MS. VERA SONGWE
Executive Secretary, ECA

Ms. Vera Songwe is an Economist and Banking executive from Cameroon who has worked for the World Bank since 1998, and in 2015 became Western and Central Africa’s regional director for the International Finance Corporation. Ms. Songwe is the first woman to head the U.N.s Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) at the level of Under Secretary-Genera.

Prior to joining the ECA, she was Regional Director of the International Finance Corporation, covering West and Central Africa. In addition, she continues to serve as a non-resident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution’s Africa Growth Initiative. She is also a member of the African Union institutional reform team under the direction of the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, and a board member of the African Leadership Network and the Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

Previously, she was Country Director for the World Bank, covering Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal. She was also Adviser to the Managing Director of the World Bank for Africa, Europe and Central and South Asia and a lead Country Sector Coordinator for the organization. She had earlier served as the World Bank’s Senior Economist in the Philippines.

MR. XAVIER DEVICTOR
Practice Manager, Fragility, Conflict and Violence Group, World Bank

Mr. Xavier Devictor is the Advisor for the Fragility, Conflict and Violence Group at the World Bank, leading work on forced displacement as a development challenge. He has broad experience across regions on country programs, strategy and policy dialogue, most recently as Country Manager for Poland and the Baltic Countries until 2014, and Country Program Coordinator for Egypt, Yemen and Djibouti from 2007-2011. He joined the Bank as a young professional. Earlier in his career, he was Program Manager for UNHCR in the former Yugoslavia, where he managed humanitarian programs including leading humanitarian convoys into conflict areas.
MR. ALLAN WAITITU
Director, Special Projects, Kenya Equity Bank Ltd.

Mr. Allan Waititu is the Director, Special Projects, Kenya Equity Bank Ltd. Allan is a Certified Systems Engineer, a Novell Certified Network Engineer. He has over 27 years’ experience in Information technology and banking industry. He joined the Company in 2004 and served as the General Manager of Operations and Director of Projects.

MS. TRACY WASHINGTON
Head, Fragile & Low-Income Country Investment Coordination Unit, International Finance Corporation

Ms. Tracy Washington is Head, Fragile & Low-Income Country Investment Coordination Unit, International Finance Corporation (IFC). She has nearly 20 years of experience in development finance with a focus on Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Funds. Mrs. Washington is the IFC Private Equity group lead for SME Funds and the Program Manager for SME Ventures Program establishing risk capital SME Funds in Fragile States. Mrs. Washington developed her expertise in small business investing as the local Investment Manager of the IFC Mozambique SME Initiative providing risk capital finance and advisory support to SMEs in the country. Within IFC, Mrs. Washington also worked as an Investment Officer leading global corporate finance transactions in the manufacturing, financial markets and health and education departments in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and South Asia.

MR. RICHARD BLEWITT
Permanent Observer of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to the United Nations

Mr. Richard Blewitt is the Permanent Observer of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to the United Nations. Prior to his appointment, Mr. Blewitt served as United Nations Resident Coordinator and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative for Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten, since 2013. From 2006 until 2013, he was CEO of the non governmental organization HelpAge International, which focuses on issues of ageing.

Between 2003 and 2006, Mr. Blewitt served as IFRC’s Director of Movement Cooperation and Policy Communications. He has also worked in senior capacities at the British Red Cross and Save the Children UK and has been a consultant for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Geneva. He began his career as a teacher of English with Sudan’s Ministry of Education.
LEAD PRESENTER

H.E. DR. IBRAHIM ASSANE MAYAKI
Chief Executive Officer, African Union Development Agency-NEPAD

H.E. Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki is the Chief Executive Officer of the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD. He was appointed to the position in January 2009. A former Prime Minister of Niger, from 1997 to 2000, Dr. Mayaki has a Master’s degree from the National School of Public Administration (Enap), Quebec, Canada and a PhD in Administrative Sciences from the University of Paris I, France. He worked as a Professor of Public Administration in Niger and Venezuela. From 1996 to 1997 he was appointed Minister in charge of African Integration and Cooperation and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Niger. In August 2000, he set up the Analysis Centre for Public Policy in Senegal. From 2000 to 2004, Dr. Mayaki was a guest Professor at the University of Paris XI, where he lectured on international relations. He also led research at the Research Centre on Europe and the Contemporary World within that university. In 2004, he served as Executive Director of the Platform in support of Rural Development in West and Central Africa, the Rural Hub, based in Dakar, Senegal.

MODERATOR

MS. NOURA HAMLADJI
RBA Deputy Director

Ms. Noura Hamladji is the Deputy Assistant Administrator and Deputy Regional Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA).

Prior to this appointment, Ms. Hamladji served as Country Director in Libya (2015-2017). Ms. Hamladji joined UNDP through its Leadership Development Programme in 2003. She served at UNDP Headquarters in New York as Programme Specialist in the Iraq Unit before being deployed as Assistant Resident Representative for Programme in Djibouti from 2003 to 2005. She then served in UNDP Timor-Leste as UNDP Assistant Resident Representative in charge of the Governance Programme from 2006 to 2007. During her stay in Timor-Leste, Ms. Hamladji was seconded to the UN Integrated Mission to Timor-Leste (UNMIT) successively as Manager of the UNMIT Transition Team and Special Assistant to the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General. From 2008 to 2014 she served as Deputy for Programme and Operations in Azerbaijan and Timor-Leste.

Prior to joining UNDP, she worked in academia as a researcher in the field of Political Science.