

**The Permanent Missions of Sri Lanka and Kenya to the United Nations in partnership with the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development-NY welcome you to our CSW63 High Level Event ~  
“Women Investing in Peace”**

**March 15, 2019 – 11:30AM to 12:45PM - Conference Room 12 at United Nations Headquarters, NY**



**H.E. Dr. Amrith Rohan Perera, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations in New York.** Dr. Perera is a Graduate of Law of the University of Ceylon (1971). After being admitted as an Advocate of the Supreme Court (1973), he practiced in the field of Civil Law. He then joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an Assistant Legal Advisor (1976). Thereafter, he was appointed as Additional Legal Advisor and finally Legal Advisor, in which capacity he served until his retirement from public service in 2007. Until 2011, Dr. Perera served a member of the International Law Commission (ILC), having been elected to the Commission in 2007. He also chairs the United Nations Ad-hoc Committee on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, currently negotiating the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. He has also served as a Visiting Lecturer in Public International Law at the Department of Law, University of Peradeniya, Open

University of Sri Lanka, Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies and the General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University. In May 2010, Dr. Perera was appointed as a Commissioner of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC).



**Hon. Ms. Rachel Wambui Shebesh, Chief Administrative Secretary of the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs of Kenya.** Hon. Ms. Shebesh has been Chief Administrative Secretary since 2nd March, 2018. Born to an urban family in Nairobi, in the course of her growing up, education and early adult life, she encountered deep seated discrimination of women and youth in leadership and management of Kenya's affairs in all respects. Rachel's active leadership career began with the Vision Sisters, a grassroots women organization committed to the betterment of women lives. She is currently the patron of the group which originally operated in the slums of Korogocho but now has 23 groups all over Nairobi County and boasts of a strong membership of 2820. She belongs to the influential PLDP Alumni, The Pioneers for Change having been among the very first group of emerging young leaders to receive one year intensive training in 2005. The training was sponsored by the Fredrich Ebert Stiftung and coordinated by

the Youth Agenda and the 4Cs. The acts of discrimination and the subtle efforts to consign women and youth to the periphery of national affairs pushed her to political activism and party leadership. She was first nominated to Parliament in 2007 by the Orange Democratic Party (ODM) to represent the interests of persons with disabilities. Rachel became the Champion for the Kenya Disabilities Network (KDN).



**Hon. Ms. Marjan Mateen, Deputy Minister of Education of Afghanistan.** Hon. Ms. Mateen began working as Deputy Minister of Education in 2019. Prior to this, Ms. Mateen was the First Ladies' Advisor on Youth and Educational Affairs. In this role, Ms. Mateen focused on improving the quality of education in Afghanistan through standardizing the curriculum. Ms. Mateen was also a member of the High Council for Human Resources under the auspices of President Ashraf Ghani. It was in this capacity that Ms. Mateen began advocating for high quality and professional education curriculum. Ms. Mateen graduated from Zarghuna high School in Kabul and earned her undergraduate and postgraduate degree from the Jawaharlal Nehru University in India. Ms. Mateen has a bachelor of social sciences (political science, journalism and psychology) and has received her Master's Degree in International Relations.



**Dr. Ida Betty Odinga, EGH is the Wife of the Former Prime Minister of Kenya, H.E. Mr. Raila Odinga and a Patron of the “Embrace Women Building Bridges for Kenya” Initiative.** Dr. Odinga is an Icon in Kenya. Her life journey is synonymous with fighting for justice, advocating for the less fortunate, fighting for women's rights, as well as being a great mentor and influencer for women's leadership and a voice for the young girls of Kenya. A much-known face that is also celebrated for her grace, talent in leadership as well as intellect, she is a teacher by profession having taught for a period of over 20 years since she graduated from the University of Nairobi. Dr. Odinga is also celebrated as one the first women to head a major corporation when she took over as the Managing Director of East Africa Spectre in 2003. The wife of Kenya's Former Prime Minister, she has been a great influence in the journey that has made the Prime Minister's political career possible. Dr. Odinga is peace crusader and played a key role in the historic

“Handshake” in Kenya that saved the country after the difficult electioneering period in 2017. She has also just been named the Champion for Universal Health Care and adds to the numerous initiatives she has spearheaded in the past namely: Founder and Past Chairperson - League of Kenya women Voters; Patron - White Ribbon Alliance- Kenya that aims at preventing maternal deaths through initiating safe motherhood programs; Patron - Freedom from Fistula Foundation that aims at creating awareness of the causes, preventions and cure for those afflicted; Past Patron – Kenya Medical Women's Association; Patron – Kenya breast health organization; Champion – Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and UNICEF nutrition Initiatives Champion – Integrated carepack program that aims at maximizing efforts in Kenya in the fields of Malaria, Diarrheal diseases and HIV; Chairperson – Paraplegic Association of Kenya Advisory Board. For all these, she has received numerous awards in many countries including USA – The Susan G Komen, Nigeria, South Africa, UAE and recently honoured with the highest civilian award in Kenya – “Elder of the Golden Heart.”

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**Mrs. Swarna Sumanasekera is the Chairperson of the National Committee on Women in Sri Lanka.** Mrs. Sumanasekera has worked extensively in the field of gender equality and entrepreneurship among women including making positive changes in the former areas of conflict for the economic enhancement and protection of war widows. Under the auspices of the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, Mrs. Sumanasekera with her vast range of expertise is involved in capacity building measures and implementing the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.



**Ms. Heidi Kuhn, Founder and CEO of Roots of Peace.** The California spirit is deeply rooted in Ms. Kuhn who was raised with the values of respecting the earth and its people, ideals established by her family who were early pioneers in the 1800s. A fifth-generation California, she attended the University of California Berkeley, where those core beliefs were strengthened during the peace movement of the 1970's while majoring in Political Economics, setting forth a lifelong commitment to following in the footsteps of peace. From the basement of her home, she garnered the support of famed Napa Valley vintners including Robert Mondavi and Mike Grgich to support her vision of turning “Mines to Vines” – replacing the remnants of war with bountiful vineyards and orchards of peace around the world. Over the past 22 years, Ms. Kuhn has grown Roots of Peace across the world with the support of the United States Government, the United Nations, the World Bank and other international governments and organizations. She has been

recognized by numerous world leaders including UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, HH Pope Benedict XVI, HH Pope Francis and many heads of state and government. Ms. Kuhn and Roots of Peace have been the recipient of numerous awards including the Skoll Award on Social Entrepreneurship, the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Award/National Jefferson Award for Public Service, the Rotary International “Service Above Self” Award and in 2018, received the inaugural Earth Ethics Award from Marcus Nobel, nephew of Alfred Nobel presented to her at the United Nations in New York. She has been married to her husband Gary for over 35 years, and they have four grown children, Brooks, Tucker, Kyleigh and Christian.



**Ms. Margo LaZaro, President and Chair of the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development-NY.** Further, Ms. LaZaro represents Global Family, the Huairou Commission and Youth for a Better World: MMUN at the United Nations. She has over thirty years of experience at the United Nations working with Civil Society and the UN Community as a Chief Developer of meetings, conferences and Special Events with all stakeholders in developing impactful programs and projects. She is a member of the Habitat Civil Society Working Group, the General Assembly of Partners, the NGO Major Group and newly formed NGO/MG Urban Cluster, as well as the Women's Major Group for the UN High Level Political Forum. She served as a member of the 2017 UN Ocean Conference Steering Committee and she recently co-created the 2019 Climate Summit & SDGs Stakeholder Steering Committee for UNGA Week at UN Headquarters. She is proud to serve on the Planning Committee for the August 2019 68th Civil Society UN/Dept. of

Global Communications Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. She is an expert in highlighting the outstanding contributions made by leading global change makers and bringing the initiatives undertaken by them to the United Nations and the global community. Ms. LaZaro's work is mainly focused on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals with grassroots outreach for women & girls, climate action, gender equality, ending violence against women & children, women's economic empowerment & entrepreneurship, ending hunger, ocean cleanup & renewable energy resources, human rights, education, clean water, health & well-being, disarmament, peace & security, youth leadership & entrepreneurship, the New Urban Agenda while including engagement with media, technology and communication outlets. She studied Art & Design in New York. Her career as a Designer gave her a solid foundation for taking on issues and developing creative impactful solutions. She passionately champions SDG 17 on Building Partnerships and believes in the NGOCSN-NY motto: *"Turn Your Passions into Actions for Change."* She recently brought entrepreneurs into the United Nations discourse on the SDGs to foster solutions and support for the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, to “Leave No One Behind.” (website: [ngocsd-ny.org](http://ngocsd-ny.org))

*“Turn Your Passions into Actions for Change”*

