



NGO Committee on Sustainable Development-NY

For the United Nations & Communities Globally

*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”

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

NGOCSD-NY General Membership Meeting: Thursday, January 26th from 1-3:30PM



Mr. Elliot Harris, Assistant Secretary-General and Head of UN Environment Programme, New York Office. On 1 April 2015, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Mr. Harris as Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Mr. Harris joined UNEP as Director of the New York Office and of the Secretariat of the Environment Management Group (EMG) in September 2013. Prior to joining UNEP, he worked as an Economist in the IMF from 1988 to 2013, gaining extensive policy and programmatic experience in African and Central Asian countries, as well as in the Fiscal Affairs Department on public expenditure policy issues. From July 2002 onward, Mr. Harris served as Advisor and Assistant Director in the IMF's Strategy, Policy and Review Department, including as Chief of the Development Issues Division. From September 2008 until May 2012, he was also the IMF's Special Representative to the United Nations, and was closely involved in interagency collaboration in the areas of social

protection, the green economy, and fiscal space for social policy. From September 2009 until October 2013, he was the Vice Chair of the High-Level Committee on Programs (HLCP) of the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination.



Dr. Azza Karam, Ph.D. is a Senior Advisor on Culture and Social Development, at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). She is the Lead Facilitator for the United Nations Strategic Learning Exchanges on Religion, development and humanitarian issues. She represents UNFPA as Coordinator/Chair of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Engaging Faith-Based Organizations for Development; and coordinates engagement with members of a Global Interfaith Network for Population and Development with over 500 faith-based organizations. Prior to UNFPA, Dr. Karam served as the Senior Policy Advisor in the Regional Bureau for Arab States at the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). With the support of the Ford Foundation, she founded the first Global Women of Faith Network during her tenure at Religions for Peace, while also advising on interfaith development work in Muslim-majority countries. During this time, she served also as President of the Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations. She was a Senior Programme Officer at the International Institute for

Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) in Sweden; and an international consultant to several developmental programmes with UNDP and the OECD. She taught at a number of universities, and has published widely on international political dynamics, including democratization, human rights, gender, and religion and development. Her books include Religion and Development Post 2015 (2014); Religion, Development and the United Nations (2012), Transnational Political Islam (2004), Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers (2004); A Woman's Place: Religious Women as Public Actors (2002); and Women, Islamisms and the State (1998). For a fuller list of her publications, see: <http://www.worldcat.org/identities/lccn-nr96011457/>



H.E. Mr. Leslie B. Gatan, Former Ambassador of the Philippines to Canada. Mr. Gatan was a career foreign service officer who joined the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines on 1 March 1983. He held the ambassadorial rank of Chief of Mission Class I. In the Home Office, he served as Assistant Secretary for United Nations and International Organizations (UNIO); Special Assistant of the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs for Policy; Director for ASEAN Economic Matters and ASEAN-EU Relations at the Office of ASEAN Affairs; and Acting Director for Political Matters and, subsequently, Acting Director for Environment, Technology, Energy, Transport and Communications and Human Settlements at the Office of UNIO. Before joining the Foreign Service he served as management specialist of the Department of Science and Technology. In the foreign service, he served as Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN in New York; Minister at the Philippine Embassy in Brussels; Minister, Consul General and Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN-ESCAP at the Philippine Embassy in Bangkok; Consul at the Philippine Consulate General in Milan; First Secretary and Consul

at the Philippine Mission to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva; and Third Secretary and Vice Consul and Representative to the Colombo Plan Council in Colombo. He obtained a Master in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of the Philippines through the NSTA staff scholarship program. In 1982, he passed the Foreign Service Officers' Examinations and transferred to the Department of Foreign Affairs the following year. He is married to Ms. Lydia Debbie Mijares of Masbate and Batangas.



Rabbi Reuben Modek is the Director and Spiritual Leader of Hebrew Learning Circles and its innovative Synagogue-Without-Walls and the author of the innovative Legacy Passage Bar and Bat Mitzvah program. Living in Nyack, New York, he offers educational services, holiday celebrations, and life-cycle ceremonies, and social justice engagement opportunities embracing the lifestyle realities of the twenty-first century Jewish and intermarried family. A native Israeli, Rabbi Modek launched his career as an educator with the Dror and HaShomer HaTza'ir progressive Zionist youth movements. After earning a degree in Social Work from Haifa University, Rabbi Modek moved to the US where his passion for Jewish education, activism and leadership were refocused. Rabbi Modek teaches workshops on Jewish spirituality, wellness and deep-ecology at retreats, synagogues, and Hebrew schools in the US, England, Germany, and Israel. He serves as Founding Director of Educating For Spirituality a project of Aleph Alliance for Jewish Renewal and is a member of Ohalah, Association of Rabbis For Jewish Renewal. His approach offers Jewish and interfaith families an opportunity to engage in the Jewish quest

with a high degree of spiritual connectedness, contemporary relevance, and personal meaning. Rabbi Modek is engaged in a variety of interfaith projects promoting dialogue and good will relationships among religious leaders and activists, such as the Stony Point Center in Rockland County and the Interfaith Group of Northern Westchester.



Ven. Guang Guo Shih is a Nun in the Wu Sheng Monastery on Ling Jiou Mountain. She was ordained in 1991 after she earned her Bachelor degree from the German Literature Department at Soo Chow University. After her ordination, Ven. Guang Guo Shih began her Interfaith journey as a disciple of Ven. Dharma Master Hsin Tao, the founder of the Museum of World Religions. She extensively traveled with the Master to establish Interfaith relations. Ven. Guang Guo Shih relocated to New York City in the wake of the events of 9/11 to offer spiritual guidance and further promote Interfaith and peace work. She was appointed the Abbess of the One Center, then located in lower Manhattan near Ground Zero and now teaches the practice of meditation and engages in interreligious activities through Global Family for Love and Peace to disseminate Master's guiding theme of the Museum, "Respect for all Faiths, Engagement with all Cultures and Love for all Life."



Ms. Abigail Nelson, Senior Vice President of Programs for Episcopal Relief & Development. Ms. Nelson has served as Senior Vice President of Programs since 2010. She joined Episcopal Relief & Development in 1999 and has worked also as Vice President of Programs, Director of Latin American Programs and also as a Program Associate for the organization. Under Nelson's stewardship, the programs of Episcopal Relief & Development have reached nearly \$20 million per year in over 40 countries. She has played an important leadership role in shaping and overseeing all of Episcopal Relief & Development programs in Latin America, Asia and Africa and particularly Episcopal Relief & Development's Katrina Response program and NetsforLife®. As Director of Latin American Programs, Nelson helped the Episcopal Church throughout Latin America design and implement programs that respond to natural and manmade disasters and reduce communities' exposure to future risk. She oversaw Episcopal Relief & Development's programs for vulnerable populations that include new housing and infrastructure

construction, small business development and training, disaster mitigation and reforestation, and small agriculture and fisheries investment. The journey that Episcopal Relief & Development has made since its days as the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief would not have been possible without Abigail's many gifts and her commitment to Episcopal Relief & Development's mission to serve the least of these, as we are asked to do by Jesus in Matthew 25. Before coming to Episcopal Relief & Development, Nelson, the daughter of an Episcopal priest, worked with the government of Ecuador on its coastal resource management program and as a financial analyst of Latin American telecommunications companies for several investment banks. She earned her B.A. in Government from Harvard College and her M.Sc. in Economic Development from the London School of Economics.



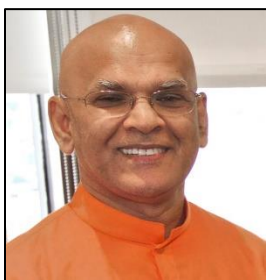
Mr. Gordon M. Tapper, Founder and Chair of Give Them a Hand Foundation. One of Mr. Tapper's main focuses is in giving support to Rural Women in Agriculture whom he sees as the backbone of food security in most of the developing world. He has had a long and distinguished career of over 35 years of service at the United Nations, and is a former Chief of Section in the Department of Administration and Management. Mr. Tapper numbers amongst his more important contributions at the UN, his participation in the first fair and free elections held in South Africa as a member of the UNOMSA mission. Then he was assigned to Kwazulu/Natal where he established and supervised electoral offices and meetings of the peace processes. In 2004 and while still a UN Staff Member Mr. Tapper founded the Non-Profit Organization, Give Them a Hand Foundation (GTAH) primarily so that staff members like himself could help needy peoples on the ground. In this way, several UN staff members and family members have been able to help with clean-up activities after Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Sandy, the earthquake in Haiti and on medical and humanitarian missions to several countries. Under his

leadership, GTAH has hosted an annual Interfaith Harmony week program each February since 2012. On March 30th, 2014 GTAH and partners hosted an event in the Mandela Hall of the African Union office in New York to raise awareness about the plight of the Africans and people of African descent in the Ukraine who were being beaten and abused as the domestic situation entered a period of strife. GTAH with partnering organizations also hosted the first Ebola Forum at the United Nations in August of 20 in the ECOSOC Chamber with the participation of ambassadors of the three most affected countries. GTAH also hosted a major concert in the General Assembly Hall in March of 2015 to impress upon Member States that the Ebola crisis had not gone away and that the world still needed to be vigilant in fighting it. He is a proud native of Jamaica in the West Indies. Mr. Tapper has a Degree in Business Administration from Pace University in New York.



Ms. Audrey E. Kitagawa, JD, is the President of the Light of Awareness International Spiritual Family, a Trustee of Council For A Parliament of The World's Religions. Ms Kitagawa is a UN Representative of the United Religions Initiative, and Chair Emerita of the NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns. She has been enstooled into the royal family as the Nekoso Hema (i.e. Queen Mother of Development), of Ajjyamanti in Ghana, and has a school named after her in her African name, the Nana Ode Anyankobea Junior Secondary School. She has published articles in World Affairs The Journal Of International Issues, entitled, The Power of Om: Transformation of Consciousness, and Practical Spirituality. A chapter, Crossing World Views, The Power of Perspective in the Hawaii Japanese American Experience, has been published in a book about multiculturalism, communication and Asian women entitled, Learning In The Light. Her chapter, Globalization As The Fuel For Religious And Ethnic Conflict has been published in the book, Globalization And Identity, Cultural Diversity, Religion and Citizenship. She has been listed in Who's Who In America, Who's Who Of American Law, Who's Who Of American Women, Who's Who In America, Who's Who In The World, and Prominent People of Hawaii. She

is a recipient of the Medal, "Pride of Eurasia," and a Diploma from the Republic of Kazakhstan Ministry of Education for her outstanding contribution to the development of spiritual culture and education in Eurasia. She is a recipient of the Spirit of the United Nations Award, and a recipient of an Honorary Interfaith Minister Degree from The New Seminary.



Swami Parameshananda, is the Main United Nations Representative and a Monk of Bharat Sevashram Sangha, a Hindu not-for-profit social and religious monastic order with headquarters in Kolkata, India. He is an executive member of CSVGC-NY (Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns-NY) and the Religious NGO Committee at the United Nations. Swami Parameshananda has participated in programs on Conflict Resolution in Syria and Lebanon, as well as religious and spiritual harmony in Italy, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Australia. He was instrumental in establishing ashrams in Nepal, India, and Guyana in order to provide basic needs to the poor and the less fortunate. He believes that advocacy work together with grass service work is the right combination to serve and at the same time spiritualize himself and the masses. He is convinced that spirituality is the solution for problems. He headed BSS Tsunami reconstruction South India, two hundred houses were rebuilt. During this period he counseled victims who lost loved ones or homes. He served in two cyclones in India and

one in Nepal, usually living in mosquito infested tents. He worked to eradicate leprosy in India through his organization Bharat Sevashram sangha. BSS has been serving the poor and less fortunate for one hundred years and has achieved most of the SDGs. He is keen to expand his organization to serve more on the world's stage so as to achieve all of the SDGs. He is an accountant and writer, including work on his autobiography.



Mrs. Maria Eugenia Crespo, Director of the Cooperation Circle Support for the United Religions Initiative in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She maintains communication with CCs around the world, manages the CC approval process and is the staff liaison for the URI CC Approval Committee. Mrs. Crespo moderates URI's list serves and oversees the production of the annual community Directory (a complete listing of the URI CCs). Prior to this, served as the Regional Coordinator for URI Latin America for five years. She originally became involved with URI in 1997 when she was appointed as a Trustee in the Interim Global Council. By profession, she is a bilingual school teacher. She is very involved in the Roman Catholic Church as a catechist and lay person, collaborating in the Episcopal Conference for Ecumenism, Relations with Judaism, Islam and other Religions. She is married has five children.



Ms. Saphira Rameshfar is a UN Representative of the Baha'i International Community's UN Office in New York. Prior to this, Ms. Rameshfar was at the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs headquarters in New York working on capacity development policy. As an Australian, she worked for the Australian Federal Government Department of Agriculture on international trade negotiations and market strategy for Australian agricultural exports. Ms. Rameshfar dedicated three years to projects aimed at the empowerment of youth in Australia as well as in communities throughout the Asia Pacific region and North and South America. She holds a Bachelor of Applied Science, Bachelor of Economics, and a Research Degree in Ecology, along with Postgraduate qualifications in Public Administration, and Governance as well as a Masters Degree in International Law from the Australian National University.



Mr. Juan Elias Chebly, Lead Adviser to the UN Environment Programmes' Secretariat of Governing Bodies; Founder and CEO of voipebox.com. Mr Chebly is a Ph.D. Candidate in Sustainable Development at Simon Bolivar University in Caracas, Venezuela. He holds a BS in management, a minor in International Business, and a Finance MBA degree from St. John's University in Queens NY. Mr. Chebly completed his studies with honors at St. John's in 2009. At age 24, he became St. John's Tobin College of Business youngest Adjunct Professor during Fall 2010. He taught Foundations of Finance and was among the top-ranked professors by students. In 2009, he founded Voipebox.com, a telecom startup introducing innovative and pioneering VOIP telephony solutions in South America and the United States.



Mr. Daniel Perell, Global Organizing Partner of the NGO Major Group, Chair of the NGO Committee for Social Development, Representative for Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations, New York. Mr. Perell joined the Baha'i International Community's United Nations Office as a Representative in 2011. His areas of work include social and sustainable development, global citizenship, human rights, the role of religion in society, and defense of the Baha'i Community. He is currently a Global Organizing Partner of the NGO Major Group and the Chair of the NGO Committee for Social Development. In 2010, Mr. Perell received a JD from the University of Virginia, School of Law and an MA in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School at Tufts University and was admitted to the New York State Bar Association. Mr. Perell has worked with the International Service for Human Rights in Geneva, the UN in

Aceh, Indonesia and other organizations in the Marshall Islands and Chile.

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**Our sincere appreciation to Ms. Hawa Diallo, Public Information Officer NGO Relations, Advocacy and Special Events Section Department of Public Information; Mr. Daniel Perell, of the Bahai International UN Office; Juan Chebly, Lead Adviser , UN Environment Programme; Ms. Melissa Jane Kronfeld; Mrs. Monica Willard with the United Religions Initiative; Ms. Lynnaia Main, with The Episcopal Church and Mr. Laurence Singer with Global Family for Love & Peace for their support of this meeting.**

