

Biographies of Speakers/Panellists

Samantha Stratton-Short, Head of Strategic Initiatives, Infrastructure and Project Management, UNOPS



Managing a multidisciplinary team, Samantha leads UNOPS thought leadership in infrastructure and the global agenda 2030 for sustainable development. The Strategic Initiatives team supports countries and partners as well as teams with strategic and technical support to improve sustainable, resilient and inclusive development outcomes.

Samantha is an architect with a PhD in sustainable development and a career in sustainability and resilience.

Prior to UNOPS, Samantha led Arup's International

Development in Asia, based in the Philippines, focussed primarily on climate resilience and urbanization. She has over 20 years' international experience managing programmes and advising with governments, foundations, international finance institutions, NGOs and donors.

Ali Raza Rizvi – Head, Climate Change, IUCN



Ali Raza Rizvi has over 20 years of experience in the conservation and development sectors. He has diverse experience in the areas of coastal & marine, water & wetlands, biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods, disaster risk reduction, and climate change. He has extensive experience of working with mainstream development and humanitarian sectors on their disaster management response & rehabilitation and promoting green recovery. Over his career, Ali has worked in Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas with international and national development partners, private sector, media, and academia. In his current position as Head Climate Change, he leads IUCN's Climate Change team and

provides vision, strategic direction and the operational guidance for the development and implementation of IUCN's global work on climate change.

Midori Paxton – Head, Ecosystems and Biodiversity, UNDP



Midori Paxton has been the UNDP Head of Ecosystem and Biodiversity Programme based in New York since 2016. She is responsible for a large portfolio of biodiversity projects, comprising approximately 300 projects in 130 countries. These projects include support for strengthening protected area systems, biodiversity mainstreaming in landscape/seascape and development and sectoral planning, promoting nature-based solutions for climate change mitigation/adaptation, and sustainable development. She oversees a range of biodiversity finance initiatives including the Biodiversity Finance Initiative, the UNDP support for the Task for Nature-Related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) among others. Previously,

she worked as a Bangkok-based Regional Technical Adviser, providing policy and programming support for countries in Asia. Between 2000 and 2010, she worked in Namibia; much of the time working under the Directorate of Parks and Wildlife Management, Ministry of Environment and Tourism, coordinating the project to strengthen the national protected area system. Midori holds a master's degree in Environment and Development from University of Cambridge, and author of six books and hundreds of published photos and articles.

Todd Howland – Chief, Development, Economic and Social Issues Branch, OHCHR



Todd Howland has over 25 years of professional experience in the field of human rights. He presently serves as Chief, Right to Development, Sustainable Development, and Economic and Social Rights Branch of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva. He has served as OHCHR Representative in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola among other UN posts. He has authored numerous scholarly articles on human rights including in the Human Rights Quarterly, the Denver Journal of International Law and Policy and the Virginia Journal of International Law and published extensively on human rights in newspapers and magazines including in the Washington Post, LA Times, Boston Globe, the Toronto Globe and Mail and Revista Semana. Howland was director of the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Human Rights in Washington, DC. He has also worked at El Rescate, the European Commission and in Ethiopia for the Carter Center. Howland was a professor of human rights law at Hankuk University in Seoul, Korea. He holds a JD and MA from the University of Denver and was a Visiting Fellow at the Harvard Human Rights Program.

Carmel Lev – Strategy and Partnership Specialist, Global Infrastructure Facility



Carmel Lev serves as a strategy and partnerships specialist for the Global Infrastructure Facility (GIF), a multi-donor fund housed at the World Bank that seeks to mobilize private capital into sustainable infrastructure. In her role, Carmel supports the implementation of the GIF's strategic priorities with a focus on climate finance. Prior to joining the GIF, Carmel worked for the IFC's Inclusive Business unit and helped coordinate IFC's Social Bond Program. Carmel also served as a Strategy Associate for Spectrum Impact, a consulting company that works with public and private sector clients to develop impact investing strategies and products. Previously, Carmel worked at Impact Investment Exchange in Singapore and also supported the Case Foundation's Impact Investing portfolio. Prior to this, Carmel was at the National Democratic Institute, managing and implementing foreign assistance programs in the Middle East & North Africa. Carmel earned an MS in Global Business & Finance from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and a BA in Global Studies and World Arts & Cultures from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Brenden Jongman – Lead, Global Program on Nature-Based Solutions for Climate Resilience, World Bank



Brenden is Senior Disaster Risk Management Specialist at the World Bank’s Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), where he leads the [Global Program on Nature-Based Solutions for Climate Resilience](#). The program aims to scale up the implementation of nature-based solutions across the World Bank’s portfolio. A Dutch national, Brenden holds a PhD in Water and Climate Risk Management from the Institute for Environmental Studies in Amsterdam and has published over 40 peer-reviewed articles on resilience and climate change.

Kantuta Conde – Representative, Network of Indigenous Youth of Latin America and the Caribbean



My name is Kantuta Conde. I am an Aymara woman from the Plurinational State of Bolivia. I advocate for Indigenous peoples' rights, particularly for women and youth. I have advocated the Indigenous young perspective, as a member of the Red de Jóvenes Indígenas de Latino America y el Caribe (RED-LAC) in UN mechanisms such as the UNPFII. The RED-LAC regional platform of Indigenous youth promotes their participation in decision-making processes at the national, regional and international levels. I am a law student in the Universidad Mayor de San Andres, the most prestigious university in Bolivia. I have also participated in the 2021 International Summer Program on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights and Policy at Columbia University. In addition, I write English and Spanish essays for the UNICEF platform *Voices of Youth* to promote an Indigenous youth perspective in today’s issues. I also campaign for access to health for youth as a member of the Young Group for Health of the Pan American Health Organization. Currently, I am part of the International Land Coalition Future Leaders Fellowship and part of the Global Youth Land Forum in Jordan.