



NGO Committee on Sustainable Development-NY

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"Turn Your Passions into Actions for Change"

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Wednesday, December 20, 2017 from 2PM to 4PM



Ms. Lakshmi Puri is Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women. Ms. Puri is directly responsible for the leadership and management of the Bureau for Intergovernmental Support, UN System Coordination, and Strategic Partnerships. Ms. Puri joined UN Women in March 2011 and was the interim head of UN Women from March 2013 to August 2013. She has steered UN Women's engagement in major intergovernmental processes, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, including the landmark outcomes of the 57th and 58th sessions, as well as the historic 59th session on the 20-year anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which resulted in a Political Declaration by which Member States pledged to take concrete steps to ensure the full, effective and accelerated actions to achieve gender equality and the

empowerment of women. Ms. Puri has been at the forefront of UN Women's intergovernmental work on Sustainable Development, Climate Change, Financing for Development, Health, Information Society, Youth, Migration, Women, Peace and Security, the Urban agenda and Humanitarian Action. Ms. Puri has been a strong champion of movement building ensuring effective and enhanced engagement of civil society in delivering results for the achievement of gender equality. Through her strategic and thought leadership, Ms. Puri has fostered a dynamic partnership with civil society international networks, ensuring that civil society and the women's movement have greater participation, voice and leadership in intergovernmental normative processes, while bridging communication and interaction between the networks and the governments in relation to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, and women's rights at the international, regional and national levels. During her tenure as Deputy Executive Director she has played a critical role in ensuring the strong presence of civil society in the most relevant intergovernmental processes, including Rio+20, the 15-year review of Security Council resolution 1325, Humanitarian Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Conference of the Parties 17 through 21 on Climate Change, to list a few. Ms. Puri has promoted the importance of the youth movement to defeating entrenched patriarchal belief systems in order to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. Under her guidance UN Women developed its strategy on youth and gender equality, which has spearheaded the entity's work to include youth in the advocacy for, decision-making on and implementation of the international commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment, at the international, national and local levels. Prior to joining UN Women, she was Director of the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. She joined the United Nations in 2002 as Director of the Division of International Trade in Goods, Services and Commodities, which is the largest division at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). From 2007 to 2009, she served as UNCTAD's Acting Deputy Secretary-General. Ms. Puri had a distinguished 28-year career with the Indian Foreign Service, where she held the rank of Permanent Secretary of the Government of India. She has a Bachelor of Arts (honours) from Delhi University and a postgraduate degree from Punjab University, as well as professional diplomas. An Indian national, she speaks Hindi and English fluently, and speaks some French and Japanese.



Mr. Bruce Knotts, Director of the Unitarian Universalist Association, UN Office, the President and CEO of the NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security & Chair of the NGO/DPI Executive Committee. Mr. Knotts has earned his BA from Pepperdine University and MA from the Monterey Institute of International Studies. He was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ethiopia; worked for Raytheon in Saudi Arabia (1976-80) and on a World Bank contract in Somalia (1982-4), before he joined the Department of State as a U.S. diplomat in 1984. He had diplomatic assignments in Greece, Zambia, India, Pakistan, Kenya, Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire and The Gambia, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. While in Cote d'Ivoire, he served as the Regional Refugee Coordinator for West Africa covering 16 African nations, but focusing on the refugees from the conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia and in Cote d'Ivoire. This was the assignment where he had his most sustained contact with the UN

system. Mr. Knotts evaluated programs and recommended funding for UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, WHO and many NGOs working with refugees in West Africa. He worked closely with several UN Special Representatives and observed UN peacekeeping operations in Sierra Leone from 2000-2003. He retired from the Foreign Service in 2007 and joined the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office (UU-UNO) as its Executive Director at the beginning of 2008. Mr. Knotts has been a chair of the UN NGO Committee on Human Rights since June 2010 and a member of the NGO UN Security Council Working Group. He is on the Executive Board of the UN NGO Committee on Sustainable Development-NY.

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Ms. Meredith O'Connor, Anti-Bullying Teen Icon & Celebrity Youth Activist. Ms. O'Connor has radio hit songs that are loved by millions. She is a proud born and raised New Yorker. In addition, to her classes at Hofstra she has also taken film classes at NYU, as she is passionate about higher education. Her songs have been featured on Teen Nick and Disney all with a positive uplifting message, and many of her fans have claimed her music changed and even saved their lives. Ms. O'Connor has sold out concerts all over the world, and she shares her story, and why the cause is so important to her to help others. As a child, she had faced excessive bullying and abuse by her peers, verbally, emotionally and physically. It is her mission to let people know that they are not alone, and to embrace

what makes them stand out to begin with. She supports the goal of transforming pain into passion, as her song "The Game" was written after her first hit song brought her to Internet fame. She wrote the song The Game to address the issues she faced as a child, and her uplifting songs help to provide hope for her fans that relate with similar circumstances. She has a passion for sharing the importance of providing mental health support, and helping those who battle it from overcoming hardships. She is proud to be an NGOCS-D-NY Honorary Adviser for Youth Leadership and Anti-Bullying.



Ms. Dali Schonfelder, 17 year old, Founder & Co-Creator of Nalu: Dress to Give. Dali made many friends when traveling to rural India each year with her family. One year, she returned to find that the government had stopped paying for some of her friends' uniforms after they reached 12 years old. Since students were forbidden to attend school without uniforms, those who could not afford uniforms could no longer receive an education. Together with her younger brother Finn, Dali Co-founded Nalu to break the poverty cycle and give students of all socio-economic levels the opportunity to stay in school. Dali oversees the process from start to finish, first designing the uniforms, and then traveling to India to lead their distribution. In a pilot program, Nalu made and provided more than 5,000 school uniforms to children living in extreme poverty, resulting a doubled enrollment. Not only are more students attending

school, but academic performance has increased and teenage pregnancy in the village has decreased. Further supporting the community, Nalu employs local tailors to manufacture the uniforms. To ensure the sustainability of their impact, Dali and her brother developed a business model by selling clothing and accessories. In the coming year, Nalu's business revenue will provide 20,000 uniforms per month by 2020, creating long-term impact for rural India. Dali is an NGOCS-D-NY Honorary Adviser for Youth Leadership.



Mr. Finn Schonfelder, 14 year old, Founder & Co-Creator of Nalu: Dress to Give. Finn loves to surf, skate and create. He spent his childhood growing up in Holland until his parents decided to go on a world trip. From the world trip they decided to move to Bali, Indonesia. That's where he co-created Nalu, with his sister Dali. Nalu is a company in the business of doing "good." He loves doing his work with Nalu due to the places he visits, the people he meets and the things he learns from it. Nalu has opened up so many doors for him whether he is attending events for peace boats, sleeping on floors in India, or if he is speaking in front of large crowds. He is happy that Nalu has taken up such a big chunk of his life and that it has turned into a lifestyle. Finn is an NGOCS-D-NY Honorary Adviser for Youth Leadership.

We thank our Co-Sponsors for their support of this meeting: the Huairou Commission, UNA-USA Council of Organizations; Peace Boat-NYO; Global Family; Africa Development Interchange Network; Global Family for Love & Peace; Ms. Sheima Sweiss; World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations; Mediators Beyond Borders International; Montessori Model UN; Youth for a Better World; Global Foundation for Democracy & Development; ICW, Salvation Army and CoNGO.

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