



NGO Committee on Sustainable Development, NY

*Environmental, social and economic development that meets the needs of the present
without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

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

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Child Brides: Raising Awareness of a Cultural Travesty; Monday, November 23, 2015



H.E. Mr. Henry Leonard Mac-Donald is the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Suriname to the United Nations. Ambassador Mac-Donald was born in Suriname. He received his legal education at the Law Faculty of the Anton de Kom University in Paramaribo, Suriname (1994) and at the American University in Washington DC, where he obtained an additional Masters of Laws in “Laws and Government” at the Washington College of Law in 2003. He was the Representative and Advisor of his country to the Inter American Defense Board (IADB) in Washington DC and has also been representing Suriname for longer than 8 years as its Alternate Representative to the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM). Ambassador Mac-Donald is a senior legal advisor on international human rights topics and a principal speech writer for his government on development, legal and diplomatic matters. He has represented his country as Principal Expert before a number of Human Rights bodies at the United Nations (e.g. the Universal Periodic Review (2011); the UN Committee Regarding the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2009); the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child (2007); the UN Committee against the Discrimination of Women (2002), and at the Organization of American States such as at the

Moiwana hearings before the Inter American Commission on Human Rights (2003) and the Inter American Court of Justice in 2004. Since his arrival at the United Nations five years ago he has served several times as the Chairperson of the CARICOM Caucus of Ambassadors to the United Nations and as Chairperson of the GRULAC Regional Grouping. He was a Vice President of the General Assembly in 2010, in which capacity he served on numerous occasions as Acting President. Almost two years ago he was very instrumental in having the first Surinamese human rights expert being elected to the Human Rights Committee. He served as Chairperson of the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee, generally referred to as the Third Committee for the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.



Ms. Satvika Chalasani, Ph.D., Technical Specialist, Adolescents and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health Branch Technical Division, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Ms. Chalasani is a Technical Specialist at the United Nations Population Fund’s headquarters in New York. At UNFPA, she focuses on the sexual and reproductive health and rights of adolescents and youth. She coordinates UNFPA’s work on evidence-based programmes and policies for adolescent girls at risk of child marriage and adolescent pregnancy. She also supports workstreams aimed at improving contraceptive services for young people and maternal health services for young mothers. Previously she worked at the Population Council doing research on adolescents. She is trained as a demographer, economist, and sociologist. Ms. Satvika was born and brought up in India and has lived in the United States for more than a decade.



Mr. Ravi Karkara, Strategic Adviser, Partnership to the Assistant Secretary-General & Deputy Executive Director of UN-Women & Co-Chair of the Policy Strategy Group, for the World We Want Platform. Mr. Karkara is the lead author of the groundbreaking report “Youth 21: Building the Architecture of Youth Engagement in the UN System,” by UN-Habitat, which contributed to the creation of United Nations Secretary General’s Envoy on Youth. He represented UN-HABITAT as the Co-chair of the UN Interagency Network on Youth Development. The Government of Sri Lanka appointed him as the Global Advisor to the World Conference on Youth in 2014, focusing on youth perspective in developing post-2015 development agenda. He has relentlessly supported United Nations SG’s My World 2015 survey in reaching close to 5.5 million young people. Mr. Karkara has been co-chairing the Policy Strategy Group for World We Want 2015 - a UN and CSO co-led post-2015 Big Data-Curation-Visualization global conversation platform. He is serving as Strategic Adviser Partnership Beijing+20, Office of the Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director, UN-Women. He has committed his lifetime to women’s and girls’ empowerment, strengthening human rights of/with girls, adolescent girls, young women and women, gender

equality and social inclusion. He is a founding member of the MenEngage Alliance and Young Men 4 Gender Equality. Mr. Karkara has worked with several organizations on gender mainstreaming with a specific focus on children, youth and women including UN-Women, UNICEF and Save the Children.



Ms. Melissa Jane Kronfeld, Ph.D. (ABD), Founding Member & Co-Chair of the Nexus Working Group on Human Trafficking & Modern Slavery. Ms. Kronfeld is a Ph.D. candidate in the Division of Global Affairs at Rutgers University and received a B.A. in International Relations from George Washington University, as well as a M.S. in Global Affairs from both New York University and Rutgers University. She has lectured on American foreign policy and presented lectures on national security issues at Rutgers, Syracuse University and New York University. In 2012, she was awarded first place in the Richard A. Clarke National Security and Counter-Terrorism Scholarship contest and in 2014, the Rutgers University Walter F. Weiker scholarship celebrating students who possess academic excellence and a commitment to exceptional contributions to society. A journalist and editorialist, she has been featured in Politico, The Daily Caller, Government Security News, Fox News, Fox News Channel, Fox Business, The Journal on Terrorism and Security Analysis, World Jewish Daily, as well as the New York Post, and in 2013 she was named one of the “36 Under 36” by The Jewish Week. She is also engaged in numerous community endeavors, non-profit advisory boards and associations, as well as a group of socially

conscious start-up businesses engaged across a spectrum of humanitarian causes. In 2014 she launched a boutique social impact consultancy with operations in Manhattan and Washington, D.C.



Dr. Padmini (Mini) Murthy, Associate Professor and Global Health Director at New York Medical College. Dr. Murthy is a physician (a trained obstetrician and gynecologist) and an activist who did her residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology. She has practiced medicine and public health for the past 28 years in various countries. She has been working in various arenas of the health care industry. She has a MPH and a MS in Management from New York University. Dr. Murthy serves as the Medical Women’s International Association NGO representative the United Nations. She also serves a member of the Executive Council of the NGO CSW Committee of NY at the United Nations. Dr. Murthy is widely published and is the author and editor of *Women’s Global Health and Human Rights (Jones and Bartlett publisher)* which is used as a text book worldwide and she serves as a peer reviewer for several publications. Her poetry book *Mini’s Musings* was published in 2012. She has made over 100 presentations on women’s and children’s health nationally and internationally in scientific conferences and in the United Nations and countries where she has been invited. She has been working to promote safe motherhood and other health initiatives focused on women in India, Malawi and Grenada. Dr. Murthy has been the recipient

of numerous awards. She was the 1st American woman physician to receive the Jhirad Oration Award (in Seoul, Korea) conferred at an international conference in recognition of her service and work to MWIA. She has also been the recipient of the Soujourner Truth Pin which is given to those women who excel in community service. In June 2015, she was presented Millennium Milestone Maker Award at the 9th Annual Women’s Symposium at Sias University, China.



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Mrs. Stella Ayo-Odongo, Executive Director the Uganda Child Rights NGO Network & a Custodian of the AfricaWide Movement for Children. Mrs. Ayo-Odongo has worked in the development field for over 15 years and has particularly gained extensive knowledge and experience in advocating for vulnerable groups such as the elderly and children. In the last five years she spearheaded several advocacy initiatives at national, regional and international levels particularly on child rights concerns. Mrs Ayo-Odongo has been extensively involved in technical services at national and regional levels. Some of these engagements include: evaluation of the child labour programme and facilitating the development of a national child labour policy for the KURET Initiative in Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda, evaluation of the mental health programme for Mental Health Uganda, Team Leader for the Child Protection Advocacy Report for the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF), Team Leader for the Contextual Analysis on the Situation of Children for the International Child Support Programme, facilitating the development of a National Child Participation Guideline for Uganda, and contributing to the generation of a national Situational Analysis Report on the situation of children. She has an MSc degree in Development Management (Open University-UK) and an Honors degree in Social Sciences (Makerere University-Uganda), and has participated in several professional development courses in political and policy advocacy training, project planning and management among others.



Ms. Ashley Marinaccio, Co-Founder/Director of Girl Be Heard. Ms. Marinaccio is a writer, performer and photographer who creates work that challenges the status quo. She is dedicated to documenting the socio-political issues that define our times. Her theatrical work has been seen off-Broadway, at TED conferences, The White House, The Apollo, at the United Nations and on tour throughout the United States and Europe. She is also Co-founder/Director of Co-Op Theatre East (cooptheatreast.org). She holds her M.A. in Performance Studies from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and BA in theatre directing and sociology/anthropology with minors in women/gender and Middle Eastern from Pace University. Ms. Marinaccio is on the faculty of Pace University's Performing Arts School. Learn more: www.ashley-marinaccio.com. Girl Be Heard (GBH) is based in New York City uses theatre as a vehicle to empower young women to become brave, confident, socially conscious leaders while exploring their own challenging circumstances. GBH specializes in creating safe spaces where girls can talk about the issues that are most important to them, and providing a platform where they can speak out for change. *Girl Be Heard* has been featured on MTV, VH1, Huffington Post, the United Nations, NY International Fringe Festival and in middle and high schools, colleges and venues across the world. For more information, visit girlbeheard.org.



Ms. Naila Amin, College Student & 26 year old Survivor of a forced marriage residing in New York. Ms. Amin was living here, when she was taken to Pakistan to marry her first cousin who was her elder of 13 years. She started experiencing problems at home at the age of 14 when her parents found out she was dating an American boy. The whole problem stemmed from the fact that she was betrothed to her first cousin at the age of 8. She was basically spoken for, in her culture this was looked upon as adultery. She was taken away from her parents in 2004 and entered foster care, Ms. Amin did not like the foster care system because no one understood her and there was not enough cultural competency. No one knew what a child bride was. She escaped and went to her parents who helped her leave the country to go to Pakistan; little did she know she was being set up in a trap. She was married to her 28 year old cousin in January of 2005. She managed to escape with the help of her uncle. Ms. Amin is currently going to Nassau Community College to be a social worker and wants to specialize in working with survivors of forced marriage. She wants to open up the first group home for survivors of forced marriages, and for Males and Females escaping honor violence. Ms. Amin has big plans for the future. Her biggest dream is to criminalize forced marriage in the U.S. and raise as much awareness as possible.



Ms. Monica Singh, Fashion Designer & Motivational Speaker & Survivor of being attacked by Acid. Ms. Singh had an acid attack on her face in 2005, by a boy whose marriage proposal she rejected. After 10 years and 46 surgeries later she is now fulfilling her dream of becoming a fashion designer. Currently she is pursuing a degree in Marketing at Parsons, The New School for Design in New York. In her own words, "Strength and support are the tools that helped me go from being a victim of an acid attack to a survivor. These are the gifts I received from my family, especially my father. Though he is gone today, I think there is still a lot more he wanted to do to help others in need, as he was always ready to come to the aid of those who wanted help while he was still alive. I want to share and spread his message and legacy with the foundation that I have started in his name to help others in their journeys, to go from being helpless to becoming strong enough to thrive and help others." Today, Ms. Singh has become an inspirational & motivational speaker, she recently spoke at UN during a Humanitarian Award function, and she was a guest speaker on International Human Rights at Brooklyn Law School. She also had an opportunity to speak on Women Against Violence at the 2015 Parliament of World Religions meetings held in Utah. Spreading awareness about violence against women and girls has given her a motive to create a new life through her mission. She wants to help others to live their dreams.



Ms. Iqra Shafiq, Youth Representative of Girl Be Heard at the United Nations. Ms. Shafiq has loved working with Girl Be Heard on different projects and help it grow in numerous ways. She is currently a Political Science and Business major in her senior year at The City College of New York, and has worked as an intern for Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez in Washington, DC. She plans to attend graduate school and create her own organization connected to the United Nations with the goal of mentoring young girls in an education setting. Ms. Shafiq is fluent in Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi and literate in Arabic and Urdu as well as Punjabi.

