



**United Nations**

Department of  
Economic and  
Social Affairs

**29 September 2020**

**Global Online Dialogue Series**

**“Navigating uncertainties: An intergenerational dialogue  
on COVID-19 and youth employment”**

### **Speaker Biographies**

#### **Opening remarks:**



**Mr. Jeph Acheampong (Ghana):** Mr. Acheampong is the founder of Blossom Academy, where he drives the business strategy of the company. Being at the forefront of innovation and talent development, Blossom Academy recruits and develops African data science talent, with the goal of connecting them with global opportunities. Prior to founding Blossom, Mr. Acheampong was a founding member of Esusu Financial, a leading financial technology company providing data solutions for the low-to-middle income consumer. As a Princeton in Africa fellow, he helped high-growth startups across Kenya gather live customer insights from mobile survey conversations. He also worked on Wall Street, where he helped multinationals use their data to achieve a competitive advantage. Mr. Acheampong holds an Economics degree from New York University. He is an Expo Live Global Innovator, a World Economic Forum Global Shaper, and was named a Future of Ghana Pioneer.

#### **Moderator:**



**Ms. Lyanne Alfaro (USA):** As Supervising Multimedia Producer and Social Media Content Director for Nasdaq, Ms. Alfaro’s team helps reimagine the way Nasdaq tells stories about the organization’s role in the future of technology through video, podcasting and social media content. On any given day, she hosts live segments spotlighting entrepreneurs and thought leaders, leads video campaigns on Nasdaq technology and produces the podcast “Tomorrow’s Capital.” Through her newsletter and podcast, “Moneda Moves”, she shares stories about the intersection of Latinos and money, a topic she is very passionate about. Her storytelling work has been recognized by the Webby Awards, Digiday and PRNews. Previously, at CNBC, her team’s social

coverage earned a Best in Business Award from the Society of American Business Editors and Writers. Ms. Alfaro's work has appeared in CNBC, Business Insider, NBC Latino, Millie, Distintas Latitudes and Latino Rebels. She is especially passionate about exploring the Latino influence in the world of business.

## Panelists:

### **Roundtable 1: Protecting and strengthening youth employment during COVID-19**



**Professor Anastasia Gage** (Ghana/USA): Professor Gage is a Professor at the Department of Global Community Health and Behavioral Sciences, School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, at Tulane University in New Orleans, USA. In addition, she is a member of the UN High-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs. She earned a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Demography from the University of Pennsylvania, a Master of Philosophy degree in Population Studies from the University of Ghana, and a Bachelor of Arts (Honors) degree in Geography from the University of Sierra Leone. Dr. Gage has extensive research experience in sexual

and reproductive health, violence against women and girls, maternal and child health, women's empowerment, and health risk behaviors among youth. She has also conducted qualitative and quantitative studies to support program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in Ghana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Nigeria, Jamaica, Uganda, and Zambia. Dr. Gage has served on the Board of Directors of the African Population and Health Research Center, Nairobi (2000-2006); the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS)-International, Advisory Board for the National Science Foundation (2015-2018); the Scientific Advisory Committee, INDEPTH Network (2010-2018); and the International Outreach Committee, Population Association of America (2013-2017). She served as President of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, the worldwide network of demographers, from 2014-2017.



**Dr. Alexandre Kalache (Brazil):** Dr. Kalache is President of the International Longevity Center in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and a HelpAge International Global Ambassador. Previously, he was Lecturer in the Department of Community Health at the University of Oxford, Director of Epidemiology of Ageing Unit at the University of London, and Director of the WHO Department of Aging and Life Course. Dr. Kalache acts as an international consultant

on ageing for public and civil society organizations and teaches at universities across the world.



**Ms. Nolundi S. Luthuli (South Africa):** Ms. Luthuli holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Honors) Degree from UNISA and an Advanced Certificate in Management from Milpark Business School. She is the Managing Director of iSeluleko Youth Leadership Development Forum (iSeluleko NPC), a non-profit company aimed at developing youth through leadership talks, career development exhibitions and health seminars. She is currently working in the CSI department at the Transformation Centre of Excellence in one of the world's largest steel producing companies, ArcelorMittal. Ms. Luthuli is suitably positioned to be a well-sought after and trusted advisor, especially with regards to youth development in underprivileged communities. In 2013 Nolundi received

the Indondo Award (KwaZulu-Natal province) for her role as a social entrepreneur and has been featured in DestinyConnect online, Radio 2000, Tshwane TV, Milpark Education Newsletter, Media24 and various Transplant/Medical social media and print media platforms. She is seeking to scale up the project and has registered it on UN DESA's SDG Acceleration Action platform.



**Ms. Mbuki Mburu (Kenya):** Ms. Mburu is a Public Policy and Youth Development Advocate and Project Lead for Jenga Hustle, a jobs-related policy initiative. Through the Jenga Hustle Project, she has petitioned the high court of Kenya for the full implementation of the National Employment Authority, a body responsible for Youth Employment in Kenya. She has also championed for several policies geared towards youth employment and inclusive youth development. Ms. Mburu has significant experience in participatory development strategies, public policy research and analysis underpinned by a deep commitment to social justice. She has worked at the national,

regional and international levels where she has, among others, addressed the United Nations General Assembly during the International Conference on Population and Development and a

speaker at the UN High-level Political Forum during the review of SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth. Ms. Mburu was among 15 young people selected across Africa to lead in the finalization of the Model African Union Toolkit. She is the Civic Engagement Officer at PAWA 254, Kenya Convener, Youth for Tax Justice Network and a co-convener of the Youth Serving Organizations consortium. She is a Political Leadership and Governance Programme 2019 Fellow, Binti Ungozini 2020 Fellow and One Campaign East Africa Champion. She holds a bachelor's degree in International Relations from United States International University-Africa, trained in Monitoring and Evaluation and Programme Planning and Management from the MS Training Center for Development Cooperation.



**Mr. Saúl Zenteno-Bueno (Mexico):** Mr. Zenteno-Bueno is a professor in the Social Sciences Division at Tecnológico de Monterrey. His academic interests revolve around illicit financial flows and their interlinkages to sustainable development. His experience with the UN dates to the preparatory process of the 2030 Agenda covering youth engagement and interlinkages in different negotiations, such as the Nairobi Azimio and the Nairobi Maafikiano, the Sendai Framework, the New Urban Agenda, the Agenda for Humanity, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. He has participated in expert group meetings

convened by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs related to Major Groups and Other Stakeholders engagement, and to the SDG 17 to address the Agenda 2030 Means of Implementation. His field experience covers youth empowerment, disaster response, the Central American migratory crisis, and the Colombian armed conflict. He is a member of IMCS Pax Romana United Nations Taskforce and the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth Global Focal Point for Financing for Development, Means of Implementation and SDG 17.

### **Roundtable 2: Considering entrepreneurship in a tough job market**



**Ms. Chmba Ellen Chilemba (Malawi):** Chmba is a DJ, music producer and activist. She is the Founder of Tiwale, a community center in Malawi supporting girls, women and nonbinary folks through art, education and economic opportunities. Chmba started Tiwale at age 17 to help end the vicious cycle of child marriage in Malawi. Tiwale has since directly supported 313 women and girls through secondary school opportunities, vocation skills training, business grants, and a learning space. It has also reached 20,000+ youth in workshops and campaigns hosted at universities and schools. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Tiwale recalled its sewing program graduates to launch a face-mask production at its community center and has donated over 12,000 masks

prioritizing low-income critical workers, educators and students.





**Mr. Nwachinemere Emeka (Nigeria):** Nwachinemere Emeka is a goal-driven innovation and technology enthusiast passionate about the transformation of Africa into the global food hub. He is a fellow of the Social Innovation Program, a recipient of the Total Startupper Awards for Innovation and the Nigerian Innovation Awards, both in 2016. The multi-award winning serial entrepreneur is a 2015 Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurship Program Alumni, and was named part of the Africa Price shortlist of the Royal Academy of Engineering in 2018. He also won the 2017 World Bank Ideas for Action competition in 2017, placing first out of 743 teams from 118 countries. Nwachinemere is the founder and CEO of Kitovo Technology, a Nigerian social enterprise that connects farmers with tools to improve crop yield. The project that was one of the 2020 winners of the UN DESA Innovators Challenge connected to the Science, Technology and Innovation Forum. Nwachinemere is a graduate of University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where he studied Mechanical Engineering. He has also received specialized training on Business and Entrepreneurship from the Enterprise Development Center, Pan African University, Lagos. He has a dream that one day, extreme poverty and hunger will be eradicated from Africa and the world. He is a writer and public speaker with interests in governance and advocacy.



**Mr. Krishna Gautam (Nepal):** In 2011, Mr. Gautam founded Ageing Nepal, an organization dedicated to the betterment of the ageing population. Some of its notable achievements include the introduction of gerontology studies in the education system of Nepal, elder-friendly provisions in government policies, beginning of Elders' Literature, and the introduction of a Basic Literacy programme for older adults in Nepal for which Mr. Gautam was awarded the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize 2020. Ageing Nepal annually offers Ageing Research Fellowships to three masters-level students to do their theses on issues of older persons. Mr. Gautam is a Steering Group member of Global Alliance for the Rights of Older Persons (GAROP) for 2018-2020, that works with a network of 350 organizations across the globe. He has participated in numerous national and international training and conferences, guided research, provided training and authored books on various issues of older adults in Nepali. Mr. Gautam with his Master degree in Economics began his professional career in 1978 as an Assistant Lecturer. He joined the Agriculture Projects Services Center in 1979 as an Agriculture Specialist and rose up to the position of Senior Agriculture Economist by 1988. He then founded his own private consulting company and worked in many rural development projects in Nepal, China, and India. He has training and substantial experience in various subjects ranging from media to alternative energy technologies. He is also known in Nepal as one of the most read creative writers in Nepali humor and satire poems.



**Ms. Waziha Raquib (Bangladesh/Malaysia):** Ms. Raquib, a Bangladeshi based in Malaysia, is a data scientist in a FinTech Company. She is the co-founder of Neeti, a youth advocacy network empowering SDGs 4, 5 and 7. She is a thematic focal point for SDG 8 for the UN Major Group on Children and Youth and a Global Youth Ambassador for Theirworld, founded by the former British prime minister and UN Special Envoy on Education Gordon Brown. From 2011 onwards, she has been engaged with WFUNA, UKEC, MyPerintis, TEDx, Microsoft, ENACTUS and various government-organized events based on women empowerment, restoring culture, providing technological solutions to environmental problems and encouraging entrepreneurship. Women

empowerment has been marked its way top to her priority list



**Ms. Marija Vasileva-Blazev** is a Special Advisor to the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth since November 2019. Prior to this appointment, she has worked for over ten years as a Technical Specialist in adolescent and youth health and development with the United Nations Population Fund's (UNFPA) Division of Arab States, Europe and Central Asia in New York, the Regional Office of Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Istanbul, and the Pacific Sub-regional Office in Fiji. Since 2000, she has worked in a non-formal education and capacity building in the civil sector, especially with youth-led and youth-serving organizations, and prior to joining UNFPA, she worked at the Health, Education and

Research Association (H.E.R.A.) in her home country Macedonia and with Family Health International in the US where she supported behaviour change communication and initiatives related to gender and youth, HIV/STIs prevention, youth peer education programs, and youth participation.

## Closing remarks:



**Mr. Elliott Harris:** Elliott Harris has served since 2018 as UN Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist in the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). Mr. Harris has more than 25 years of international experience in the fields of international economics and development policy analysis, coupled with knowledge of the United Nations system, multilateral and inter-agency coordination processes. He has extensive experience in the design of macroeconomic policies and its application as a central instrument for the reduction of poverty and for resilient and sustained

economic development. His work in the field of economics also focuses on the macroeconomic linkages with global social and environmental policies. Since 2015, Mr. Harris has served as Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). He joined UNEP's Senior Management Team in 2013 as Director of the New York Office and Secretary to the Environment Management Group. Prior to joining UNEP, Mr. Harris began his career in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1988, where he worked in the African Department and the Fiscal Affairs Department. In 2002 he became an Adviser in the Policy Development and Review Department, and was appointed in 2008 as Special Representative to the UN, in addition to serving as Assistant Director of the Strategy and Policy Review Department.