned to IBPS New York and serves as the temple's executive director.



**Dr. Uma Mysorekar**, President of the Hindu Temple Society of North America, is an American Hindu leader and educator. She is an expert in disabilities, initiated programs to bring the community together, including spiritual, educational, and cultural activities. She has initiated interfaith meetings and spoken at numerous functions to increase public understanding of Hinduism. Raised in Bangalore, India, she studied medicine at the University of Bombay, where she was awarded the gold medal for academic excellence. She came to the United States in 1970 and practices obstetrics and gynecology in New York City. She has been involved in helping the handicapped through Heart and Hand for the Handicapped since 1976 and served as its president, and pioneered fundraising for Aid to the Disabled, Orphaned and Poor under the auspices of the Hindu Temple Society of North America. She has also contributed substantially toward the construction of a hostel for poor working women in Bangalore, India.

**Imam Jaiteh**, Omar Mosque, a native of Gambia, is a highly regarded Islamic scholar, a respected imam in the African community, and a sought-after public speaker in mosques throughout the city of NY. He who holds a masters degree in Leadership from Claremont

Lincoln University and a bachelor's degree from the Islamic university of Medina. He is also a founder and president of Njaba Kunda Development Corp.



Rev. Dionne P. Boissière is the Chaplain of the Church Center for the United Nations and the first woman of African Descent to hold this position in the history of this New York ecumenical and inter-faith landmark. Fittingly, she is featured among those called the ‘next generation’ of black women ministers and is published in *Those Preaching Women: A Multicultural Collection*. She received her Masters of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary in NY and has vast experience in organizational leadership training, non-profit fundraising, religious & community programming; women’s religious studies & gender justice; church stewardship, worship and liturgy; and interfaith community building. Rev. Boissière is Co-Chair of Ecumenical Women at the United Nations and serves on the Bureau of the Committee of Religious NGOs at the UN, the International Humanitarian Outreach Ministries, Inc., and other boards. She is called and committed to a ministry of relevant, holistic, integrated teaching and preaching, global advocacy and activism.



**Rev. Dr. T. Kenjitsu Nakagaki**, D.Min., President and Founder of the newly established non-profit organization, Heiwa Peace and Reconciliation Foundation of New York Ltd., is a Buddhist priest, ordained in the 750-year old Jodoshinshu tradition of Japanese Buddhism. Rev. Nakagaki is a Hiroshima Peace Ambassador, Nagasaki Peace Correspondent, and New York City Police Department Clergy Liaison. Since 1994, he has organized Interfaith Peace events to commemorate the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings. He also organized annual 9/11 WTC Memorial Floating Lanterns Ceremonies from 2002-2011.

**Ruth Devorah** is an American singer, cantor, actor, composer, craft artisan and costume designer. She is a member of the American Society for Jewish Music, Actors Equity Association, the Screen Actors Guild, Society Singers and the National Association of Women Artists. She was born on December 28, 1930 in New York City.

**Zoe Chang** is an ordained interfaith minister and officer of the United Nations Staff Recreation Council Enlightenment Society. Previously, she was an organizer of meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women.



**Chris Sacarabany** is the Executive Director of the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding and a Board Member of the United African Congress. Previously he was a project coordinator assistant and consultant for UNESCO.



Mohammed A Nurhussein, MD, is the national chairman of the United African Congress. A Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine emeritus, he served as Chief of Geriatric Medicine at the State University of New York (SUNY) Downstate Medical Center. Under his leadership, the geriatric fellowship program secured a full 5-year accreditation. Born and raised in Ethiopia, he was one of six Army officers from the Harar Military Academy sent by Emperor Haile Selassie to Yugoslavia to

study medicine, thus becoming among the first Ethiopian military doctors. A repressive military regime that followed the 1974 revolution in Ethiopia eliminated all opposition, including that his brother was among the thousands killed by the military. Seeking political asylum in the U.S.A., Dr. Nurhusein started a long career as an attending physician at Kings County Hospital Center and at SUNY Downstate. His long service and mentorship to students at both public institutions has earned him numerous awards, including a listing in the Castle-Connolly Best Doctors in Geriatric Medicine in New York in 2009 and 2010. He served as Chairman of a coalition of African Diaspora organizations led by the United African Congress and Give Them a Hand Foundation to raise awareness of the then-raging Ebola epidemic in West Africa, holding a forum on Ebola at the UN in August 2014 and a concert at the UN GA Hall in March 2015. Dr. Nurhusein is a Board Member of Ethio-American Doctors Group, Inc., establishing a state-of-the-art internationally accredited hospital and cancer center of excellence in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He is also an active member of Physicians for Human Rights and a Board member of Brooklyn for Peace.

## PERFORMERS



**Lynn Rosen** is an author, activist and teacher. She founded two organizations: Lynn's Kids that goes into schools and offers free courses, and Saving Souls that helps women who are abused. She lives in New York with her husband, **Taoufik Essadiki (Tofi)**, with whom she has written several books. As she says, they met when she was doing a workshop about empowering women for teachers in Morocco. Taken with his sweet heart, kind soul, desire to learn more (and cooking abilities), they eventually communicated by email and FB Messenger every day and bridged the cultural gaps; ultimately she met his family, he came to the U.S. after three years due to the immigration system; and they married in a Mosque in Casablanca and a civil service in New York City. They work together at Lynn's Kids and the Saving Souls Women's Network and have written several books together, including "I Love You in Allah." She thanks Allah every day for bringing him to her.



**Russell Daisey** is an internationally-known composer, pianist and singer-songwriter, and music therapist. An NGO representative at the United Nations of the International Association of Applied Psychology, he is a founding member of the NYC Peace Museum and cofounder with Dr. Judy Kuriansky of the Stand Up for Peace Project and the Global Kids Connect Project. He has performed for world leaders, including Presidents Bill Clinton and George H. W. Bush, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, and New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani, and produced concerts and presentations at international congresses, interfaith events and memorials worldwide with Dr. Judy Kuriansky, including after 9/11; earthquakes in Haiti and Japan; the International Congresses of Applied Psychology in Cape Town, South Africa, and Paris, France; the European Congress of Psychology in Stockholm, Sweden; the United Nations Department of Public Information/NGO conference in Mexico City; and the UN International Day for the Culture of Peace; the U.S. Doctors for Africa's First Ladies of Africa Health Summit in Los Angeles; and the First Hiroshima International Peace Summit in Japan with HH The Dalai Lama, Betty Williams, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. He and Dr. Kuriansky have written original songs in indigenous languages for many missions worldwide. They have performed and co-produced events for several years at the UN for various meetings and events.



**St Mark the Evangelist French Choir** is the choir for the St Mark the Evangelist Church on West 138<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan. They perform regularly at the church and other venues, with a chorus and band,

in a vast repertoire of cultural styles, inspiring and uplifting spirits at every service.



**B.L.I.A. choir** is the choral group of the Buddhist Light International Association

## CALL TO ACTION



**Mr. Felipe Queipo** currently serves as a Public Information Officer, Civil Society Unit, United Nations Department of Global Communications (DGC), responsible for outreach, engagement and global communications with civil society organizations. He began his United Nations career at the NGO Relations & Advocacy Section of the Department of Public Information (DPI) in 2008. Also, as the focal point for faith-based organizations within DGC, he leads the team that organizes the "Focus on Faith" briefings

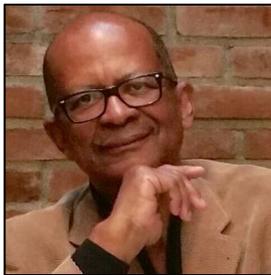
within the Department, an initiative that studies the links between faith traditions and religious organizations, and the work and mission of the UN, and that has explored, amongst other themes, the role that gender plays in religious institutions, the contribution of religious organizations in preventing violent extremism, as well as the efforts to address the refugee and migrants crises around the globe and the resettlement work of governments and faith-based civil society. He also serves as the focal point for technology, as a strong advocate of new communications tools and their role in developing effective communication and media strategies. In this capacity, he assists civil society organizations in developing social media policies to increase the efficacy of their outreach efforts within the civil society context. Before Graduating from Brigham Young University, where he studied Political Science, he studied Theology and Biology in Spain, emphasizing his training on Political and Social Theology.

## MODERATORS



**Dr. Judy Kuriansky** is an internationally known psychologist, professor, award-winning journalist, author, and media commentator. At the United Nations, she is the main NGO representative of the International Association of Applied Psychology and Past Chair of the Psychology Coalition who partnered with UN Ambassador Caleb Otto for the successful

inclusion of mental health and wellbeing in UN Agenda 2030, and now serves as the advisor for the Group of Friends of Mental Health and Well-being at the UN. On the faculty of Columbia University Teachers College, she has provided psychosocial trainings and post-disaster support in China, Haiti, Japan, the USA, Sint Maarten and Iran, as well as in Sierra Leone during Ebola and in Jordan for Syrian refugees. She and her music partner Russell Daisey compose original anthems performed for these events. A Trustee of the United African Congress, she co-organizes, moderates or speaks at many events at the UN, including for the WHO World Health Day, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission for Social Development, the First Ladies of Africa Health Summit, International Day of Happiness and the World Day of Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development. She has also moderated a workshop on civil society contributions to innovative financing at the Tbilisi International Solidarity and Innovative Financing Forum. Her many books include *“Ecospsychology: The Intersection of Psychology and Environmental Protection”* *“The Psychosocial Issues of a Deadly Epidemic: What Ebola has Taught us about Holistic Healing”* and *“Beyond Bullets and Bombs: Grassroots Peacebuilding between Israelis and Palestinians”* as well as *“The Complete Guide to A Healthy Relationship”* and *“31 Things to Raise a Child’s Self-Esteem.”* Her many awards include the Humanitarian Award for Lifetime Achievement in Global Peace and Tolerance.



**Mr. Gordon M. Tapper**, Founder and Chair of Give Them a Hand Foundation, has had a long and distinguished career of over 35 years of service at the United Nations, and is former Chief of Section in the Department of Administration and Management. Amongst his more important contributions at the UN is his participation in the first fair and free elections held in South Africa as a member of the UNOMSA mission where he was assigned to Kwazulu/Natal where he established and supervised electoral offices and meetings of the peace processes. Also while at the UN, he founded the Non-Profit Organization, Give Them a Hand Foundation (GTAH) for staff members like himself to have an organized format for offering help to needy peoples. GTAH teams have give physical support to survivors of Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, the Haiti earthquake and on medical and humanitarian missions to several countries. GTAH was partner organization that hosted the first Ebola Forum at the UN in August, 2015 in the ECOSOC Chamber with the participation of ambassadors of the three most affected countries, as well as a concert in the General Assembly Hall in March to impress upon Member States the need for vigilance in fighting Ebola. He also gives support to Rural Women in Agriculture whom he sees as the backbone of food security in most of the developing world. Mr. Tapper is a Trustee of the United African Congress and a proud native of Jamaica in the West Indies.