

In Celebration of World Cities Day: “Better Cities, Better Life”  
October 31, 2019 in Conference Room 11 at United Nations Headquarters, NYC



**H.E. Ambassador Dr. Michal Mlynar, Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Slovakia to the United Nations.** Dr. Mlynár, presented his credentials to UN Secretary-General António Guterres on August 17, 2017. Prior to his appointment, Dr. Mlynár was Slovakia's Director-General for International Organizations, Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid between 2015 and 2017. From 2012 to 2015, he was Ambassador to Kenya and to the United Nations agencies in Nairobi. Dr. Mlynár held several positions from 2010 until 2011, including Head of the Project Team for Security Sector Reform, Deputy Chef de Cabinet in the Office of the Minister, and Head of the Unit for Coordination of Candidatures and Cross-Cutting United Nations activities. Between 2004 and 2009, Dr. Mlynár was Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, and his delegation's political coordinator on the Security Council from 2006 to 2007. He was also Deputy Chef de Cabinet and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister between 2002 and 2004. Dr. Mlynár holds a master's degree in teaching and a Ph.D in the theory of teaching foreign languages from Coenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia. (UN Photo: Mr. Evan Schneider).



**H.E. Ambassador Dr. Christoph Heusgen, Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations.** Ambassador Heusgen was appointed Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations on July 26, 2017. Prior to this appointment and since 2005, Ambassador Heusgen was the Foreign Policy and Security Adviser to his country's Federal Chancellor, Angela Merkel. He served as Director and Head of the Policy Unit for High Representative Javier Solana in the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union from 1999 to 2005. Between 1988 and 1999, he served in various capacities at the Foreign Office in Bonn, including Deputy Director-General for European Affairs from 1997 to 1999; Head of Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel's Private Office in charge of European Affairs from 1993 to 1997, serving as Deputy Head since 1994. From 1990 and 1992, he was Deputy Head of the special section in charge of negotiations on the Treaty of Maastricht. He held the position of Private Secretary to the Coordinator for German-French Relations from 1988 to 1990. From 1986 to 1988, Ambassador Heusgen worked in Germany's Paris Embassy, having begun his foreign service career in the Press and Economic Affairs Office of his country's Consulate in Chicago, where he worked from 1983 to 1986. He joined the Foreign Service in 1980. Ambassador Heusgen is a graduate of the University of Saint Gallen in Switzerland, and Georgia South College in the United States. He earned a post-graduate degree from the University of Saint Gallen in 1980.



**H.E. Ambassador Mr. Georgi Velikov Panayotov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Bulgaria to the United Nations.** Mr. Panayotov was born on July 24, 1968 in Pomorie, Bulgaria. Mr. Panayotov is a career member of the Diplomatic Service. Since joining the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1995, Mr. Panayotov has held various positions in Sofia and abroad, including Head of the NATO Department from 2014 to 2016 and from 2007 to 2010; Political Officer and Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Bulgaria in Washington, D.C. from 2010 to 2014, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Bulgaria in Kabul, Afghanistan, from 2002 to 2007; Deputy Head of the “Multilateral Co-operation in South-Eastern Europe” Department from 2000 to 2002; Political Officer at the Embassy of Bulgaria in Tirana, Albania, from 1995 to 2000. Mr. Panayotov has an M.A. in Politics from the Moscow State Institute for International Relations. He speaks English, German, Russian and Albanian. Mr. Georgi Panayotov is married and has a son and a daughter.



**H.E. Mr. Lazarus O. Amayo, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations.** He has held several senior public positions before his current assignment among them; the Director for Europe and Commonwealth Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, High Commissioner of Kenya to the United Kingdom, Zambia and India with concurrent accreditation to Malawi, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Singapore. He also served as the Permanent Representative of Kenya to COMESA, International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Commonwealth, Ag. Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Director of Administration and Head of International Organizations and Conferences (Multilateral Relations) Division in the same Ministry. Prior to his diplomatic service, Ambassador Amayo served as Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/Managing Director of Catering Levy Trustees (a parastatal in Kenya). He was elected as a Member of Parliament for Karachuonyo Constituency in the Kenya National Assembly (6th Parliament 1989-1992) and appointed an assistant Minister, Ministry of Education during the same period. He also worked as Human Resource Manager with the Kenya Posts and Telecommunications Corporation. He holds a Master of Arts degree (MA) in Political Science from the University of Delhi and Bachelor of Liberal Arts degree from Spicer Memorial College in India. He is a member of the Kenya Institute of Management (MKIM), and Member of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). H.E. Mr. Amayo has widely travelled and represented Kenya in many regional and international conferences. He is married and has three children. He enjoys reading, tennis and chess.



**Mr. Fabrizio Hochschild Drummond, Special Adviser on the Preparations for the Commemoration of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the United Nations at the Under-Secretary-General level.** In April 2019, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres appointed Mr. Fabrizio Hochschild of Chile as his Special Adviser on the Preparations for the Commemoration of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the United Nations at the Under-Secretary-General level. Mr. Hochschild, Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General since 2017, will support the Secretary-General in coordinating the preparations for the commemoration of the Organization's seventy-fifth anniversary in 2020 and related celebrations, through a system-wide process of consultations and reflections on the role of the United Nations in advancing international cooperation and in supporting the ability of Member States to respond to emerging challenges and frontier issues. The Special Adviser will

liaise and work with Secretariat entities in support of the intergovernmental consultations on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary, led by co-facilitators appointed by the President of the General Assembly and future intergovernmental processes. He will also draw on expertise within the Secretariat and the wider United Nations system to further develop proposals for the Secretary-General on themes and events, allowing for reflection on the contribution the Organization can make to the future that we aspire to, based on the goals enshrined in the Charter. To this end, Mr. Hochschild will facilitate consultations with civil society, youth representatives, academia and the private sector.



**Mr. Christopher W. Williams, Ph.D. is the Director of the UN-Habitat New York Liaison Office.** Mr. Williams is a development practitioner with over twenty-five years of experience in international organizations in Africa, Asia and the Americas and with training in economics and sociology. Prior to UN-Habitat, Mr. Williams served as Executive Director of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) in Geneva for five years. He also held senior posts in global fund management, advocacy, fund raising and policy research, and worked on programmes to upgrade water, sanitation and shelter in settlements. He worked in Africa and the United States promoting community economic development. His work with homeless shelters, community organizations, financial intermediaries, and community lending institutions gave him exposure to private, civil and public sectors. He has studied

economics, public policy and sociology, and holds a Ph.D. from the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research.



**Dr. Eugénie L. Birch FAICP, RTPI (hon), Co-Director of Penn Institute for Urban Research and President of the General Assembly of Partners.** Dr. Birch holds the Nussdorf Chair for Urban Research, School of Design, University of Pennsylvania where she chairs the Graduate Group in City and Regional Planning. Founding co-director, Penn Institute for Urban Research, she is also co-editor of Penn Press's *The City in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* series and co-editor of the *SSRN Urban eJournal*. Dr. Birch's most recent publications include *Slums: How the Informal Real Estate Markets Work* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016) and "A Midterm Report: Will Habitat III Make a Difference to the World's Urban Development?" *Journal of the American Planning Association* (82:4 2016 398-411) In New York City, Dr. Birch has served as a member of the New York City Planning Commission, and on the jury to select the designers for the World Trade Center site. She has also served as a member of the US delegation to

Habitat III. Dr. Birch, who lives in New York City, holds a PhD and Master degree in Urban Planning from Columbia University.



**Dr. Andrise Bass, BSCJ, MBA, Ph.D is President and Founder of Humanitarian Focus Foundation, Vice President of ASPAFrique and a Mentor/Leader at Al Gore's Climate Reality Project.** She is on the Global Board of Advisors for the SDG Impact Awards. Dr. Bass is a Transformational Strategist Coach, Entrepreneur, and Philanthropist with over 28 years of experience in the business industry. She has been a community organizer, for grassroots movements, an author, a keynote speaker, a business entrepreneur for business start-ups and a business strategist for non-profits. Her passion is helping men and women become leaders in their communities. Over the past 11 years, she has trained and mentored thousands of corporate professionals and entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds and varied industries across the globe. Every day, she looks forward to helping her clients transform their lives, so they can create wealth and have a long-lasting sustainable legacy. In 2011, she was honored as a social ambassador for her

humanitarian work and her positive fight on social justice in Haiti. She has a Bachelor in criminal justice, MBA in Organizational Psychology and Ph.D. in public policy and administration. Working with Al Gore she is a Mentor/Leader at Climate Reality Project and Vice President of ASPAFrique a non-profit. As President and Founder of Humanitarian Focus Foundation she is continuously working to support education, poverty alleviation, human rights, climate action, and sustainable development. Dr. Bass' goal is to educate women to become leaders in being of serve to their communities.



**Mr. Isaac Reshad is the Managing Director of Global Access Partner, LLC and Chairman of Replabuild Corp.** Replabuild is a green infrastructure company dedicated to removing waste and plastic pollution from the ocean and using their technology to convert waste into sustainable building materials. Global Access Partner specializes in connecting the private and public sectors with a broad array of advisory services relating to foreign direct investment, project acquisition and management, and global business development. Mr. Reshad has over 20 years of experience in matters related to domestic and international Public-Private Partnerships for infrastructure and other sectors. He works with a broad array of groups including Family Offices, local and national authorities, to support United Nations programs such as the 17 SDGs for the UN 2030 Agenda. Along with serving on the boards of several professional and charitable organizations, Mr. Reshad has supported several global projects, and he is regularly invited to

speak at the UN on their behalf. Prior to founding Global Access Partner and Replabuild, he worked as a business consultant, specializing in strategic business development including capital raising for SMEs and start-ups, working with Private Equity and Venture Capital partners. Many of his successful concepts were concentrated in emerging markets infrastructure, real estate, and fashion industries.



**Ms. Jaya Kader, AIA, LEED AP is the Founding Principal of KZ Architecture.** Ms. Kader was born and raised in San Jose, Costa Rica, she spent 15 years in Boston before moving to Miami. She earned a Master of Architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design in 1988 and is currently a member of its Alumni Council. Throughout her professional tenure, and under the tutelage of world renowned mentors, she has worked on numerous projects including public libraries, schools, municipal centers, houses of worship, residences and resorts. Ms. Kader has been an advocate for sustainable design since the inception of her practice in 2003. She is a member of the International Living Future Institute and the US Green Building Council as well as a LEED accredited professional (One of her projects was the first LEED certified residence in Miami). Recently, her firm won a Resilient Housing Competition shown at the United Nations that was organized by Build Academy and sponsored by the World Bank and UN-Habitat for a

Better Urban Future. The vision of the project highlights the power of design to help manifest sustainable practices that address environmental, social and economic concerns. She weaves many of her core interests and values into her work, including nature, yoga, diverse cultural perspectives, mindfulness, art, healing and spiritual yearnings. KZA studio serves as a laboratory to explore the power of design and architecture to care for our planet and enhance the human experience.



**Ms. Nidhi Gulati, Program Manager at Project for Public Spaces.** Ms. Gulati is a social impact professional, a trained architect and urban researcher with a specialization in civic engagement. Since 2012, she has worked on transportation advocacy, placemaking, technical assistance and education projects spread across 12 American States and 7 countries. She strongly believes that the built environment has a sustained impact on the personal and social lives of people that inhabit them. In that vein, she's committed to advancing design and planning practices that cultivate physical, social, and financial wellbeing for all citizens, especially young children in cities around the world. She is currently leading the Streets and Transportation program at Project for Public Spaces - a global urban planning and design nonprofit organization based in New York City; a visiting professor at Pratt Institute, a guest writer for several online publications on shaping cities with a focus on early childhood; and an advocate for

combating climate change through the built environment. She's born and bred in India with high appreciation for trains, love for walking as a mode of transportation, and a deep sensitivity towards issues of gender and race and their manifestation in the built environment.



**Ms. Manal Kahi is the Co-Founder and CEO of Eat Offbeat,** a social enterprise that delivers authentic ethnic meals made by refugees who are now chefs in New York City. Ms. Kahi came to the United States from Lebanon to pursue a Master's Degree at Columbia University in International Environmental Affairs. She has a passion for traveling, social impact and great food, but not necessarily in that order. However, the Hummus she found on supermarket shelves in NYC led her on a different journey. She made her own hummus from a family recipe, her friends loved it, and she considered starting a business. At the same time, millions of Syrian refugees were fleeing their country, making up a quarter of Lebanon's population by October 2013. She co-founded Eat Offbeat to help New Yorkers discover authentic off-the-beaten-path cuisines from around the world all the while providing recently resettled refugees who are passionate about cooking with a job and a place to thrive. The for-profit caterer specializes in authentic cuisine cooked by

recently arrived refugee chefs for a growing list of corporate and non-profit clients in New York City. Her small business in growing and they currently employ several dozen chefs, and most of them are women. They cater to corporations, universities and non-governmental organizations with their sights set on growth. They want to bring their food to like-minded companies that share their passion for social good. Eat Offbeat has been featured in numerous Media and News outlets including The Guardian, Forbes, the Huffington Post, Newsweek, Fast Company, ABC-TV.



**Ms. Amanda J. Nesheiwat, Environmental Director, Town of Secaucus, New Jersey and UN Representative for the Foundation for Post Conflict Development.** Ms. Nesheiwat currently works as the Environmental Director for the Town of Secaucus, New Jersey. During her time working with the town, they have received many environmental achievements including receiving the Environmental Achievement Award with ANJEC for the town’s ban on Styrofoam. She is a UN Representative for the Foundation for Post Conflict Development, a foundation that is based in East Timor and works primarily on development. She is an organizer and environmental activist and is passionate about sustainable development and combatting climate change. She has served as a youth delegate in conferences such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Doha, Qatar where she was the State Department Liaison for the delegation. She was trained by Al Gore and his team to

effectively present information about climate change as a Climate Reality Leader. She is a sought after public speaker and consultant for municipalities on the economic benefits of sustainability. Ms. Nesheiwat is a recipient of the 2014 United Nations ATOP Peace Award for her work in Environmental Sustainability and was chosen as one of the top 50 Most Influential People of Hudson County, New Jersey. She has also received the North Jersey Young Environmental Innovator Award for 2015. She serves as a Board Member for several organizations including the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions. She also had a Tedx talk about her work titled: “How I Became a Change Agent.” She has a Master of Science in Sustainability Management from Stevens Institute of Technology.



**Mr. Jeffery Huffines is Senior Advisor to UN2020 on behalf of CIVICUS.** Mr. Huffines joined CIVICUS in 2009 as UN Representative (NY). Since 2017 the civil society-led initiative UN2020 has facilitated discussions with many member states, UN secretariat officials and civil society on the need for a robust, well prepared 75th anniversary commemoration for the UN in 2020, one that includes a meaningful process of stocktaking, review and strengthening of the organization. Jeffery has represented CIVICUS at the UN High-level Political Forum since its inception and was an organizing partner of the UN DESA NGO Major Group (2011-2016) responsible for guiding multi-stakeholder engagement of NGOs during the lead up to Rio+20 through the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. He was Chair of the 65th UN DPI/NGO Conference, “2015 and Beyond: Our Action Agenda”, UN HQ NY, 27-29 August 2014. Previously, Jeffery was elected Chair of the NGO/DPI Executive Committee (2007-2011), when the annual UN DPI/NGO Conference was

hosted abroad in Paris (2008), Mexico City (2009), Melbourne (2010) and Bonn (2011). Mr. Huffines had previously served as Main UN Representative for the U.S. Baha’i Community where he led a number of NGO initiatives as Co-Chair of the Faith and Ethics Network for the International Criminal Court (FENICC); Chair of the UN Association/USA’s New York Council of Organizations; President of the Committee of Religious NGOs; and co-founder of the Tripartite Forum on International Cooperation for Peace.



**Ms. Margo LaZaro, is the President and Chair of the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development-NY** and she is the Director of UN Relations for Global Family, and Chair of the Board of Advisers for Youth for a Better World/Montessori Model UN, Youth Impact! Forum and she represents the Huairou Commission at the UN. She is Co-Founder and Chief Strategic Officer of the SDG Impact Awards. She has over thirty years of experience at the United Nations working in the UN Community as a Chief Developer of meetings, conferences and Special Events with all stakeholders developing impactful programs and projects that include the UN Sustainable Development Goals. She is a member of the Habitat Civil Society Work Group, the General Assembly of Partners, the NGO Major Group and the Coordinator of the NGO Major Group Urban Thematic Cluster, as well as a member of the Women’s Major Group for the UN High Level Political Forum. Ms. LaZaro’s work is mainly focused on connecting all areas

of the 17 SDGs. She passionately champions SDG 17 on Building Partnerships and she believes in the NGOCS-D-NY motto: “Turn Your Passions into Actions for Change.” Through her leadership the NGOCS-D-NY is a proud Partner of the UN Friends of World Ocean Day initiative. She was on the Planning Committee of the 68<sup>th</sup> UN Civil Society Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah from August 26-28, 2019. She has recently initiated bringing entrepreneurs of all ages and the private sector into United Nations discourse to foster support for the success of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, so we “Leave No One Behind.”

**“Turn Your Passions into Actions for Change”**

<http://www.ngocsd-ny.org>

