

BIOGRAPHIES

WEBINAR ON SUB-THEME 4: HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT, CLIMATE, ENERGY AND FOOD SYSTEMS

24 May 2022 — 9:00-10:30am (EST) 15:00-16:30 (SAST) 16:00-17:30 (EAT)

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



MS. CRISTINA DUARTE

United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa

Ms. Cristina Duarte is the United Nations Special Adviser on Africa and Under-Secretary-General of OSAA since 1 August 2020. She is the strategic adviser to the Secretary-General on African Affairs, the focal point in UNHQ for relations with the AUDA-NEPAD as well as the African Group with regard to Africa's development. As the head of OSAA, she supports the Secretary-General in promoting coherence in the UN system's engagement in Africa and chairs the Inter-Departmental Task Force on African Affairs (IDTFAA), and advocates and mobilizes the United Nations, its Member States and other key stakeholders around Africa's transformative vision articulated in the 2030 and 2063 Agendas.

Prior to joining the UN, Ms. Duarte served as Cape Verde's Minister of Finance and Planning for 10 years. She has also served as Director of a World Bank reform program and Vice President of Citibank giving her a valuable exposure on the functioning of international finance systems. When Ms. Duarte left Government in 2016, she was invited to governance and advisory positions in various international and regional organizations; namely, Member of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration, Member of the United Nations High-Level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs, a Member of President Paul Kagame's Advisory Committee on African Union Reforms, a Member of the Board of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and a Member of the Board of the Institute of African Leadership for Sustainable Development (UONGOZI Institute). Mrs. Duarte is committed to public service.



VERA SONGWE

United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa

Vera Songwe is the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Upon her appointment, she became the first woman to lead the institution in its 60-year history.

As Executive Secretary, Songwe's reforms have focused on developing and implementing "ideas for a prosperous Africa". They have emphasized the critical importance of macroeconomic stability, innovative finance, private sector participation, the digital transformation, trade and competitiveness in fostering growth and improving livelihoods.

She was listed as one of Africa's 50 most powerful women by Forbes in 2020 and named as one of the '100 Most Influential Africans' by Jeune Afrique in 2019. In 2017, New African Magazine listed her as one of the '100 Most Influential

Africans' and the FT named her one of the '25 African to watch' in 2015. Songwe is acknowledged for her long-standing track record of providing policy advice and her wealth of experience in delivering development results for Africa. She has written extensively on development and economic issues including on debt, infrastructure development, fiscal and governance issues. She is well published and contributes to the development debate across a broad spectrum of platforms including in the Financial Times.

Prior to ECA, she held a number of senior leadership roles with the International Finance Corporation and World Bank.



MS NARDOS BEKELE-THOMAS

Chief Executive Officer of AUDA-NEPAD

Ms Bekele-Thomas has influenced growth and development on the African continent for nearly 40 years, serving in prominent positions with governments of multiple nations and at the United Nations. Her appointment as the new Chief Executive Officer of AUDA-NEPAD was endorsed by the African Union Heads of State and Government during the Thirty-Fifth Ordinary Session of the African Union held Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in February 2022.

Ms Bekele-Thomas was previously the Senior Director of the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General. She also served as Resident Coordinator for the United Nations in South Africa and as Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Kenya and Benin. Prior to that she served for over four years in Kenya as Deputy Resident Representative. She is the author of several papers and monographs, and she is fully bilingual in French and English. She has excelled as a Private Sector Policy Adviser focusing on the promotion of trade and investment in several African countries through private/public sector partnerships in the United States.

Ms Bekele-Thomas has also served in a technical and advisory capacity in which she helped initiate and conceptualise a pro-poor programme on the Social Dimensions of Development and has served in various other capacities in the international development space.

PANELISTS



MARTIN BWALYA

Ag. Director, Knowledge Management and Programme Evaluation (KMPE), in the Africa Union Development Agency

Currently, Ag. Director, Knowledge Management and Programme Evaluation (KMPE), in the Africa Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD). This responsibility covers three core functions in AUDA-NEPAD, namely Knowledge Management, Programme Evaluation and AUDA-NEPAD's five Centres of Excellence charged with specialised research, analysis and knowledge support in fields including STI, Human Capital Development, Food Systems and Environment-Climate change as well as Industrialisation

Martin is a Machinery Design and Machine Management Engineer, has since 2000, worked in several international organisations in the field of development, in general, and agriculture, food systems and nutrition, and climate change, in particular. Joined the then NEPAD Agency in 2008 as lead specialist on Sustainable land and

water management, moving on to Head the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) – Africa’s continental framework for agricultural transformation.

Has extensive experience in research and development (R&D), Science-Technology-and-Innovation (STI), foresight analytical work in development and public policy fields across national, regional and global political economy interests and priorities; Continues to serve in varying responsibilities in international initiatives and programmes including Board chair for the Southern Africa Coalition on Climate Change (SACCC) – Current and Co-chair of the Global Alliance for CSA (GACSA) - 2014 to 2018.



MRS. JULIE KASA-KANGA TSHILOMBO

Deputy Coordinator in charge of External Resources and Project Monitoring (CRESP-DRC Presidency), as senior adviser in the office of the President of the Republic

Deputy Coordinator in charge of External Resources and Project Monitoring (CRESP-DRC Presidency), as senior adviser in the office of the President of the Republic. Graduated from ICHEC, Hautes Etudes Commerciales, in Belgium, with a focus on the economies of developing countries and adult education. After experience in management and education in the international private sector, Julie K. Tshilombo currently focuses on international aid, monitoring and evaluation of development policies, programs and projects, institutional and organizational reforms, strengthening capacity in governance, human resources management, particularly with the Ministries of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries and Livestock, Health, Mines and the Civil Service in DR Congo. Particularly aware of issues of empowerment, self-ownership and community initiatives as a key vector for sustainable development. Currently DRC National Coordinator for the UN Food Systems Summit dynamic.



NANA OSEI BONSU

Chief Executive Officer of the Private Enterprise Federation

Nana studied at Saint Francis College in Brooklyn, in the USA for his first degree in Economics in 1977 and followed up at Fordham University Graduate Arts and Sciences with graduate studies in International Finance.

Nana has had an extensive banking career in the USA, from 1972-2003, notably with the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, New York State Banking Department, the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York. Nana later joined the investment banking division of JP Morgan Chase.

On his return to Ghana, Nana served as a Technical Assistant to the Economic Management Team at the Senior Minister’s Office from 2003 -2005. At the same time, he doubled as a Technical Advisor to the Minister of State for Economic Planning.

In 2005, Nana was appointed the first Chief Executive Officer of the Venture Capital Trust Fund (VCTF) where he leveraged Government’s endowment of GH¢22.4 million to partner private sector investors, including some European Equity firms, to create five Venture Capital Funds with the private partners contributing an additional GH¢40.5 million.

In June 2011, Nana was appointed the Chief Executive Officer of the Private Enterprise Federation and is currently at post.

Nana serves on the Boards of a lot of both public, private and research organizations both local and foreign: He is the Chairman of the Food Research of the Ghana Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Chairman of the Institute of Applied Science and Technology (IAST) of the University of Ghana, Chairman of Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC), Chairman of Good Governance Africa (GGA-West Africa Chapter) Member of the Steering Committee of the Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR) an FAO affiliate, Member Steering Committee Of Institute of Scientific Social and Economic Research (ISSER) of the University of Ghana. Member of the Board of the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC) and Member of the Management Board of the Ghana Road Fund to mention a few.



MS. VEDA AYELE NYOTH SIMPSON
Entrepreneur

Veda Ayele Nyoth Simpson is an entrepreneur with a professional background in communications and international development. She has more than 30 years of experience in government consulting and international development. She currently owns Quidiyu Inc., an agro processing company based in Monrovia, Liberia.

Ms. Simpson founded Quidiyu Inc., (QCC) with a focus on retailing professionally packaged cashew nuts and all-natural ginger beer, “Gingeranana” to the local Liberian market. In 2019, she officially took on the role of managing company operations including farm operations, marketing/sales, production and distribution. She also provides strategic direction for Quidiyu. As Vice President/Managing Partner, Ms. Simpson has developed the QCC Brand; established processing systems for cashew & ginger beer production; and incorporated the Gingeranana brand into QCC.

Prior to QCC, Ms. Simpson was Program Lead and subsequently, National Coordinator-Liberia for the *Angie Brooks International Centre’s (ABIC) “Women’s Situation Room”, (WSR). The WSR is a Woman-lead process for maintaining peace during volatile elections. The WSR has been replicated in (8) eight countries in Africa. As Program Lead, Ms. Simpson played a key role in the replication of the WSR in Ghana by working closely with international partners to draft project proposals, concept notes for the design of various WSR activities including the Youth Peer-to-Peer process.

Ms. Simpson was recruited to serve as National Coordinator of Liberia’s Women’s Situation Room in 2017. Ms. Simpson collaborated with ABIC’s international coordinator to draft the project proposal and worked closely with government entities and international partners to successfully implement this project under extremely tight deadlines. She managed a 300 person network deployed throughout all 15 counties including the WSR Secretariat staff and volunteers in the Physical Situation Rooms in Monrovia and Gbarnga. Ms. Simpson represented the ABIC/WSR at meetings with Liberian Government Ministries and international partners. She served as an elections observer in Ghana and Liberia in 2016 and 2017 respectively.

Also in Liberia, Ms. Simpson created and hosted an on air lifestyle magazine that focused on Liberian Culture, “Grain Coast Chronicles”.

Ms. Simpson began her Foreign Service career as the Public Affairs Officer for the Liberian Embassy near Washington DC in 1997. Since then, Ms. Simpson has held a number of professional assignments in Liberia and the United States including projects with the U. S. Departments of Transportation and Labor.

Ms. Simpson is passionate about community service. She volunteers with service organizations regularly.



ANDREA RENZULLI

Program Manager Policy and Regulations, RES4Africa Foundation

Andrea Renzulli joined RES4Africa Foundation at the beginning of 2020 to coordinate and oversee the Foundation’s work about electricity policy and regulatory aspects. Previously to join RES4Africa, Andrea worked in several institutions, mainly in the consulting and advisory businesses, with a strong focus on renewable energies development in Africa, policy analysis, market design and business development. Today, he collaborates closely with UNECA in supporting African partners improving their electricity market openness, attractiveness and readiness through policy and regulatory reforms. Andrea holds a Master Degree in “International Business” from the University Paris-Dauphine, with a focus on energy markets and energy diplomacy.



RICHARD TOWLE

Deputy Director of UNHCR New York Office

Richard Towle is the Deputy Director of UNHCR New York Office, having previously served as the UNHCR Representative in Malaysia and also as Regional Representative for Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific. He is a New Zealander who joined UNHCR in Hong Kong in the early 1990s, working in a variety of capacities dealing with the Vietnamese boat people, then moved to the London office of UNHCR. He has since held various senior legal and policy roles, including in the Department of International Protection at UNHCR headquarters in Geneva and has been involved in the UNHCR development of policies and operations relating to human rights, internally displaced persons, and asylum-migration issues.

His other UN experience includes a role as Chief of Mission for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Belgrade, former Yugoslavia, from 2001-2003. Towle was also a Member of the New Zealand Refugee Status Appeal Authority during a temporary absence from UNHCR from 2005 - 2006. Prior to joining the UN, he was a Deputy Chair of the Hong Kong Refugee Status Review Board, after working as a partner in a New Zealand law firm specializing in refugee and human rights issues.



H.E. MS. FATIMA KYARI MOHAMMED

Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations

Ambassador Fatima Kyari Mohammed is the Permanent Observer of the AU to the UN. Prior to her appointment she was Senior Special Advisor to the ECOWAS Commission. Her career spans over 2 decades with a focus on peace, security, socio-economic development, regional integration, organizational development, and project management, both in the public and private sectors.

Her thematic expertise includes: Peace & Security, Conflict Prevention & Transformation, Gender, Regional Integration, and Socio-Economic Development. She is also the Founder of the LikeMinds Project, a non-profit, non-partisan Organisation working with vulnerable communities in Nigeria. The organization works with displaced communities from Northeast Nigeria particularly Women and children and youth empowerment.

Her academic background is in Peace, Security, Development and Conflict Transformation (University of Innsbruck, Austria), Sustainable Economic Development (UN University of Peace, Costa Rica), and Business Communication (MBA, European University, Switzerland). She also holds a BA in Environmental Design from the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. In addition to English she speaks fluent French, Hausa, and Kanuri and has a basic knowledge of Arabic and Spanish.

In her spare time she enjoys painting, photography, travelling and learning about different countries and cultures, and engaging in community development activities.

Some of her publications and articles include: The Future of Nigeria: Security Challenges and Implications for Internal, Regional, and Global Security Environment (Revue Défense Nationale, Summer 2016); "A Human Security & Development Approach to CVE in Northeast Nigeria: Exploring the Role of Women" (August 2015); "Climate Change, Human Security and Violent Conflict: Challenges for Sustainable Peace in the Lake Chad (June 2014); "Engaging Private Sector Corporations in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding through Corporate Social Responsibility: A Case study of Northern Nigeria" (September, 2013); "Security and Development in Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) in the Sahel - Case study: Northern Nigeria" (May 2013); "Women as Drivers of Economic Recovery and Development in the Sahel Region" HD Centre/EU- UNWOMEN Discussion paper (April 2013); "Regional Security Lessons from the Attack on Algeria's In Amenas Gas Plant" - USIP, Olive Branch (January 2013); "Nigeria: Fuel Subsidy Removal and the National Crisis" Peace and Conflict Monitor (March 2012); "Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector in West Africa: Opportunities and Challenges - Case Study of ECOWAS" (2005); "Oiling Violence: The Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Niger Delta" - FES (2005).

MODERATOR



MS. JOAN C. KAGWANJA

Chief, Agriculture and Business Enabling Environment Section and Coordinator of the African Land Policy Center (ALPC), Private Sector Development and Finance Division, UN Economic Commission for Africa

Ms. Joan Kagwanja is the Chief, Agriculture and Business Enabling Environment Section and Coordinator of the African Land Policy Center (ALPC), Private Sector Development and Finance Division, UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). She has over 25 years experience in African development, having held positions at the ECA, The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), among others.

Ms. Kagwanja leads in the development and implementation of programmes that conduct policy analysis and advocacy as a basis for commitment and viable options for enabling private sector investments to transform african agriculture and food systems. In particular these programmes aim at innovative interventions that enhance the role of women, youth, and smallholders.

Ms. Kagwanja was instrumental in the establishment of the Land Policy Initiative (LPI), an AUC-ECA-AfDB tri-partite partnership that set pace for the AU Agenda on land governance in Africa. Under her leadership the LPI/ ALPC been successful in advancing knowledge and advocacy towards a common agenda to address land govenance issues in Africa, with key commitments made by Member States at AU level to: strenghten women's land rights; engage in responsible land based agricultural investments; address land and ethnicity based conflicts; improve efficacy and transparency in land administration; and build capacity through improved curricula, training and research for land govenance reforms. Ms Kagwanja led the LPI/ALPC in establishing the Conference on Land Policy in Africa (CLPA), Forum for African Traditional Authorities (FATA), the Civil Society Platform on Land (CSP), and the Network of Excellence on Land Governance in Africa (NELGA).

Dr. Kagwanja holds a PhD in Agricultural Economics from the University of Missouri-Columbia, USA.