

UN Environment Management Group Nexus Dialogue

*Environment, Peace and Security: The environment as an entry point to implementing
SDG 16*

24 January 2019, 13.00 – 17.30

Speakers Bios

Ambassador Whyte Gómez, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations Office in Geneva.

With more than 20 years of experience as an outstanding diplomat, Ms. Elayne Whyte Gómez has devoted her life as a public servant who has had a significant impact, not only on the conduct of her country's foreign policy, but also globally through her leadership towards achieving a nuclear-weapons-free world.

Prior to her appointment as Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations Office at Geneva, Ms. Whyte Gómez's dedicated and distinguished service to Costa Rica, as a Diplomat and Policy Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, led to her appointment as Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship from 2000 to 2002. In parallel, Ms. Whyte also held regional positions as Pro Tempore President for both the Central American Security Commission and the regional Conference on Migration. She then served for several years as a Senior Specialist in regional integration, human rights and regional security for the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the ILO, among others. She then became Chief of Staff at the office of the Minister of Foreign affairs in San José from 2009 to 2010. In 2010, Ms. Whyte Gómez was nominated as Executive Director of the Mesoamerican Project for Integration and Development in San Salvador, El Salvador; a position she held until her appointment in 2014 as Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva.

As Ambassador, Ms. Whyte Gómez has held leading positions in the consolidation of disarmament, promotion of peace and respect for international humanitarian law. She co-chaired the Fifth Conference of States Parties of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and served as Vice-Chairman of the First Review Conference of this instrument. In addition, she was nominated Vice-Chair of the Second Conference of States Parties of the Arms Trade Treaty and served in 2015 as Vice-Chairman of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. She showed strong commitment to the initiatives aiming at strengthening the United Nations Human Rights Pillar, her positions as coordinator on Transparency Measures in support of the Convention on Cluster Munitions as well as Co-Chair of the ad hoc Working Group on Treaty Implementation of Arms Trade Treaty. This led to her nomination as President of the United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons leading towards their total elimination.

Ms. Whyte Gómez also has extensive academic experience of more than 10 years, both as a Researcher and Professor at the School of International Affairs and the Institute of Latin American Studies at the National University of Costa Rica, from 1995 to 2008, and is also the author of a series of academic publications. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in International Affairs from Universidad Autónoma de Centroamérica (Summa Cum Laude) and a Master's degree in International Policy Studies from the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California, United States.

Mr Gary Lewis, Director, Programme and Policy Division, UN Environment

Gary Lewis, a native of Barbados, has served with the United Nations for over 30 years in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Europe and the Caribbean.

He currently heads the Division of Policy and Programme in UN Environment HQ in Kenya. In this capacity, he leads the organization's efforts on environmental security.

Prior to this he served at the UN Resident Coordinator in Iran. He has spent most of his UN career (1987-2018) working in field assignments.

The greater part of this work was with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) during 1993-2013. He has headed UNODC East Asia and the Pacific operations (from Thailand) and South Asia operations (from India).

Prior to this he was posted in South Africa and, earlier, Pakistan/Afghanistan/Iran.

He started his UN work in his native Caribbean island of Barbados.

He is a published author on Barbadian history. He has retired now from competitive soccer, but plays bass guitar and percussion. In his spare time, he studies paleo-anthropology and evolutionary psychology.

He is married to Elizabeth Lewis and together they have three daughters.

Mr Alexander Verbeek, Founder, Planetary Security Initiative, Associate Fellow, GCSP

Mr Alexander Verbeek is Associate at Geneva Centre for Security Policy and at the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), Stockholm, Sweden. He is the Founder of the Planetary Security Initiative and Chairman of the Board of Advisors of the PS-Conference. He is a former Dutch diplomat. His last position in the MFA was Strategic Policy Advisor. Alexander is an Associate at the Stockholm Environment Institute. He is a Yale World Fellow and a Visiting Fellow at the Peace and Conflict Department of Uppsala University. He is also an Associate at the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI). Mr Alexander Verbeek is a public speaker and active in several advisory boards.

Ambassador Christian Dussey, Director of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)

Prior to this assignment, he served as Swiss Ambassador and Head of the Crisis Management Centre of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). The Centre coordinates the governmental crisis response system during major incidents affecting Swiss citizens abroad (disasters, political upheavals, terror attacks, hostage-taking).

In 2012, he was selected to serve as a fellow at Harvard University (Weatherhead Center for International Affairs), where he spent the academic year 2012-2013.

Among other postings as a Swiss career diplomat, Christian Dussey headed the International Security Section of the FDFA, served as political counselor at the Embassy of Switzerland in Moscow (Russia) and as diplomatic adviser to the President of the Swiss Confederation.

Prior to joining the diplomatic corps of the FDFA, he served for five years at the Strategic Intelligence Service of the Federal Department of Defense. Christian Dussey is also a general staff officer in the Swiss armed forces. He is regularly invited to give lectures on crisis management at various universities and business schools. He was educated at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University (MA), at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland (MA), and at Georgetown University, Washington D.C. (exchange student).

Mr Josep A. Garí, Senior Policy Advisor, Sustainable Development Cluster, UNDP

Josep Garí (Barcelona, 1972) is a UN professional, dedicated to sustainable development. He works in international cooperation and diplomacy since year 2000, mainly on agriculture, environmental governance and sustainable rural development. He is currently a senior policy advisor at the UN Development Programme, in Geneva. Josep received a PhD in Political Ecology from the University of Oxford. He had a career stint in academia, 1995-2001, including tenure as Marie Curie Fellow and tutor at Oxford, visiting scholar at Berkeley, lecturer at ESADE and UAB, and visiting professor at FLACSO/Ecuador. He received the Planetary Garden award in 1999 for his research on ecological economics.

Josep's experience in international development spans the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, FAO and UNDP. He has worked in more than 30 countries, notably in Africa and Latin America, supporting a wide range of field projects, investment programmes and policy reforms. He was programme manager for Haiti at the Inter-American Development Bank, leader of several UN missions for rural recovery, head of UNDP's Environmental Finance Unit for West & Central Africa, and Africa coordinator for UN-REDD. Josep has also worked in multilateral diplomacy for agriculture and the environment. He played a proactive role in the negotiations for the International Seed Treaty (2001) and the Congo forest & climate agreement (2011). He has served on various international bodies, such as the FAO Subcommittee on Ethics in Food and Agriculture.

Josep is a keen participant in the civic arena. In the 1990s, he was a volunteer teacher at a prison and President of the Oxford chapter of Amnesty International. His writings range from academic papers to pieces of journalism. As amateur photographer he has documented rural lifeways across the world, staging various exhibitions. He is occasionally a public speaker with the UN External Relations service in Geneva and a guest lecturer on green diplomacy.

Mr Vicente Paolo Yu, Coordinator Global Governance for Development, South Centre

Vicente Paolo B. Yu III served as the Deputy Executive Director of the South Centre, the intergovernmental policy research institution of developing countries, and currently coordinates the Centre's work on global governance and sustainable development issues. His substantive policy work includes overseeing the policy research and analysis and the provision of technical and legal advice by the South Centre to developing country governments, including on the right to development, international environmental law, development economics, international climate change policy, and South-South cooperation. He obtained his political science (with honors) and law degrees from the University of the Philippines, and his master of laws degree (with honors, specializing in international trade law and international environmental law) from Georgetown University where he was a Fulbright Scholar. Prior to joining the South Centre, he worked for Friends of the Earth International (FOEI) and was a Staff Attorney and head for Research and Policy Development of the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC) in the Philippines. He has taught law at the University of the Philippines. He has published papers and articles on issues relating to trade and environment, energy policy, mining policy, sustainable development, environmental policy, climate change policy, South-South cooperation, and indigenous peoples' rights.

Ms Sonja Koeppel, Secretariat of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, UNECE

Sonja Koeppel, originally from Germany, has been working for more than 10 years in the secretariat of the UNECE Water Convention in Geneva. She is coordinating the activities on climate change adaptation under the Convention and servicing different bodies under the Convention. She also leads the activities

on the global opening of the Convention to all United Nations Member States. Before joining UNECE, she worked for UNEP in Nairobi for a short while and studied environmental sciences, policy and management in Budapest and Manchester as well as social sciences in Bordeaux and Stuttgart.

Mr David Jensen, Head of Environmental Cooperation for Peacebuilding, Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch, Policy and Programme Division, UN Environment

David Jensen is the Head of the Environmental Peacebuilding Programme at UN Environment. He also co-directs the [MapX platform](#) that helps stakeholders map and monitor the sustainable use of natural resources using the best available planetary data, frontier technologies and open source software. MapX is currently being used to power the [UN Biodiversity Lab](#) launched in July 2018 and was recently featured in the Journal of [Software X](#).

The focus of his work is to address conflict risks and peacebuilding opportunities from renewable and non-renewable natural resources. In particular, to improve access to information, benefit sharing and risk mitigation during the lifecycle of major natural resource investments. A summary of his work is available [here](#). David has worked with all of the key peace and security actors of the UN, including the peacebuilding (PBC/PBSO), peacekeeping (DPKO/DFS), and mediation (DPA) communities, as well as UN country teams, Resident Coordinators and Special Representatives of the Secretary General.

David's programme has worked with a range of partners to produce a knowledge base of 150 case studies on natural resources and peacebuilding organized in six thematic books. This material covers 60 conflict-affected countries and 12 natural resource categories. The cases can be freely downloaded from www.environmentalpeacebuilding.org. David's work on natural resources and peacebuilding was featured in a TEDx event hosted in Geneva: <https://youtu.be/-csxGMxyqwx>. David is also one of the lead lectures in a new Massive Open Online Course on Environmental Security and Sustaining Peace offered by the [SDG Academy](#). David's recent publications include a new UN guide on mediating natural resource conflicts, as well as a book of case studies on Assessing and Restoring Natural Resources in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding. He is also the co-author of a new white paper on entitled "Digital earth: Building, financing and governing a digital ecosystem for planetary data".

David holds an MSc in Biology from Oxford University (UK) and an undergraduate degree in Geography from the University of Victoria (Canada). He is an Alumnus of the Peace Mediation Platform (Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs) and a Behrs' Environmental Leadership Fellow at the University of California, Berkeley. He was also certified as a Project Management Professional (PMP) in 2009.

Ms Anna Brach, Human Security Cluster Leader, Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)

Anna Brach is Human Security Cluster Leader in the Emerging Security Challenges Programme (ESCP) at the GCSP. In this role Anna leads projects and contributes to courses, in particular in the area of human security, environment and security, and migration. She is Course Director of the European Security Course (ESC) and directs an annual course on environment and security. Anna has been with the GCSP since 2006, in functions related to training and academic affairs, and courses and projects on new issues in security. She has previous professional experience in the private sector with Nestlé and Academy and Finance SA. Anna holds a Master's degree in Economy from the Warsaw School of Economics, a Master's degree in Political Science from the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva and a Master's degree in European Studies from the University of Geneva.