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USG LI JUNHUA

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has appointed Mr. Li Junhua of China as the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs effective 25 July 2022.

Prior to his appointment, Mr. Li was Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China to Italy and San Marino. He brings to the position perspectives and visions on fostering multilateral economic and social cooperation, with a commitment to engage with all parties to further implement the 2030 Agenda including dedication to serve Member States. He has contributed to numerous meetings of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council, as well as other multilateral meetings including the G20, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), BRICS etc.

As Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Li guides UN Secretariat support for the follow-up processes of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. He also oversees the substantive services to many intergovernmental processes, including the annual meetings of the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly, the meetings of the Economic and Social Council, including its Development Cooperation Forum, and the work of the subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC. In addition to intergovernmental processes, Mr. Li oversees DESA's policy analysis and capacity development work. He also serves as the Convenor of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, and advises the United Nations Secretary-General on all development-related issues, including climate change, internet governance, and financing for development.



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AMBASSADOR PETER THOMSON

In 2017, the United Nations Secretary-General Guterres appointed Ambassador Peter Thomson of Fiji as his Special Envoy for the Ocean, aiming at galvanizing concerted efforts to follow up on the outcomes of the 2017 United Nations (UN) Ocean Conference, maintaining the momentum for action to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Mr. Thomson leads the UN's advocacy and public outreach efforts inside and outside of the UN system, ensuring that the many positive outcomes of the 2017 Ocean Conference, including the over 1600 voluntary commitments, are analysed and implemented. He also works with civil society, the scientific community, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders, to coalesce and encourage their activities in support of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

Mr. Thomson brings a distinguished experience in diplomatic services and is familiar with the work of the United Nations, including as Permanent Representative of Fiji to the UN and President of the 71st session of the UN General Assembly, during which he provided visionary leadership in guiding the preparation of the 2017 Ocean Conference.

Ambassador Peter Thomson is a founding Co-Chair of the Friends of Ocean Action and is a supporting member of the High-Level Panel for Sustainable Ocean Economy.



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AMBASSADOR OLIVIER POIVRE D'ARVOR

Diplomat, cultural manager, specialist in maritime issues, writer.

Trained as a philosopher, Olivier Poivre d'Arvor began his career as a literary adviser in various publishing houses, as an actor and director, and as a journalist.

Winner of a Villa Médicis "hors les Murs" scholarship (United States, 1987), he then held various positions in the French network abroad: director of the French Cultural Centre in Alexandria (1988-1990), he successively reopened the French Institute in Prague (1990-1994), then directed the French Institute in the United Kingdom and held the position of Cultural Counsellor at the French Embassy in London (1994-1999).

From 2000 to 2010, he directed the Association française d'Action Artistique (AFAA), which became Culturesfrance in 2006, and then set up the Institut Français.

He was the French organiser of the Year of China in France (2003-2004) and the Year of France in China (2004-2005).

In 2007, he joined the Quai d'Orsay as Minister Plenipotentiary.

Appointed Director of France Culture in the summer of 2010, he ran the public service station until September 2015. He was then appointed Ambassador in charge of France's cultural appeal, and launched the Grand Tour (January-July 2016).

Appointed French Ambassador to Tunisia, he will serve from 2016 to 2020.

In 2005, he produced the first edition of the Marathon des mots in Toulouse, a festival at the crossroads of words and texts, now the second-largest literary event in France in terms of attendance.

Specialist in maritime and environmental issues, he has been Chairman of the Musée national de la Marine since 2014, and in 2018 founded the Saison bleue and, with Pascal Lamy, the World Maritime Forum/Bizerte.

In December 2020, he was appointed Ambassador for the Oceans and Poles, and in January 2022, Special Envoy of the President of the French Republic for the United Nations Ocean Conference, for which he is the French organiser (Nice, June 2025).

Novelist, biographer and essayist Olivier Poivre d'Arvor has published numerous works. Winner of the Prix Renaudot des lycéens for his novel *Le Voyage du fils*, he is also the acclaimed author of *Le Jour où j'ai rencontré ma fille* (The Day I Met My Daughter), as well as a dozen books devoted to maritime adventure, grouped together in *L'Odyssée des Marins* (The Seafarers' Odyssey).



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H.E. MR. KANG DO-HYUNG

Dr. Kang Do-Hyung is a distinguished marine biologist. Since December 2023, has served as Minister of Oceans and Fisheries in South Korea. He holds a Ph.D. in Marine Biology from Jeju National University and has dedicated his career to advancing marine science and environmental policy.

Dr. Kang began his professional career at the Korea Institute of Ocean Science & Technology (KIOST), where he held various key positions, including President of KIOST (2023) and Director General of the Jeju Research Institute (2021-2023). His research expertise spans marine bioresources and ecosystem management, and he has been instrumental in advancing South Korea's oceanic research and policy.



AMBASSADOR GINA GUILLEN

Ambassador Gina Guillen is a seasoned Costa Rican diplomat and legal expert, with a specialized focus on international law, the Law of the Sea, and multilateral diplomacy.

She currently serves as the Director General for Foreign Policy at Costa Rica's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, a position she has held since January 2023, where she plays a leading role in shaping the country's international diplomatic strategies.

Ambassador Guillen has extensive experience at the United Nations, having served as Legal Advisor for the Costa Rica Mission to the UN in New York and Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the International Seabed Authority and the Embassy of Costa Rica in Jamaica.

Her academic background includes a law degree from the University of Costa Rica (UCR) and a diploma in the Law of the Sea from the Rhodes Academy of Law of the Sea, underscoring her expertise in maritime law and global ocean policy.



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H.E. MR. WALTON ALFONSO WEBSON

H.E. Dr. Walton Alfonso Webson is the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations. Dr. Webson holds a B.Sc., an M.Sc. in Management of Non-Profit Organizations, a Postgraduate Diploma in Organizational Development from the New School for Social Research, and a Doctorate in Management from Case Western Reserve University. He has worked with international organizations such as Sight Savers International, Helen Keller International, the Caribbean Council for the Blind, and was CEO of Perkins International (2011–2014). Dr. Webson has written extensively on NGO development, nonprofit governance, eye health, and the SDGs. He has spoken at global conferences on disability rehabilitation and eye health, championing UN resolutions for International Sign Language Day and World Braille Day in 2015 and 2017, respectively. He founded the "Friends of Vision" at the UN and pioneered the first UN resolution on vision in 2021. Ambassador Webson has chaired several UN bodies, including AOSIS, and served as president of the boards of UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS, and UNICEF. He co-facilitated UN work on tuberculosis in 2019 and chairs the Steering Committee on Accessibility. He also led the UN process for the Multi-Vulnerability Index and the successful SIDS4 conference in 2024. A passionate advocate for small island developing states, climate action, and disability inclusion, Ambassador Webson received the Lewis Braille Medal in 2023 for his leadership in the blindness community. He has also advised the University of South Africa and served two terms on the International Centre for Non-profit Law board.



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H.E. MS. TANIA ROMUALDO

H.E. Ms. Tania Serafim Yvonne Romualdo is the Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cabo Verde to the United Nations in New York. Prior to her current appointment, Ms. Romualdo held the position of National Director for Political Affairs at the Headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Regional Integration (January 2022 – June 2023). She was the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Cabo Verde to the People's Republic of China and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Cabo Verde (non-resident) to Japan, respectively, from September 2015 and October 2019, both until December 2021. She was the Director of the Office of the President of the Republic and Chancellor for Honorary Orders, Titles and Decorations (2011-2015), Director-General for State Protocol (2009-2011), Climate Change Focal Point of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (2007- 2009), Chief of Staff of the Executive Secretary and Counselor for Portuguese Language, Education and Culture at the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) – Lisbon (2004-2007) and has served in various diplomatic service missions for the Republic of Cabo Verde. Ms. Romualdo holds a Degree in International Political and Cultural Relations – University of Minho – Braga, Portugal.



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H.E. MR. FATUMANAVA-O-UPOLU III DR PA'OLELEI LUTERU

Ambassador Lutero currently serves as Permanent Representative of Samoa to the United Nations and Chair of AOSIS.

Prior to his current appointment, Fatumanava-o-Upolu III Dr Pa'olelei Lutero was the Ambassador of Samoa to Europe based in Belgium and bilaterally accredited to the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. He was also concurrently Samoa's Permanent Representative and Delegate to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the European Commission, and the European Council.

Previously, he was Samoa's Trade Commissioner to New Zealand from 2010 to 2012. From 2000 to 2005, Ambassador Fatumanava was Assistant Secretary-General of the ACP Group, Political Affairs and Human Development Department in Brussels. Dr Lutero held various positions leading Pacific-EU matters in the design and facilitation of projects for Pacific ACP member states under the Lome IV Convention. He also held several academic positions at the University of the South Pacific including Director of Planning and Development, and from 2005 to 2009 Executive Dean of the Faculty of Islands and Oceans. Ambassador Fatumanava has chaired several key ACP Committees including the Committee of Ambassadors in 2013-14 and in 2021, Ambassadorial Working Groups, and sub-committees of the Committee of Ambassadors. More recently, from 2018 to 2021, he was the lead negotiator for the Pacific-EU Protocol under the new post-Cotonou Agreement with the EU and a member of the leads for the Foundation part of the Agreement. In this capacity, Ambassador Lutero was the lead ACP Negotiator for Part IV, "Means of Cooperation and Implementation" and Part V dealing with "Institutional Framework".

Ambassador Lutero was also involved in consultancy work in key sectors for SIDS development in the Pacific context. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree (Flinders University, Australia) specializing in Development Economics, Strategic Planning, and Aid Policies, a Masters and post-graduate Diploma from New England University (Australia), and a Bachelor of Science from Canterbury University in New Zealand majoring in Applied Mathematics and Operations Research.



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MS. ARMIDA SALSIAH ALISJAHBANA

Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana was appointed Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) on 13 September 2018. Prior to joining ESCAP, Ms. Alisjahbana was Professor of Economics at Universitas Padjadjaran in Bandung, Indonesia, a position she assumed in 2005. She joined Universitas Padjadjaran as a lecturer in 1988. Since 2016, she has served as Director for the Center for Sustainable Development Goals Studies at Universitas Padjadjaran and Vice Chair of the Indonesian Academy of Sciences.

She also serves on the Governing Board of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), and member of the Indonesian Academy of Sciences (Akademi Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia - AIPI), the Forum of Statistics Community (Forum Masyarakat Statistik or Advisory Council of the Indonesian Statistics), the International Advisory Board of the Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies and Council Member of the Regional Science Association International (RSAI).

From 2009 to 2014, she was Minister of National Development Planning and the Head of the National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS), Indonesia. She served as Co-chair of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation from 2012 to 2014. From 2009 to 2014, she was Alternate Governor of the World Bank and Alternate Governor of the Asian Development Bank representing the government of Indonesia. In 2016, she was a member of the High Level Independent Team of Advisors to support the ECOSOC Dialogue on the longer term positioning of the United Nations Development System in the context of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

Ms. Alisjahbana has been involved in various research projects and consultancies to the United Nations University/Institute for Advanced Study in Tokyo, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australia, the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), the European Commission, and the International Labor Organization (ILO).

Ms. Alisjahbana earned her Bachelor degree in Economics and Development Studies from Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia, a Masters degree in Economics from Northwestern University, USA and a Ph.D in Economics from University of Washington, USA. She was awarded the Mahaputra Adipradana Order (Bintang Mahaputra Adipradana) from the Republic of Indonesia, honorary brevet from the Indonesian Navy and honorary flight wing from the Indonesian Air Force.



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MR. HENRY GONZALEZ

Henry is the Chief Investment Officer (CIO) of the Green Climate Fund overseeing over USD 16 billion commitments of GCF resources and close to USD 55 billion in co-financing across over 280 projects in more than 135 countries. In his earlier tenure at the Fund, he was the Executive Director a.i., the Deputy Executive Director and the Director of its Private Sector Facility.

He has 30 years of professional experience across sustainable and impact investing, emerging markets, and political and economic development. Prior to joining GCF, he was an Associate Fellow at Oxford University's Saïd Business School where he directed the Oxford Fundamentals of Sustainable Investing Program, and a Lead Financial Sector Specialist for CGAP, the World Bank-housed financial inclusion think tank. He also served as member of Senior Management and Global Head of Research & Advisory at responsAbility Investments AG (part of the M&G group), where he led thought leadership, technical assistance, and ESG/impact integration strategies across the sectors of finance, climate, and agriculture. He spent time at Morgan Stanley, serving as a Vice President for Emerging Markets Debt Investing and held other positions at the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the Government of Costa Rica.

Henry holds an MBA from Oxford University (Skoll Scholar), an MPA from Harvard University (Fulbright Scholar) and a BA in Political Science from the University of Costa Rica.



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DR. ABDULAZIZ ALSUWAILEM

Dr. Abdulaziz Alsuwailem is well experienced in academic and corporate organizational management, with extensive accomplishments in large-scale program planning and administration; high-level advisory roles on environmental and development strategies in government and industry sectors; leadership in enabling regional and international collaborations; and contributions to the capacity building and operational expansion of emerging and existing institutions in the Kingdom.



REAR ADMIRAL LUIGI SINAPI

Rear Admiral Luigi Sinapi, born in Grosseto, Italy, on August 27, 1967, joined the Naval Academy in 1985. He has held key positions in the Italian Navy, including Commanding Officer of the MIRTO Survey Vessel, Frigate ZEFFIRO, and Destroyer DURAND DE LA PENNE. He also served as Head of Financial Planning, Operations, and Logistics at the Italian Navy General Staff and Director of the Italian Hydrographic Institute from 2015 to 2020.

Since September 2020, Rear Admiral Sinapi has been the Director of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), coordinating its global programs. He has earned several decorations, including the Commemorative Medal for the 11th Italian Expedition to Antarctica, NATO Medals, and the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic. His academic credentials include degrees in Physics, Navigation and Maritime Science, and International Diplomacy, along with a Master in Marine Geomatics and certification in Hydrography. He also completed a Master in International Strategic and Military Studies at the CASD in Rome. Rear Admiral Sinapi has lectured at various Italian universities and published numerous essays in national and international journals.

He is married to Loredana Lupoli and has two sons. His hobbies include navigation, sailing, basketball, and tennis.



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MS. MADHUSHREE CHATTERJEE

Ms Madhushree Chatterjee is the Secretary of UN-Water and currently serves as Chief of Natural Resources and Interlinkages Branch at the Division for Sustainable Goals of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), United Nations, New York. Ms Chatterjee brings a combination of substantive experience in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs and understanding of the strategic direction of the Organisation to her role as Secretary of UN-Water. Ms Chatterjee served as the Principal Economic Affairs Officer and later as Chief of the Strategic Planning and Communication Service at the Office of Under-Secretary General, DESA. She actively engaged programme managers on inputs to discussions on the 2030 Agenda, provided a leadership role in the Strategic Planning and Communication Services unit, and supported the DESA Editorial Board. Ms Chatterjee holds a PhD in Economics from the University of California Santa Cruz.



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MR. CHUN KYOO PARK

Mr. Chun Kyoo PARK is the Head of UN Office for Sustainable Development as of 26 October 2020. Before that, he has served at the government for almost 30 years mainly at the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea where he joined in 1991 starting at mid-level management rising to the rank of the Vice Minister of Environment. Throughout the experience, he has built various capacities and broadened the scope of work by engaging in many different areas of sustainable development.

Mr. Park's works range from air and water quality management to nature conservation, waste management, chemicals management, sewerage system, etc. Tackling climate change has been his major concern and produced lots of achievements at the ministry including setting up Korean National Mitigation Targets.

Moreover, his career stretches to the international cooperation where he worked as the first secretary of the Republic of Korea Mission to the UN in charge of works related to the UN General Assembly 2nd Committee, and the Commission on Sustainable Development. He has attended various international meetings which include CBD COP13 in Cancun, Mexico as the chair of the COP12 Presidency and the most recently the 4th UN Environment Assembly in 2019 in his capacity as the head of Korean delegation.

He worked closely with UN organizations to support program such as the UNEP's PAGE (Partnership for Action on Green Economy) and the first international workshop for developing country officials on MRV (Measurement, Reporting, and Verification) jointly with UNFCCC and/or EU

He graduated from Yonsei University majoring in Public Administration and holds a master's degree in Development Policy and Public Administration at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. He is co-author of three books including "Carbon Market, Are You Ready to Buy or Sell It.*"



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MR. VIDAR HELGESEN

Vidar Helgesen was born in Bodø in the North of Norway, on 21 November 1968, and grew up at Nøtterøy in the County of Vestfold. Helgesen holds the Cand. Jur. Degree from the University of Oslo in 1998.

Helgesen served as state secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2001-2005, under Kjell Magne Bondevik's Second Government.

Helgesen was a special adviser at the International Red Cross in Geneva 1998-2001. He was secretary-general of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), in Stockholm from 2006 until he was appointed minister by Prime Minister Erna Solberg in 2013.

Helgesen held the position as minister of EEA and EU Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Chief of Staff at the Office of the Prime Minister from 16.10.2013 to 16.12.2015, when he was appointed as Minister of Climate and Environment.



DR. BAASANJAV GANBOLD

Dr. Baasanjav Ganbold is the Head of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) East and North-East Asia Office based in Incheon, Republic of Korea. Prior to joining ESCAP in 2019, Dr. Ganbold worked extensively for the government of Mongolia as a career diplomat, serving as Ambassador to the Republic of Korea (2013-2018) and Vietnam (2004-2008), and more recently as the Ambassador-at-large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Sustainable Development. Earlier he served as the State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Director-General of the Departments of Public Affairs and Asia and the Pacific respectively, and in the Embassy of Mongolia in Pyongyang, DPR of Korea. He earned his BA in International Relations from Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), Russia, MA in Political Science from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA, and Ph.D. in Law from Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Republic of Korea.



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PROF. MANUEL BARANGE

Professor Manuel Barange is the Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division at the FAO since 2016, and Assistant Director-General since 2023, responsible for FAO's biennial "State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA)" report. Previously he was Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Science at the Plymouth Marine Laboratory, UK, and Chair of the Science Committee of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). Manuel is an Honorary Professor at the College of Life and Environmental Sciences, University of Exeter, UK.

Professor Barange is a global expert on the impacts of Climate Change on marine ecosystems, fisheries and aquaculture, and on the interactions between natural and socio-economic drivers of change. He sits in advisory boards of several institutions and is a regular speaker at international scientific conferences. He has over 130 academic publications and contributes to IPCC assessment reports. In 2010 he was awarded the UNESCO-IOC Roger Revelle Medal for his contribution to ocean science.



MR. FRANCIS STAUB

Francis started his career working for the French Ministry of Environment, then the World Bank headquarters in Washington D.C. at the Environment Department before becoming a consultant. He has been working for more than 20 years in providing services related to the conservation and sustainable use of natural – terrestrial, coastal and marine – resources including international cooperation projects development, implementation and evaluation worldwide. Further experience includes policy analysis and recommendations, project development and evaluation, capacity building and communication, education and public awareness (he was the international coordinator of the International Year of the Reef in 2008). Francis also has a strong interest in Marine Protected Areas and developed several tools to evaluate their effectiveness. These experiences combined allowed him to acquire a comprehensive understanding of international negotiations while developing a strong global network with the international marine community. He has also been spending a fair amount of time working closely with on-the-ground realities faced by the – marine – protected managers and other stakeholders, hence developing a comprehensive vision of the local communities and governmental policies toward marine protection in various parts of the world.

For the last 15 years, Francis has been involved in the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI). He acted as strategic advisor to most of the governments who have chaired ICRI (USA, France, Australia, Japan among others). He is currently ICRI's global coordinator on behalf of the government of Saudi



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MS. KIRSTEN ISENSEE

Kirsten Isensee has been a programme specialist at the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO since 2012. Her work focuses on ocean carbon sources and sinks, trying to distinguish the natural and anthropogenic influences on the marine environment in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, contributing to the achievement of the outcomes of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. She provides technical assistance to emerging ocean science activities and facilitates collaboration between scientists, policymakers and stakeholders, via networks such as the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network, the International Blue Carbon Initiative, the International Partnership for Blue Carbon, the Integrated Ocean Carbon Research Working Group and the Global Ocean Oxygen Network. She co-leads the Ocean Decade Programme 'Ocean Acidification Research for Sustainability'. In addition she oversees the production of the Global Ocean Science Report and supports the publication of the State of the Ocean Report. She received her diploma and her PhD in marine biology from the University of Rostock, Germany.



MR. PEPE CLARKE

Pepe Clarke is the Oceans Practice Leader for WWF International. He leads a global community of 590 marine conservation practitioners across 60 WWF offices, striving to reverse the loss of nature in the ocean, from polar seas to the tropics. In his previous role with the Pew Charitable Trusts, he led a high-performing team to protect 85 million acres and secure over \$1 billion for conservation in Australia. He has a multidisciplinary background in law, policy, science and advocacy, and more than 20 years of experience with leading conservation organisations, including IUCN and BirdLife International.



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MS. TRINA LEBERER

Trina has lived on the island of Guam since 1994. She has an MSc in Biology from the University of Guam Marine Laboratory and a BA in Environmental, Populational and Organismic Biology from the University of Colorado, Boulder. Before joining The Nature Conservancy in 2004, Trina worked for the Guam Department of Agriculture's Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources for seven years as a biologist, Fisheries Supervisor, Assistant Chief and Acting Chief. Trina began her career with TNC as the Marine Conservation Coordinator for the Micronesia Program, and then served several years as the Micronesia Program Director and Pacific Division Director. She became the Director of Pacific Regional Partnerships in January 2021 and in this role, oversees TNC's engagement with key regional partners to advance large-scale conservation initiatives in the Pacific Islands region, helping to identify and pursue emerging public funding opportunities, especially those associated with the US Government's investments in Micronesia. Trina also sits on the board of Micronesia Conservation Trust and serves as Chair of its Governance Committee.



MS. ANJALI D. BOYD

Anjali D. Boyd is a marine scientist, technologist, and storyteller who works across sectors to develop innovative solutions for ocean sustainability. Her career spans academia, government, non-profit, and private sectors, where she consistently bridges the gap between cutting-edge research, policy, and technological innovation to drive meaningful change in the Blue Economy. At Fleet Robotics, she serves as Product Manager for Efficiency and Environmental Impact, developing autonomous solutions that reduce vessels' greenhouse gas emissions and combat marine invasive species. She leads the company's policy engagement across local, federal, and international levels—while spearheading strategic partnerships that have secured \$720K in non-dilutive funding. Furthermore, as a Ph.D. Candidate and National Geographic Explorer at Duke University, her research has focused on developing scalable solutions for marine ecosystem conservation, supported by the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship and Ford Foundation Fellowship. Her work advancing both science and equity in ocean science fields has earned recognition from the Smithsonian, NOAA, National Academy of Sciences, and the Aspen Institute. Throughout her career, she has remained committed to bridging innovative technology, policy, and storytelling to build a sustainable and economically robust Blue Economy.



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MR. MAHESH PRADHAN

Mahesh Pradhan is the COBSEA Coordinator, an intergovernmental mechanism administered by the United Nations Environment Programme, which brings together nine countries (Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam) in protecting and conserving the marine environment in the East Asian Seas region. COBSEA, established in 1981, is part of the global Regional Seas Programme comprising of 18 Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans spanning over 146 countries.

At COBSEA, Mahesh leads implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter, with focus on plastics pollution. He also oversees the Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Framework, which focuses on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework under the overall theme of Sustainable Blue Economy. This Framework considers Marine Spatial Planning, Marine Protected Areas, and Marine Habitats, such as seagrass, mangroves, and coral reefs, in the context of the East Asian Seas. Earlier, he was based at UNEP HQs in Nairobi where he coordinated the Global Partnership for Nutrient Management, providing technical backstopping for two resolutions adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) on Sustainable Nitrogen Management.



MR. SERGIO CARVALHO

Sergio Carvalho has over a decade of professional experience in Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea. He currently serves as Deputy Director for International Advocacy at the Oceano Azul Foundation. Prior to joining Oceano Azul, Sergio was Counsellor responsible for Legal Affairs, Oceans and the Law of the Sea with the Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations and, earlier in his career, was Head of Unit responsible for Ocean Affairs and Sustainable Development at the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Sergio holds a Law degree from the University of Coimbra, a Master's degree in European Affairs from the Catholic University of Lisbon, and he has completed the first phase of a Doctorate degree on International Ocean Law and Policy at the Catholic University of Lisbon.



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MS. NAIARA COSTA

Naiara Costa is an experienced International Relations analyst. Since 2018 she serves as Senior Sustainable Development Officer at the Division for Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) where she coordinates the stakeholder engagement programme, connecting with SDG-related intergovernmental processes and UN conferences. Before that, she led the International Secretariat of Together 2030, a civil society network tracking the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. She was the Advocacy Director of Beyond 2015, a global civil society campaign strongly engaged in the intergovernmental negotiations for the SDGs. Prior to that, she worked as an Advisor at the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom in New York as well as a development advisor at the UK Department for International Development (DFID) in Brazil. Naiara has served the UN as a National Programme Officer at UNAIDS in Brazil for more than a decade and the government of Brazil at the Presidency of the Republic and the Ministry of Finance. Naiara holds a master's degree on International Relations (University of Brasilia, Brazil) and an MBA on Projects from the Getulio Vargas Foundation, Brazil.



MS. LENA KERN

Lena serves as the Senior Specialist for Marine Ecosystems Management at the Green Climate Fund, where she oversees the development of the GCF's marine portfolio within the public sector. She brings extensive expertise in project implementation focused on marine and terrestrial biodiversity conservation, ocean governance, and corporate responsibility, gained through her work with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the UN Global Compact.

Lena holds a Master of Science degree in Geo-Ecology and Ecosystem Management from Eberhard Karls University Tübingen, Germany.



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DR. HYEONG-GI KIM

Dr. Hyeong-Gi Kim is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Marine Environmental Science at Chungnam National University, South Korea. He holds a Ph.D. in Ocean & Earth Science from the University of Southampton (2017), where his research focused on the interactions between algae and nematodes. He also earned an M.S. and B.S. in Marine Biology from Pukyong National University, South Korea.

Dr. Kim's career includes roles as a Visiting Researcher at the National Oceanography Centre in Southampton (2017-2020), and as a BK21 Postdoctoral Researcher at Seoul National University (2018-2020). He has also held research positions at the Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology (KIOST).

His research interests involve marine ecosystems, particularly the interactions between free-living marine nematodes and their environments. Dr. Kim has received several honors, including the Best Young Scientist Presentation Award at The Korea Society of Oceanography's Spring meeting in 2018 and an International Travel Award from KIOST.

Dr. Kim is passionate about advancing marine environmental science and contributing to the understanding of marine ecosystems in Korea and beyond



MR. PIERRE BARDOUX

Pierre Bardoux is Director of the Nature Assets Team and Global Fund for Coral Reefs at the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF). Based in Geneva, he designs and manages innovative financing instruments bringing together the United Nations, Governmental institutions, development actors and responsible private companies. Throughout his career with the UN, he has managed an active portfolio of Climate & Environmental Trust Funds over \$1.5 bn including a flagship Forest protection initiative in Central Africa and a blended finance Ocean Protection Fund, the Global Fund for Coral Reefs.

With more than a decade in UN Crisis/Peace Keeping Operations, he has a deep knowledge of the challenges faced when financing and implementing political, social and environmental impact actions.



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MS. JYOTI MATHUR-PHILIPP

Prior to this assignment, Jyoti served as the Director for Implementation at the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), leading the work on the development and negotiations for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

During her career, Jyoti has worked with UNEP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

Over the years, she has covered a wide range of topics, from environmental governance and negotiations, to policy, programming, partnership development and resource mobilization.

Jyoti also has in-depth experience working with private sector partners, including with NetAid – the first private-public partnership between the UN and a large corporation – the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH), REDD+ in Jakarta and Geneva, as well as with the Secretariat of CBD.

She holds a Master of Science (MSc.) in urban planning from the New School for Social Research and an MBA from Baruch College.



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DR. MARJO VIERROS

Marjo Vierros leads science policy research at the Nippon Foundation – University of Edinburgh Ocean Voices Programme. She has worked internationally in ocean policy and marine biodiversity research for thirty years, including for United Nations agencies, research organisations and NGOs on topics related to ocean protection and management, capacity building, and sustainable development. She also holds the role of Director of Coastal Policy and Humanities Research, a Vancouver-based consultancy specialising on interdisciplinary and policy-relevant ocean research. She has led the Global Marine Governance Project at the United Nations University and coordinated marine issues for the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. She has undertaken marine scientific research in Bermuda, the Caribbean and Hawaii, and worked on biocultural diversity and integration of traditional knowledge and science in the Pacific Islands and Australia. She is a Finnish and Canadian dual national.



MS. CÉLINE KAHN

Céline Kahn serves as the UNOC Operations Manager at the Oceano Azul Foundation. Drawing on her expertise in community engagement, she is dedicated to amplifying civil society's voices at international conferences, including for UNOCs. Céline has a background in geography and international development with a focus on ocean conservation. It led her to collaborate with NGOs to explore effective ways of integrating local communities into conservation initiatives and worked with international organizations to advance ocean conservation efforts



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MR. DMITRY GONCHAR

Dmitry Gonchar is a distinguished legal professional with extensive experience in international law and diplomacy. He currently serves as a Principal Legal Officer at the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, a role he has held since April 2016. Before joining the United Nations, Dmitry was the Deputy Director of the Legal Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation from February 2012 to April 2016. Earlier in his career, Dmitry served as a Senior Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations from November 2006 to January 2012.



MR. DAVID OBUA

David Obura is a Founding Director of CORDIO East Africa, a knowledge organization supporting sustainability of coral reef and marine systems in the Western Indian Ocean. CORDIO takes research to management and policy, builds capacity, and works with stakeholders, managers and policy makers. David's primary research is on coral reef resilience, in particular to climate change, and the biogeography of the Indian Ocean.

At the boundary between science and action, David works to integrate conservation and development through inclusive blue economy principles and links provided by global sustainability goals and targets. He works from the local scale, through fostering innovative action to promote sustainability, through regional scale alignment and integration, to global scales, bringing knowledge and local-regional practice into decision-making contexts. David serves on the Earth Commission (2019-2022), contributing to describing a 'safe and just corridor' into the future, for people and planet. David has contributed in multiple fora such as The Conversation Africa, the Guardian/Observer, major TV (South African Broadcasting Company, Al Jazheera, BBC) and film (e.g. Vamizi, Cradle of Coral; Chasing Coral; Blue in Focus).

Since September 2023, Dr. Obura serves as Chair of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).



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PROFESSOR STEVE WIDDICOMBE

Professor Steve Widdicombe is the Director of Science at the Plymouth Marine Laboratory, UK. He is a marine ecologist, and biodiversity expert, with 35 years of research experience, publishing over 170 peer-reviewed papers and articles. He has broad interests covering the effects of both natural and human driven disturbances on marine ecosystems and species. For the past two decades he has been particularly active in uncovering and communicating the drivers and consequences of ocean acidification. In 2024, his research was recognised by the Frontiers Planet Prize who named him as the UK National Champion for his paper "Unifying biological field observations to detect and compare ocean acidification impacts across marine species and ecosystems: what to monitor and why". He is the Ocean Focal Point for UN SDG14.3 'Minimizing and addressing ocean acidification, deoxygenation and ocean warming'. Steve is also the co-chair of the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network (GOA-ON), co-lead for the UN Ocean Decade program 'Ocean Acidification Research for Sustainability (OARS)', member of the OSPAR Working Group on Changing Ocean Climate and Ocean Acidification (WG COCOA), and member of the SOLAS-IMBER Ocean Acidification working group. He is an advisor for Economist Impact's 'Back to Blue' programme and member of the World Economic Forum "Friends of Ocean Action" group. Steve was part of the Convention for Biological Diversity's Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Indicators for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), helping develop the indicators for the 23 Targets of the GBF. He is a member of the Pool of Experts for the UN 3rd World Ocean Assessment and is the coordinating author for the chapter "The role of marine ecosystems in the carbon cycle". He contributed to the UN IOC-UNESCO 'State of the Ocean' reports in 2022 and 2024, and moderator for Interactive Dialogue #3 "Ocean warming, acidification and deoxygenation" at the 2nd UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, 2022.



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MS. CYNTHIA BARZUNA

Cynthia Barzuna is a dedicated advocate for sustainable ocean economies and environmental conservation. As the Director of the Ocean Action 2030 coalition, she plays a crucial role in supporting countries worldwide to develop and implement Sustainable Ocean Plans, with the aim of building a future where effective protection, sustainable production, and equitable prosperity thrive harmoniously. Ocean Action 2030 is a voluntary coalition comprising leading institutions committed to providing technical and financial assistance to countries seeking to build sustainable ocean economies. By fostering a strategic match between country demand and member capacity, the coalition enables countries to make meaningful progress toward their sustainability goals. Cynthia's journey to leading the Ocean Action 2030 coalition is marked by her extensive experience in environmental and ocean affairs. Before assuming her current role, she served as the Deputy Minister of Water and Ocean Affairs in Costa Rica. During her tenure, she was appointed by the country's president to spearhead the expansion of the Cocos Island National Park and its marine protected area. Through her visionary leadership, Costa Rica successfully achieved the ambitious milestone of protecting 31% of its exclusive economic zone by the year 2021. Prior to her involvement with the Costa Rican government, Cynthia held prominent positions, including Director of the Environmental Impact Assessment Agency and various sustainable city programs within the country. Her expertise in the field of Environmental Impact Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment, and Territorial Impact Assessment has been invaluable in shaping sustainable policies and initiatives. Cynthia's academic background has laid a solid foundation for her impactful career. A lawyer by profession, she pursued a master's degree in International Law and Trade from Carlos III University of Madrid. Additionally, she earned a diploma in Globalization, Economic Liberalization, and Administrative Intervention from the same prestigious institution. With her multidisciplinary background and unwavering commitment to environmental preservation, Cynthia Barzuna continues to play a pivotal role in driving positive change and inspiring nations worldwide to create a sustainable and prosperous future for our ocean and the planet as a whole. Her work within the Ocean Action 2030 coalition and collaboration with The High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy (Ocean Panel) exemplify her dedication to making a lasting impact on the health and vitality of our ocean and marine ecosystems.



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