

Quick-Takes Conversation Session: Bios and Pictures for the Moderator and Speakers

Moderator: Saru Duckworth



Saru Duckworth is a Nepalese American researcher and development practitioner, passionate about accelerating economic inclusion for youth and women across the Global South. She is the UN Foundation Next Generation Fellow for Jobs & Economic Opportunities, mentoring young people in over 30 countries to develop grassroots economic empowerment initiatives for the SDGs and make their voices heard in multilateral decision making. At BRAC, the largest Southern-led INGO, she works with the Ultra-Poor Graduation Initiative and governments across Africa and Asia to scale up proven sustainable livelihoods programs for women living in extreme poverty. She is also an MPA in Development Practice candidate at the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA), with a focus on social inclusion and how culture impacts poverty. Previously, she conducted on-the-ground research and supported programming for women and children in multiple contexts across South and Southeast Asia, including Myanmar and Nepal. She has received awards for research on climate vulnerability and SRHR norms, and was a US Department of State Fulbright Scholar.

Panelists

Ms. Jessica Polfjärd



Jessica Polfjärd is a Swedish politician, member of the Moderate Party, and was elected as a Member of the European Parliament in 2019 where she represents her home party in the EPP political group. Ms. Polfjärd was a member of the Swedish Parliament from 2010 to 2019, where she served as the vice-chairman of the Committee on Finance from 2014 to 2018. She presided the Nordic Council in 2019.

In the European Parliament, Ms. Polfjärd is Vice-Chair of the Delegation to the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee (D-MX), member of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) and the Delegation to the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (DLAT). She has been appointed rapporteur of the regulation on substances that deplete the ozone layer and on the regulation binding annual greenhouse gas emissions reductions by Member States from 2021 to 2030. In addition, to her work on energy and climate policies, MEP Polfjärd has been active on a law to make batteries more sustainable and on the area of circular economy and critical raw materials.

Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon



Prior to her current appointment, Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon (Nigeria) was the Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Africa of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and has held this position since 2017.

Ms. Samuel-Olonjuwon joined the ILO in 1995 and has undertaken different responsibilities in the field and Geneva, including Deputy Regional Director for Africa, Chief of the ILO Programming Unit for Africa and Deputy Director of the ILO Office in Pretoria.

As a member of the ILO senior management team, with a special focus on Africa, Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon has played an important role in the development and implementation of regional strategies to deliver high quality decent work results that advance social justice as well as foster opportunities for regional cooperation; particularly with the African Union, African Development Bank and Regional Economic Communities, while building strategic alliances throughout the region. She served, along with the African Development Bank President, on the UNECA supported High-level Panel on Migration chaired by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

A committed facilitator of strategic collaboration between UN agencies and regional institutions like the African Union, Ms. Samuel-Olonjuwon effectively led the AU/ILO/IOM/ECA team that developed the Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa (JLMP), which was adopted by African Heads of States in 2015. This joint programme has led to a strengthened the strategic collaboration between the AU, ILO, IOM and other partners to improve the effective governance of labour migration in the continent, and from Africa to

other regions such as Europe and the Middle East. It also supports the achievements of the First Ten Year Implementation Plan (2013 to 2023) of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Among many other pioneering initiatives, she is strategically leading the ILO/ITU/AU Joint Programme on Boosting Decent Jobs and Enhancing Skills for Youth in Africa's Digital Economy. The vision of the programme is to enable more African young people to access decent work in the digital economy. With a holistic approach that addresses the labour market supply side, the labour market demand side as well as labour market intermediation, the programme provides the comprehensive support that enable the initial nine target African countries to maximize the decent work opportunities for young women and men.

Ms. Samuel-Olonjuwon holds a BSc in Sociology (1980) and a Masters' Degree in Industrial and Labour Relations from the University of Ibadan in 1982. With about 40 years of experience in the world of work, she had worked as Assistant Director in the Nigerian Employers' Consultative Association (NECA). Prior to that, she was a Senior Researcher and Trainer at the National Institute for Labour Studies, and had been a Lecturer on Gender Issues, Industrial Sociology and Group Dynamics at the Ahmadu Bello University. During her stint in the academia, she was appointed to the Board of the International Sociological Association (Research Committee on Women in Society) from 1986 to 1990.

Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon's exemplary leadership has been recognized beyond the UN; she was named as one of the 100 Most Influential African Women in 2019 by Avance Media.

Mr. Jevanic Henry



Jevanic Henry is a climate change and development professional with experience leading and supporting the development of environmental projects at multi-levels. At the national and regional level, he previously served as Foreign Service Officer with the Government of Saint Lucia and Climate Change Special Envoy for the Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN). His multilateral experience has involved working with various agencies, including through the United Nations Foundation as a Next Generation Fellow, providing recommendations towards the UN Secretary General's Common Agenda report designed to accelerate achievement of the SDGs. He has worked with the climate change unit of the Commonwealth Secretariat, supporting technical delivery of the Secretariat's Climate Change Programme to its 56 member countries, primarily on enhancing access to climate finance, whilst strengthening integration of gender and youth considerations in climate projects developed. He has also co-authored a practical guide for enhancing access to climate finance based on experiences from the Commonwealth.

In March 2023, Jevanic was appointed as the first Caribbean representative to the UN Secretary-General's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change, tasked with providing concrete recommendation for accelerating implementation of the SG's climate action agenda. Jevanic is currently an Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) Fellow assigned to the Permanent Mission of Saint Lucia to the United Nations in New York.

He continues to utilise his technical knowledge to support community-based youth entities in Saint Lucia in building capacity, developing bankable project proposals and accessing the relevant financing facilities for climate change resilience projects.

Luísa Franco Machado



Luísa Franco Machado is an award-winning international activist for digital rights and data justice. She is also a technical advisor in feminist data economy at the German Development Cooperation Agency, GIZ. She has spent most of her career carrying on policy research at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and Sciences Po Paris on technology, feminism, and socio-economic development. By sharing her research findings in an accessible language on social media, she has reached more than 10 million people with her content. In 2022, the United Nations recognized her as a global Young Leader for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in 2023 she made it to the Future Minds 25 Under 25 list.

Dr. Sameh Kamel



Dr. Sameh Kamel, MBBS graduated in August 2020 from October 6 University with an MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery) with honours. He currently works as a teaching assistant of ENT (Ear, Nose, and Throat) at the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery of the Modern University for Technology and Information MTI.

Dr. Kamel is a strong youth activist. In April 2023, he was elected as the Organizing Partner of the Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY) at the United Nations. Since 2015, Sameh has

been the Regional Focal Point of the Middle East and North Africa at MGCY. Through his role, he facilitated youth engagement at multiple United Nations intergovernmental negotiations and processes on behalf of MGCY. Processes such as the High Level Political Forum, Habitat III, World Humanitarian Summit, Global Compact on Migration and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). During the processes, Sameh hosted multiple open-ended consultations on youth priorities on topics related to the process at hand to further build the MGCY position papers.

Furthermore, Dr. Kamel held a number of training sessions on Sustainable Development and Youth Advocacy in countries like Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Kenya, Indonesia, Lebanon, UAE, Morocco, Tunisia, Mexico, Italy, , USA, Canada and France to raise awareness among young community leaders on the importance of SDGs' activism and partnerships on all levels.

Sameh helped establish the first youth engagement mechanism at an Arab Intergovernmental Organization in 2018 and now serves as the Organising Partner for External Affairs and International Relations at the Arab Youth Platform for Sustainable Development – League of Arab States.

Gibson Kawago



Gibson Kawago is a young Tanzanian entrepreneur and innovator who has made a significant impact in the field of clean energy. He is the founder of WAGA, a company that designs, manufactures and installs solar-powered systems for rural communities in Tanzania. His work has been recognized by a number of organizations, including the United Nations, the Royal Academy of Engineering, and the Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation. In 2022, he was named as a finalist in the ClimateLaunchpad global cleantech business idea competition. In addition to providing clean and reliable energy to rural communities, Waga Tanzania also aims to create jobs and promote sustainable development. The company's solar-powered systems

are designed to be affordable and accessible to the local population, and they have already been installed in a number of remote villages in Tanzania. Gibson is determined to make clean energy accessible to all by providing off-grid communities with affordable and reliable solar power systems. Through Waga Tanzania, he continues to build innovative solutions to help communities to have access to power and improve their livelihoods. He is also actively involved in promoting sustainable development and addressing climate change. He is a member of the United Nations' Youth Envoy Network, where he advocates for the importance of clean energy and the role of young people in driving sustainable development.