

CSW68: Women Leaders Impacting Change

Thursday, March 21, 2024, via Virtual Platform from 1pm – 2:30pm, EDT



H.E. Ms. Ilana V. Seid, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Palau to the United Nations. Ms. Ilana Seid, presented her credentials to UN Secretary-General António Guterres on 16 September 2021 as the Permanent Representative of Palau to the United Nations. Before her appointment, Ambassador Seid was the founder and CEO of the online e-commerce company Sunday Morning. Prior to launching Sunday Morning, Ambassador Seid worked as a software engineer and technology project manager in New York, and as an investment banker at Lehman Brothers and Nomura Securities in Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and New York. She

holds a bachelor's degree in economics from Stanford University in the United States.



Ambassador Ms. Adela Raz served as the last Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the United States. Prior to that Amb. Raz served as the first female Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the UN, currently she is the Director of the Afghanistan Policy Lab at the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs. At the U.N. Amb. Raz was the Vice President of the 75th session of the General Assembly, and was also appointed by the President of U.N's General Assembly to serve as the co-coordinator on COVID-19-related initiatives. Before her arrival at the U.N. Amb. Raz was the Deputy Foreign Minister in Afghanistan. At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA,) she managed the regional and economic cooperation portfolios and led the two major platforms: the Regional Economic Cooperation Conferences on Afghanistan and the Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process. On behalf of MFA, she helped to manage and coordinate the Brussels (2016) and Geneva (2018) Donor

Conferences on Afghanistan and led the negotiations on the outcome documents. In 2013, she served as the first female Deputy Spokesperson and Director of Communications for President Hamid Karzai. She began her career with the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and continued to work in a variety of positions at various international development organizations in the U.S. and Afghanistan. Amb. Raz holds a Master of Arts degree in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School at Tufts University, and a Bachelor of Arts, with honors, with triple majors in International Relations, Political Science, and Economics from Simmons University in Boston. She also earned a certificate in International Development from the Fletcher School at Tufts University.



Ms. Hawa Taylor-Kamara Diallo, Chief of the Civil Society Unit at the Civil Society and Advocacy Section at the UN Department of Global Communications. She has extensive United Nations field and headquarters experience in public information outreach and fostering civil society partnerships, with a particular emphasis on youth and women's organizations. Ms. Diallo began her United Nations career in 1987 in the Department of Public Information (know now as the Department of Global Communications) and has served in two United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in Cambodia and Somalia, respectively from 1992 - 1994. She has also worked for the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) at the United Nations Headquarters in Nairobi, as an Associate Human Settlements Officer and a Partners and Youth Officer, where she managed strategic partnerships and

designed and implemented empowerment programmes for communities in informal urban settings. Ms. Diallo is a national of Sierra Leone and the United States of America.



Lord Mayor Ms. Carola Gunnarsson of Sala, Sweden. Lord Mayor Gunnarsson is the First Vice President of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR). Lord Mayor Gunnarsson is the international spokesperson of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and she is Vice President of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and Special envoye for freedom, solidarity and fighting violence against local political leaders. Lord Mayor Gunnarsson has had a long political career and she has also a long working career in the Federation of Swedish Farmers. She lives on a farm in the countryside in the municipality of Sala, 120 kilometers north-west of Stockholm.



Dr. Linda Vakunta, Deputy Mayor of Madison Wisconsin. Dr. Vakunta joined the Mayor's Office to assist with housing and human services with more than a decade of experience in grassroots community engagement and program development, monitoring and evaluation work. She served as Program Director at the Chicago-based Heartland Alliance International (HAI), where she led, developed, and designed training programs for government, community, and non-governmental organizations to combat trafficking in persons. In recent years, she has worked as a researcher with Sustaining Natural Circle's CDC funded grant on understanding impacts of opioid use among African American women in Madison. Dr. Vakunta is a founder and executive director of a Wisconsin-based non-profit called Project 1808. She was instrumental in the growth, success, and global-local recognition of the group as an important player in transforming lives, enabling youth and adults, and building capacity in Sierra Leone through School-Community-University Partnership Models. She holds a PhD in Environmental Studies, a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Psychology and a Bachelor's Degree in psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison



Ms. Mary Nikezic, Entrepreneur, Business Litigation Attorney, and Partner at Zarco Einhorn Salkowski, P.A., which is a nationally recognized law firm in Miami, Florida. As a trial lawyer, she represents national and international businesses and individuals before federal and state courts across the nation, on both the trial and appellate levels, as well as in domestic and international arbitration proceedings. Her practice focuses on complex commercial litigation in a wide range of business-related matters, including contract disputes, franchise/dealership law, labor and employment law, shareholder and partnership conflicts, fiduciary and corporate governance matters, real estate development and construction matters. Licensed to practice in both Illinois and Florida, Mary has been designated as a Rising Star and named a top-rated practicing attorney in peer-reviewed publications like Super Lawyers, Best Lawyers, and the Miami Herald. Her legal acumen is further complemented by her entrepreneurial ventures in the hospitality and real estate development sectors, in which she is committed to fostering equal opportunity and sustainable development. Dedicated to making a difference beyond the courtroom, Mary devotes significant time to pro bono work, mentoring young women in navigating male-dominated fields, and supporting initiatives and organizations championing women's rights and equal opportunities in the workplace. Mary believes in the legal profession's power to effect positive change and is committed to making a positive societal impact, not only through her legal and business endeavors, but also by raising awareness of legal rights and facilitating better access to legal representation among minority and underprivileged communities.



Ms. Mimi Darvish, is a Lead Realtor Associate with Cervera Real Estate, and Senoir Advisor for SDG Relief Fund.. She has consistently delivered exceptional results for her clients. Mimi's career is a testament to her unwavering dedication and leadership with her innate ability to connect with people. She's not just a real estate professional; she's a trusted partner on your journey to homeownership and supportive of community engagement. Mimi's entrepreneurial journey began 25 years ago when she took her first step into the world of business by establishing a luxury brand optical store, redefining the concept of eyewear retail. Through meticulous curation, personalized service, and a commitment to quality, , Mimi expanded her portfolio and developed a software company that offered cutting-edge solutions. Quickly gaining recognition for her

ability to anticipate market trends and deliver products that transformed the medical industry. In her current role as a realtor at Cervera Real Estate, as well as having her license as a mortgage loan officer, Mimi brings a wealth of experience to the real estate and financial sector. With her unparalleled ability to connect with clients, she guides individuals and families on their path to homeownership. Throughout her journey, Mimi has embodied the essence of entrepreneurship: the courage to take calculated risks, the dedication and strength to overcome challenges, and the vision to see opportunities where others may not. Her journey is a testament to the power of innovation, adaptability, and the pursuit of excellence, which she utilizes to offer a tailored solution for empowering her buyers to make informed decisions about their future. Beyond her entrepreneurial skills, Mimi is a passionate advocate for education and assisting the younger generation in pursuit of their dreams. Mimi has donated and created the Marco Darvish Memorial Endowed Scholarship Award in Legal Studies at the University of Miami in honor of her late son, Marco Armand Darvish who passed away in 2022. This scholarship supports future generations who can carry on Marco's passion for business law and negotiation, his beliefs in local and global advocacy, and his success. Mimi has consistently invested time and resources into initiatives that uplift and inspire others, embodying the belief that success is most meaningful when shared. Choose Mimi Darvish as your Miami Realtor at Cervera Real Estate for a journey marked by vision, dedication, and excellence.



Ms. Mary Muia, Founder & Director of WEMA, UN Rep. for Soroptimist Int'l to UNEA in Nairobi, a Candidate for President-Elect of Soroptimist Int'l Africa Federation. Mary lives in Nairobi, Kenya East Africa region and she is dedicated to empowering women and girls to emerge as global and community leaders. She is also passionate about the environment, climate change, gender equality, food security, water and sanitation. She champions for rights and access to adolescents and youth reproductive health, family planning, maternal neonatal child health and access to basic services and livelihoods for women and girls living in informal settlements and rural settings. Mary is the Founder director of WEMA, a community-based organization working to transform the lives

of adolescent girls and young women to access quality education, prevent gender-based violence, early child marriages, teenage pregnancies, including ending harmful practices toward young women. She empowers them through with social entrepreneurship and economic resiliency initiatives. Mary's vision is to influence as a speaker, trainer, and coach in leadership as a tool to empower those working with girls and young women in vulnerable environments in Africa. A Soroptimist, wife and a mother, Mary is the Immediate past Chair and President who helped bring Soroptimist International Africa Federation (SIAF) to its inauguration in June 2020, following many years of its formation journey. Mary was appointed to serve as a director for Soroptimist International Board in January 2021.and she serves as a Vice Chair of the NGOCSD-NY Executive Board and a Member of the Urban Cluster for the UN High Level Political Forum.



Ms. Gold Darr Hood, Founder and CEO of FULL. Gold's entrepreneurial journey is a testament to innovation and ethical leadership, spanning industries and continents with a relentless pursuit of impact. Raised in a tech-savvy family with a global perspective in anthropology and refugee crises, Gold learned to code at age four and developed a deep understanding of systems dynamics and human behavior through extensive travel and exposure to diverse cultures. Entering college at just 12 years old, Gold quickly established herself as a prodigious talent in engineering and AI. Her research focused on real-world challenges such as disaster management and global resource allocation, demonstrating a commitment to using technology for societal

benefit. Throughout her career, Gold founded numerous companies aimed at addressing pressing societal and environmental issues. From AI-driven stock trading algorithms to technologies for disaster management and agritech, her ventures consistently prioritized impact over profit. In her role in venture capital, Gold continued to champion innovation, particularly in health tech and sustainability. Championing sustainable transition initiatives with behemoths like BlackRock highlighted her dedication to integrating environmental and social considerations into investment strategies. Gold's recent initiatives focus on regenerative business models and systemic change. Projects like the Regenerative Economy Accelerator and FULL aim to revolutionize industries by leveraging technology and finance to drive sustainability on a global scale. Her vision for the future is one of harmony between humanity and the planet, propelled by innovation and collaboration. Gold's tireless efforts are reshaping industries and paving the way for a brighter, more sustainable future



Ms. Kirsten Midura, Founder & Executive Director of Engines for Change. EFC leverages motorcycles as international development tools to address environmental, social, and public health issues around the world. In 2016, Kirsten began riding motorcycles while running a rural community development program in Nicaragua. She quickly recognized motorcycles as undervalued, overlooked tools for mobility, accessibility, economic and women's empowerment, conservation, and peacebuilding. Seeing an institutional gap at a global level, she started the nonprofit E4C to call attention to this technology and to support motorcyclists around the world who use their bikes for good. Kirsten is on the Board or Advisory Board for a number of nonprofits focused on sustainability and international development - including Twende Solar, GlobalPDX, Rally for Rangers, and Women Riders Now - and is a multi-year judge panelist for the Toronto Motorcycle Film Festival and the Portland Motorcycle Film Festival. She is a public speaker, filmmaker, and contributing journalist for a range of publications, and is open to collaborations and thought leadership opportunities



Ms. Alina Karimamusama, Founder of AfriHER in Zambia, NGOCS-D-NY Youth Rep to UN/DGC & Co-Chair of the NGOCS-D-NY Youth Leadership Council. Alina is an award winning Zambian woman social entrepreneur and activist, who is actively contributing to the African entrepreneur eco-system, creating economic emancipation and accessible education in her country. AfriHER, is a registered NGO in Zambia that empowers Africa's greatest resources; its young people and women. Her foundation builds youth resource centers and entrepreneurial hubs that empower communities to gain and harness new skills, attain flexible funding/business capital in-cash & in-kind, become financially literate, eradicate period poverty, and most primarily solve the challenges of SRHR, while protecting young women and girls from trafficking and early-childhood marriages. Alina's activism was born after her own survival

story, as a child, she had experienced living in extreme poverty in a small periurban settlement in the Copperbelt of Zambia, being trafficked across borders by her own father and has known what it is like to sleep hungry. Her mission is to solve the challenges that lead to these unfortunate circumstances at ALL levels - grass roots to policy. Her activism and impact in Zambia has led to her being honored as a Zambia National Hero by Enko Ed in 2021, and being appointed on National Duty to help get the country to Vision2030: middle income economy by TEVETA Zambia. Alina also founded a youth led VC fund and summit series, for young AfriEntreCon Africa' creates empowerment through entrepreneurship and education by connecting young successful African entrepreneurs from the diaspora and continent to invest in young African start-ups, while also providing real-time scholarships to local and international universities. During its pilot launch in 2022 December, The Intercontinental School of Economics and Applied Sciences (ISEAS) launched for the first time in Zambia at VentureCon, and was enrolling students throughout the 3 day empowerment summit, 10 young entrepreneurs also received funding of over K100,000 and additional support valued at \$12000 each She is a serial entrepreneur with businesses including; a luxury interior design company that has clientele ranging from Barclays Bank, The Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia and Airport VIP Lounges, and additionally is the proud owner of a holistic women's wellness brand that produces a range of intimate feminine Hygeine washes sold country-wide in clinics, pharmacies, chemists which also has two holistic wellness spa & beauty centers (that employ and train women from local communities strictly) in Zambia with one franchised in Namibia. While Alina sits and serves on many boards like Zambezi Capital, The Grandmothers Collective, Girls Unite, Youth Alive, YAI, The Helena Foundation and others,



Ms. Julia Sora Wykoff, a Freshman at Indiana University Kelley School of Business, the Founder of Zeal Cares, an NGOCS-D-NY Youth Rep. to the UN Dept. of Global Communications and a Co-Chair of the NGOCS-D-NY Youth Leadership Council. Through Julia's leadership Zeal Cares produces and sells all-natural lip balms and for every lip balm that is purchased, another lip balm is gifted to a child or young adult with cancer to help alleviate their dry skin during chemotherapy treatment. Zeal Cares, currently partners with more than 30 hospitals and organizations in 18 states. Julia is passionate about supporting and improving the lives of the pediatric and AYA (adolescent and young adult) oncology community. As a Freshman at the Indiana University Kelley School of Business, she is double majoring in Entrepreneurship and Corporate Innovation and Business Analytics. Julia is proud to be an NGOCS-D-

NY Honorary Adviser since she was 12yo and she has brought Zeal Cares to NGOCS-D-NY panel discussions with UN Ambassadors, UN officials and experts on the SDGs. Now Julia is a NGOCS-D-NY Youth Representative to the UN Department of Global Communications and Co-Chair of the NGOCS-D-NY Youth Leadership Council with her focus on the building intergenerational partnerships supporting youth engagement at the UN and the UN Summit of the Future.



Mr. Jeffery Huffines, Senior Advisor of the Coalition for the UN We Need. Since 2017 the civil society-led UN2020 initiative had facilitated discussions with member states, UN officials and civil society advocates on the need for a robust, well prepared 75th anniversary commemoration for the UN in 2020, one that includes a meaningful process of stocktaking, review and strengthening of the organization. In December 2020, the UN2020 campaign was renamed the Coalition for the UN We Need. Together First is a network of individuals, civil society organizations, practitioners, parliamentarians, business leaders and activists from all regions of the world committed to fair, open and inclusive solutions to improve global governance. Jeffery had previously represented CIVICUS as UN Representative (NY), where he was an organizing partner of the UN DESA NGO Major Group (2011-2016) responsible for guiding multi-stakeholder engagement of NGOs in the lead up to Rio+20 through the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. He was Chair of the 65th UN DPI/NGO Conference, “2015 and Beyond: Our Action Agenda”, UN HQ NY, 27-29 August 2014. He was also Chair of the NGO/DPI Executive Committee (2007-2011), helping to organize the annual UN DPI/NGO Conferences hosted abroad in Paris (2008), Mexico City (2009), Melbourne (2010) and Bonn (2011). Jeffery was previously UN Representative (NY) for the U.S. Baha'i Community (1996-2009) where he led a number of NGO initiatives as Co-Chair of the Faith and Ethics Network for the International Criminal Court (FENICC); Chair of the UN Association/USA's New York Council of Organizations; President of the Committee of Religious NGOs; and co-founder of the Tripartite Forum on International Cooperation for Peace.



Margo LaZaro, President and Chair of the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development-NY, Director of UN Relations for Global Family and Convener of NGO Major Group Urban Cluster for the UN High Level Political Forum. Margo is a Sustainable Development Strategic Consultant connecting stakeholders from all sectors and regions with the SDGs. In addition, she is a Climate Reality Project Leader and a Member of the Coalition for the UN We Need. Margo is proud that NGOCS-D-NY has Special Consultative Status with the UN Dept. of Economic & Social Affairs and Association with the UN Dept. of Global Communications. She passionately champions all of the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals especially SDG #17 on Building Partnerships. She believes in the NGOCS-D-NY motto: *"Turn Your Passions into Actions for Change."*

Margo brings entrepreneurs of all ages and the private sector into the United Nations discourse to foster investing in the SDG solutions, In addition, Margo is an Artist and Designer having worked behind the scenes on numerous TV, Film and Theatre productions. She brings her experience from these productions to the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda to support the success of the UN2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, to “Leave No One Behind.” Margo was honored to receive the Volunteers of America Lifetime Achievement Award from U.S. President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

Our Team: NGOCS-D-NY, Permanent Mission of Palau to the UN, PVBLIC Foundation, Global Alliance for a Sustainable Planet, Global Partnerships Forum, Baha'i International Community, SDG Relief Fund, Coalition for the UN We Need, The Stimson Center, Blue Planet Alliance, RecycleGO, United Cities & Local Governments, IBTK Foundation, NGO/MG Urban Cluster, Global Family, Education Leadership Development Council, Humanitarian Focus Foundation, Salvation Army International Social Justice Commission, Consortium for Sustainable Urbanization, Global Urban Development, Huairou Commission, General Assembly of Partners, Global Family for Love & Peace, Debate for Peace, ICW, GNEC, CoNGO, and UNA-USA COO.

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