

BIOGRAPHIES

OPENING SESSION

HIGH-LEVEL OPENING SEGMENT

Wednesday 26 May, 2021 (9:00am – 9:45am)



H.E. MR. ANTÓNIO GUTERRES
United Nations Secretary-General

H.E. Mr. António Guterres is the ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations, has had a long and varied career in public service rooted in one overarching imperative: to promote human dignity for all. Whether working as a volunteer in the poor neighbourhoods of Lisbon or representing his constituency in the Portuguese parliament, and from his years as Prime Minister to his service as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Guterres has sought to ease suffering, protect the vulnerable and ensure human rights for all. These priorities have remained at the core of his efforts today as Secretary-General of the United Nations. Since taking office January 2017, he has worked to promote peace, advance prevention, combat hatred and mobilize ambition in fighting the climate emergency and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. He has also recognized the need for the United Nations itself to be more innovative and effective, and has set in motion wide-ranging reforms to make full use of new technology and to enhance agility, transparency and accountability. He has also pressed to make the Organization more equal, including through gender parity -- with major milestones met well ahead of schedule -- and improved geographical representation. Mr. Guterres has proclaimed himself a proud multilateralist. “But international cooperation cannot be taken for granted”, he has stressed; “We must prove its value by addressing the real problems people face”. António Guterres was born in Lisbon in 1949 and graduated from the Instituto Superior Técnico with a degree in engineering. He is fluent in Portuguese, English, French and Spanish. He is married to Catarina de Almeida Vaz Pinto, Deputy Mayor for Culture of Lisbon, and has two children, a stepson and three grandchildren.



H.E. MR. VOLKAN BOZKIR
President of the United Nations General Assembly

On 17 June 2020, the General Assembly of the United Nations elected H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir of Turkey as President of its seventy-fifth session, which runs from September 2020 to September 2021.

After graduating with a degree in law from Ankara University, Mr. Bozkir joined his country's foreign service in 1972. He held several positions during his 39-year career there, including: Permanent Representative of Turkey to the European Union (EU); Ambassador to Romania; Consul General in New York; Counsellor of the Permanent Representation to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); First Secretary of the Embassy in Iraq; and Vice Consul General in Stuttgart. He also served as the Foreign Policy Advisor to Prime Minister Turgut Özal; Chief of Cabinet and Chief Foreign Policy Advisor to Presidents Turgut Özal and Süleyman Demirel; Deputy Undersecretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs responsible for EU Affairs; Secretary General for EU Affairs.

Mr. Bozkir was elected as a Member of Parliament first in 2011 and then in the following three parliamentary elections. During his nine years in Parliament, he served as the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Chairman of the Turkey-USA InterParliamentary Friendship Caucus and Co-Chairman of the Turkish-Russian Civic Forum. He also served as the Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator from 2014 until 2016. In 2018, he was elected for the fourth time as the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, during which time he chaired the Turkey-Australia Inter-parliamentary Friendship Group. Mr. Bozkir was awarded the Order of the Star of Romania; the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic with the rank of "Knight"; and the 100th Anniversary Medal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan. He is married with two children and three granddaughters.



H.E. MOUSSA FAKI MAHAMAT

Chairperson of the African Union Commission

H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chad, was elected as the African Union Commission (AUC) Chairperson since 14 March, 2017. H.E. Mahamat speaks French, Arabic and English fluently and had occupied very senior positions with a thirty-year (30) experience. This lawyer was a Minister several times; he served as the Director of Civil Cabinet of the President of the Republic, Prime Minister, Head of Government, and President of a Grand Institution of the Republic, namely; the Economic, Social and Cultural Council, where he had to carry out and manage major issues.

H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat chaired the Security Council for the month of December 2015 and general debate on December 19, 2015 on the theme "threats international peace and security; cross-border terrorism and crime". Furthermore, he also chaired the Peace and Security Council of the AU in September 2013 and steered the Nairobi Extraordinary Summit on the fight against Terrorism. Africa's peace and security issues have been at the heart of Mr. Mahamat's activities and many other missions geared towards the wellbeing of Africa.

The Chairperson of the Commission is the Chief Executive Officer, legal representative of the AU and the AU Chairperson's Chief Accounting Officer. He is directly responsible to Executive Council for the discharge of his duties.



H.E. MR. ISSA KONFOUROU

Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Issa Konfourou is a career diplomat, with 22 years of experience in service of Malian diplomacy. He is the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Mali to the United Nations since 2016. Ambassador Konfourou is a graduate from École nationale d'administration (ENA) of Strasbourg and the Sorbonne University, in France (International Relations). Prior to his current position, Ambassador Konfourou was the senior Diplomatic Advisor of the Prime Ministers of the Republic of Mali, then served as Senior Political Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mali. His diplomatic career in international postings began in 2000 at the Permanent Mission of Mali to the UN, during Mali's mandate as non-permanent member of the Security Council, for the period 2000-2001. After Mali's Council mandate, he remained in New York until 2007, serving as Delegate in charge of Security Council and General Assembly portfolio, then covering different Main Committees and standing as Military and Police Advisor, as well Election Officer. Ambassador Konfourou is fluent in French and English.



MRS. CRISTINA DUARTE

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

Mrs. 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, Mrs. 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 Mrs. 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.