



DESA



Global Policy Dialogue Series

Speakers' Biographies

Strengthening Sustainable Forest and Ocean Management to Mitigate Climate Change

Building a Global Coalition for Sustainability after COVID-19
Session 3 of the UN DESA Global Policy Dialogues for Climate Action

Wednesday, 26 May 2021, 8:00-9:30 a.m. EDT

Welcome remarks



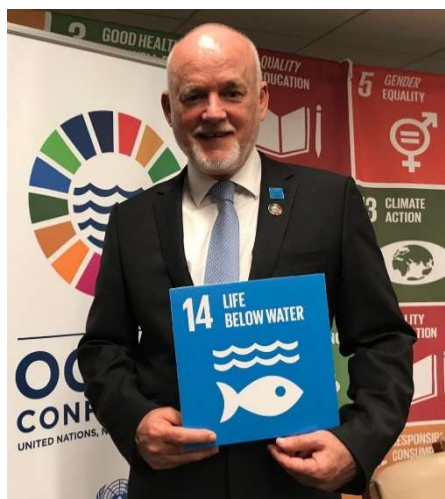
Ms. Ligia Noronha

Ligia Noronha began her role as United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the New York Office at the UN Environment Programme on 1 April 2021. In this role she works in establishing and maintaining critical links with the Permanent Missions of Member States to the United Nations, the UN Secretariat, other UN System organizations and entities headquartered in New York, major groups, civil society organizations, academia and the private sector. Through her leadership of the New York Office, she promotes effective integration of the environmental dimension in the UN System work programmes, in the interagency mechanisms and in the intergovernmental processes while raising awareness of emerging environmental issues and the outcomes of the UN Environment Assembly.

An economist with over 30 years of international experience in the field of sustainable development, Ms. Noronha previously served as Director of UNEP's Economy Division based in Nairobi, leading UNEP's work on climate mitigation and energy transitions; on inclusive green economies, sustainable consumption and production, as well as on trade and sustainable finance, and the nexus of environment, pollution and health.

Prior to joining UNEP, Ms. Noronha worked at The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) in New Delhi, she served as Secretary of the Asian Energy Institute and as Coordinator of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnerships (REEEP), and worked with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada.

She holds a Master's degree in Economics from the University of Mumbai, as well as a Master's degree in Sea Use Law, Economics and Policy and a Ph.D. from the London School of Economics. Ms. Noronha is married with three children.



Mr. Peter Thomson

In 2017, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appointed Ambassador Peter Thomson of Fiji as his Special Envoy for the Ocean, aiming at galvanizing concerted efforts to follow up on the outcomes of the 2017 UN Ocean Conference, maintaining the momentum for action to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Mr. Thomson leads UN advocacy and public outreach efforts inside and outside of the UN system, ensuring that the many positive outcomes of the Ocean Conference, including the over 1,500 voluntary commitments, are analysed and implemented. He also works with civil society, the scientific community, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders, to coalesce and encourage their activities in support of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 for the ocean.

Mr. Thomson brings a distinguished experience in diplomatic services and is familiar with the work of the United Nations, including as Permanent Representative of Fiji to the UN and President of the 71st session of the UN General Assembly, during which he provided visionary leadership in guiding the preparation of The 2017 Ocean Conference.

Elected President of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority's 2011-2012 session and President of the Council of the Authority's 2015-2016 session, Mr. Thomson chaired the Group of 77 and China (2013) and served as President of the Executive Board of UN Development Programme/UN Population Fund/UN Office for Programme Support (UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS) from 2014 to 2015. As a civil servant in the Government of Fiji, he devoted many years of his life to working in the fields of rural development and then foreign affairs.

Moderator



Mr. Nicholas Kusnetz

Nicholas Kusnetz is a reporter for InsideClimate News. Before joining ICN, he worked at the Center for Public Integrity and ProPublica. His work has won numerous awards, including from the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Society of American Business Editors and Writers, and has appeared in more than a dozen publications, including The Washington Post, Businessweek, The Nation, Fast Company and The New York Times.

Discussion 1: Forest Restoration and Sustainable Management as an Economic and Environmental Recovery Pathway



Mr. Mario Boccucci

Mario Boccucci is the Head of the UN-REDD Programme Secretariat, the forest and climate partnership of FAO, UNDP and UNEP. He has more than 25 years of experience with the UN, the World Bank and the European Commission at headquarters and country level in Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America on both operational and policy work on terrestrial ecosystems, forest governance, biodiversity and climate change.



Mr. Giovanni Soliman Bete Reyes

Giovanni Soliman Bete Reyes is a Sagada-born indigenous person of Kankanaey-Igorot ethnicity from the Mountain Province of the Cordillera Region, Northern Luzon, Philippines. He is the current President of the Philippine Indigenous Peoples Community-Conserved Territories and Areas Consortium (Philippine ICCA Consortium).

His ethnicity as Kankanaey-Igorot molds and guides his work in the training of indigenous youth and women, as well as the documentation, monitoring and conduct of participatory community conservation planning. The mixed use of indigenous knowledge and science under the Philippine ICCA Consortium as a key proponent recently pushed the Philippines in the forefront of Inclusive Conservation for the Asia region. Results of his work over the past decade have

provided stronger position of indigenous peoples and their communities in engaging policy and legislation. His line of work brought him to prestigious global environmental groups as a member of the Global Environment Facility – Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group for Indigenous Peoples or GEF-IPAG in Washington, DC, and the Global ICCA Consortium, Geneva, Switzerland. An Indigenous Peoples’ rights advocate, he holds a master’s degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City.



Ms. Kitty Sweeb

Kitty M. Sweeb has been the Permanent Representative of Suriname to the United Nations, since 2019 and is the current Chairperson of the UN Forum on Forests. Until 2019, Ms. Sweeb was Chargé d’affaires ad interim at her country’s Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, having served as Deputy Permanent Representative since 2011.

Trained as a lawyer, she was a member of several national negotiating committees since 2012, advising and assisting in the drafting of international agreements, including gold contracts with multinational extractive companies. Ms. Sweeb also served as Deputy Foreign Policy Coordinator in the Office of the President of Suriname, helping to establish national environmental and foreign policies. She previously worked in the Ministry of Defence, the Trial Court and the private sector in Paramaribo before moving to New York in 1993.

The mother of four children, she holds a Master of Laws in international business and trade law from Fordham University School of Law in New York.



Ms. Mette Wilkie

Mette Wilkie is the Director of the Forestry Division within the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). She has a background in Forestry and Environmental Management and over 30 years of experience in providing scientific evidence and policy advice to governments, partner organizations and international conventions on issues related to the environment and development nexus with a focus on the sustainable management of forests and other natural resources, biodiversity conservation and nature-based solutions to climate change.

Discussion 2: Bringing to Scale Ocean-based Solutions for Mitigating Climate Change



Mr. Carlos M. Duarte

Distinguished Professor Carlos M. Duarte is the Tarek Ahmed Juffali Research Chair in Red Sea Ecology at the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), in Saudi Arabia. Before this he was Research Professor with the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) and Director of the Oceans Institute at The University of Western Australia. He also holds an adjunct position at the Arctic Research Center in Aarhus University, Denmark.

Duarte's research focuses on understanding the effects of global change in marine ecosystems and developing nature-based solutions to global challenges, including climate change, and develop evidence-based strategies to rebuild the abundance of marine life by 2050. Building on his research showing mangroves, seagrasses and salt-marshes to be globally-relevant carbon sinks, he developed, working with different UN agencies, the concept of Blue Carbon, as a nature-based solution to climate change. He has conducted research across all continents and oceans, spanning most of the marine ecosystem types, from inland to near-shore and the deep sea and from microbes to whales, and has a particular focus on the role of seaweed aquaculture as a sustainable solution for multiple challenges.

Professor Duarte led the Malaspina 2010 Expedition that sailed the world's oceans to examine the impacts of global change on ocean ecosystems and explore their biodiversity. Professor Duarte served as President of the American Society of Limnology and Oceanography between 2007 and 2010. He has published more than 900 scientific papers and has been ranked within the top 1% Highly-Cited Scientist by Thompson Reuters in all assessments of this rank, as was ranked as the top marine biologist in the world.

He has received many honors, including the G. Evelyn Hutchinson Award from the American Society of Limnology and Oceanography in 2001, the National Science Award of Spain (2007), and the I. Vernadsky Medal of the European Geophysical Union. the Prix d'Excellence by the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES, 2011), the Carlo Heip award for excellent in Marine Biodiversity (2018), and the Ramon Margalef Ecology Award (2019), and the BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Award in Ecology and Conservation Biology (2020). Duarte received honorary doctorates from the Université de Québec à Montréal (Canada) in 2010 and Utrecht University (The Netherlands) in 2012. He served in the Expert Group supporting the High Level Group, including 12 heads of states, proposing a pathway towards a Sustainable Ocean Economy.



Ms. Amy L. Kukulya

Amy Kukulya is a Principal Investigator and leader in development and operations of autonomous underwater systems (AUVs) and their systems at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, specializing in scientific applications of AUVs. She is Founder and Director of the Scibotics Lab and Tag Lab in the Applied Ocean Physics and Engineering Department.

Current Projects include OceanRobotCam, bio-tag development, and she is also the lead technical developer for under-ice oil detection and mapping projects.

Working with underwater robots has brought her from the Arctic to Antarctica. Her technical skills include configuration and operations of AUV systems, including navigation, imaging capabilities, new sensor development and troubleshooting electrical systems. She has either led or participated in over 95 oceanographic expeditions to date and holds numerous patents on innovative ocean technology. Apart from her technical skills, she is passionate about promoting education/outreach and diversity initiatives, and has been named a Wowster by the MA Governor's office. She is also the lead developer of SharkCam as featured on Shark Week.

Her work has also been featured on several Discovery Channel and PBS productions as well as the Boston Globe, Washington Post and National Geographic Magazine. Amy has also testified before the Senate and recently threw out the first pitch at a Boston Red Sox game.



Mr. Luis Lombana

Luis Lombana has 25+ years of international business experience as an entrepreneur in the cleantech industry. Having a background as an engineer, he spent his first 12 professional years in the banking industry creating financial models for derivatives and carbon markets. In 2020, he decided to start an entrepreneur career in sustainable industries which he still continues.

He has founded two companies in Smart Water technologies, having a successful exit in one of them in 2012. In the second one he still remains as board member. He co-founded one company in renewable energy. In 2017, he founded FICOSTERRA, an agro-biotech company that produces sustainable fertilizers that increase crop production while not damaging the environment.



Ms. Courtney Boyd Myers

Courtney Boyd Myers (CEO, CMO of AKUA) is an entrepreneur, environmentalist, and writer. Prior to launching AKUA, she helped build the Summit Community, a global network of founders, creatives, and innovators. Previously, she helped market companies such as Four Sigmatic and Unframed Ice Cream. She began her career as a journalist at Forbes Magazine and The Next Web and has been recognized as one of Fast Company's Most Creative People in Business. She currently serves as an advisor to GreenWave.