Agriculture and Food Day Speakers

(Alphabetical by last name)



H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson President UN General Assembly

Prior to his election as President of the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson had served as Fiji's Ambassador/Permanent Representative to the UN and Ambassador to Cuba, since 2010. During his posting at the UN, Ambassador Thomson has also served as a Vice-President of the General Assembly, Chair of the G77 and China Group, and President of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority's, among other positions.

His earlier career includes extensive experience as a private sector consultant, which led him to be a founding member of two Business Councils.



H.E. Mr. Frederick Musiiwa Makamure Shava President

UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Until his appointment as Ambassador of the Republic of Zimbabwe to the UN in New York in 2014, Mr. Shava was Ambassador to China since 2007. From 2003 to 2004, Ambassador Shava was a consultant on Zimbabwe's Parliamentary reform. As an elected official, he was Minister of State for Political Affairs and Minister of Labour, Manpower Planning and Development. Mr. Shava holds a PhD in Philosophy and a Master of Philosophy in parasitology; as well as a Master of Science in nematology.



Dr. Yemi Akinbamijo Executive Director Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)

A Nigerian national, he has spent the past three decades of his career in Africa and Europe working in the domains of international agriculture, food and nutrition security and natural resource management. Dr Akinbamijo is the former editor of the Bulletin of Animal Health and Production in Africa and lead author of the book Crop-livestock Integration in West African cities.



H.E. Mr. Tete Antonio Ambassador of African Union

Prior to his appointment of Permanent Observer of the African Union to the UN, Mr. Antonio was the Diplomatic Adviser to the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union. He also served as Angola's Deputy Permanent Representative and Minister Counsellor in New York. Mr. Antonio began his diplomatic career in 1990, and since then he has held many positions including Director of the Deputy Minister of External Relations in Luanda. Academically, Mr. Antonio holds a master's degree in international economic relations and has studied conflict management and diplomacy.

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Katia Araujo Director of Advocacy Landesa

Committed to women's land rights and the empowerment of women, Katia builds and manages internal and external partnerships to elevate the cause of rights to land in global advocacy arenas and policy frameworks. Prior to joining Landesa, Katia led advocacy platforms in the UN fora. Academically, she holds a MA on Governance and Human Rights, as well as a BA on Africana Studies & Political Science.



Scott Angle
Director General
International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC)

An internationally known soil scientist and former Fulbright scholar, Angle combines knowledge with philanthropic passion to tackle issues like hunger, poverty and environmental protection. Before IFDC, he was the dean of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at the University of Georgia. He also held faculty and administrative positions at the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.



Paulette Bethel
Special Advisor – Multilateral Affairs
Emerging Ag

Paulette Bethel, a Bahamian national, is the Special Advisor-Multilateral Affairs on the Emerging Ag Team. Before joining Emerging Ag, Paulette served as Special Advisor-Coordination and Engagement in the Office of the President of the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Two years prior to that, she had served as Chef de Cabinet in the Office of the President of the 68th Session of the UNGA. Her career in the international arena began when she was employed by the United Nations in Vienna, Austria, after which she joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, where she served as a senior diplomat for a number of years.



Franck C. J. Berthe Senior Livestock Specialist, World Bank and Coordinator of the Livestock Global Alliance

Before the Livestock Global Alliance, Franck has previously held many positions including Head of the Animal and Plant Health Unit at the European Food Safety Authority, Associate Professor at the Atlantic Veterinary College and the Canada Research Chair in Aquatic Health Sciences. For 10 years, he led active research in aquatic animal health at the French institute for the exploitation of the sea. Franck received a doctorate of veterinary medicine, and a PhD degree in molecular parasitology. **Robin Buruchara**



Director
Pan Africa Bean Research Alliance (PABRA) and International Center for
Tropical Agriculture (CIAT)

Dr Buruchara is the Director of PABRA, a collaborative multi-country and multi-institutional, interdisciplinary research and development partnership. Trained as a plant pathologist, he has worked with CIAT for over 24 years. He has also been involved in the design and implementation of the Integrated Agricultural Research for Development (IAR4D) program. For nearly ten years, he has served as the Regional Director for CIAT in Africa.

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Tiare is an active Canadian commercial fisherperson, employed on the fishing industry since 13 years. She is also a Canadian delegate serving on the Conference Board for the International Pacific Halibut Commission. Tiare is currently living in Iceland where she is pursuing a Masters of Resource Management, specializing in Coastal and Marine Management.



Nicole Carta

Senior Partnership Officer / Team Leader, Private Sector and Foundations Unit International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD)

Nicole leads a team on private sector engagement and outreach for the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). She has over 15 years of experience in building public-private partnerships, communications campaigns and project management in both the for-profit and non-profit sectors.



Jaine Chisholm Caunt
Director General
Grain and Feed Trade Association (GAFTA)

Jaine Chisholm Caunt is the Director General of Gafta. Jaine is also the outgoing Chair of the International Agri-food Network (IAFN) which co-ordinates the work of the Private Sector Mechanism (PSM) at the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS). Jaine has a BA (Hons) in Politics & English and a P.G.C.E in Further Education. She is a Member of the Institute of Directors and a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.



Michelle DeFreese Leland International Hunger Fellow

Michelle is based at the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities in Washington, as a Policy Analyst in the International Programs Unit. She currently serves on the Board of Deeper Missions, an NGO that implements sustainable development projects in Kenya and Sierra Leone. Michelle has a BSc in Anthropology and an MA in International Studies.



Nichola Dyer Program Manager

Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP), World Bank

Ms. Dyer joined the World Bank Group in 1993. She has managed programs for country groups in Eastern Europe and Africa, and established the World Bank's office in Gabon. She has also worked as Special Assistant to the Bank's Vice President for Africa. Prior to joining the Bank, she worked as Senior Consultant at KPMG's Policy Economics Group. Ms. Dyer obtained a PhD at the University of Illinois and also a Master in Economics.

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Murilo Martins Ferreira Bettarello Nuffield 2017 Scholarship Winner

Murilo works as a consultant in ViaVerde Consultant in Tropical Agriculture and is also an advisor for companies and NGOs like Solidaridad, WWF, Imaflora, CI and Global Coffee Platform. Murilo is also the CEO and founder of IZagro, a platform to deliver knowledge and information for farmers in an affordable and digital way. Murilo is an Agronomist Engineer and has completed Business Specialisation on entrepreneurship and administration.



Shenggen Fan Director General

International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)

Shenggen Fan has been director general of IFPRI since 2009. Dr. Fan joined IFPRI in 1995 as a research fellow. He led IFPRI's program on public investment before becoming the director of the Institute's Development Strategy and Governance Division in 2005. He also serves as a member of the Lead Group for the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement. Dr Fan received a PhD in applied economics from the University of Minnesota.



Will Galvin Executive Vice President Self Help Africa

Will Galvin has led Self Help Africa since its incorporation in 2009, delivering successful funding agreements with the US government and private organizations. Prior to joining Self Help Africa, he was a trial lawyer in Ireland and began his working life as a journalist. A former board member of the humanitarian organization Goal, he currently sits on the board of TruTrade, a Kenyan-incorporated social enterprise.



Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs

UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

Thomas Gass counts with a wide-ranging experience in bilateral and multilateral development cooperation. The positions he has held in the past include: Head of the Mission of Switzerland to Nepal, Chair of the Donors of the Nepal Peace Trust Fund, Head of the Economic and Development Section at the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN, and Chair of the Donor Group of the UN Global Compact. Thomas Gass holds a PhD in natural sciences and a MSc and engineering diploma in agricultural sciences.



Maria Beatriz Giraudo Global Farmer Network

Maria Beatriz Giraudo is a fifth-generation farmer, who with her family, grow soy, wheat, barley, corn, sorghum and livestock and advocate no-till in central Argentina. Maria has been recognized as the 2016 recipient of the Kleckner Award.

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H.E. Mr. Michael Grant Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations

Mr. Grant works with a dedicated team representing Canada across the complete spectrum of UN bodies and activities in New York. He chairs the Working Group of the Whole of the UN's Special Committee on Peacekeeping as well as the Ad Hoc Committee on Haiti as part of the Economic and Social Council. Ambassador Grant is also a founder of the Bridge Group on UN budget issues created as a means to find common ground between member states.



H.E. Ms. Amira Gornass

Ambassador of Sudan to Italy/Permanent Representative of Sudan to the Rome Based Agencies & Chairperson, UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Amira Gornass has been the Republic of the Sudan's Ambassador to Italy and the Permanent Representative to the Rome Based Agencies, since 2012. In October 2015 she was elected Chair of the CFS for a two year term. Ambassador Gornass has worked for the promotion of the role of women in the Peace Process in Sudan.



Salah Goss Vice President, International Development MasterCard Worldwide

Salah Goss is a financial inclusion expert specializing in mobile money, agent banking and community-managed microfinance. Prior to MasterCard Worldwide, she worked at the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation. Salah accrued extensive experience working with different stakeholders as Grants Administrator for the Soros Open Society Foundation. She is a graduate of The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies.



Vish Govindasamy Group Managing Director Sunshine Holdings Plc

Vish holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering and a MBA from the University of Hartford. In 1997 he was the CEO of Watawala Plantations (WATA). At WATA, he was credited to having successfully navigated the plantation company through volatile times to become the highest capitalized Regional Plantation Company in the Colombo Stock Exchange. Today, in Sri Lanka, WATA is the largest producer of Ceylon Black tea and the largest producer of crude palm oil.



Martha Hirpa Managing Senior Director Heifer International

For over 25 years, Martha has been passionately engaged in international development ranging from grassroots community development to local, national, regional and international policy dialogue. She professionally served different agencies, including NGOs, civil society, national government and bi-lateral agencies, and successfully navigated through the complexities of organizational cultures and systems. Martha Hirpa currently acts as Managing Senior Director at Heifer International, leading Heifer's partnership and institutional business development, and the operation of its Washington DC branch office.

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James Hansen

CGIAR research program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), and International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI), Columbia University

Since 1996, James's career has focused on climate risk and the use of climate information for agriculture. Prior to joining the IRI in 1999, he worked at the University of Florida, where he contributed to the development of a state-wide climate applications program, and the formation of the Southeast Climate Consortium. He holds a PhD in agricultural and biological engineering, and an MS in agronomy and soil science.



Chavanne Hanson

Deputy Head, Global Public Affairs Nestlé

Chavanne joined Nestlé in 2007 as Nutrition Communications Manager for Nestlé Prepared foods in Solon, Ohio. In 2009 was promoted to be Nestlé USA's Wellness Champion and in 2014 moved into a newly developed role within Global Public Affairs. Prior to joining Nestlé, Chavanne got her start developing a preventive cardiology program for University Hospitals in Cleveland, Ohio. Chavanne received a B.S. in dietetics from Baylor University and M.P.H. in human nutrition from University of Michigan.



Stephanie Hanson

Senior Vice President, Policy and Partnerships One Acre Fund

Stephanie works to make sure that One Acre Fund is maximizing its impact for smallholder farmers through thought leadership, policy advocacy, and partnerships with external stakeholders. From 2006 to 2009, she covered economic and political development in Africa and Latin America for the website of the Council on Foreign Relations. In 2008, she won a News and Documentary Emmy for Crisis Guide.



Yvonne Harze-Pitre

Director of Communications and Public Affairs International Fertilizer Association

Dr. Yvonne Harz-Pitre has joined the International Fertilizer Association (IFA) in September 2015 as Director of Communications and Public Affairs. A native German, Dr. Harz-Pitre has earned her PhD at the Sorbonne in Paris and has served several years as a member of the Board of Directors of the Issue Management Council (IMC).



Marcelo Eduardo Lüders

President

Brazilian Dry Beans Institute (IBRAFE)

Marcelo is a member of the GPC Global Pulse Confederation, president of the Brazilian Dry Beans Institute (Ibrafe) and a consultant at the Bean Sector Chamber of the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture. He has been director of Correpar - Corretora de Mercadorias - since 1994 and editor of the daily Só Feijão publication since 1995. He is the mentor and organizer of the annual Dry Bean Forum, and works as international broker of pulses.

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Bernie McClean Vice President

Canadian Canola Growers Association

Innovative agriculture technologies and leading-edge agronomic practices equip Bernie McClean with the tools and knowledge he needs to grow healthy and sustainable food crops on his farm in Canada's northern Prairie region. He has completed an education in agronomy, and has held several positions in the farm service sector prior to farming full time. Bernie joined the Canadian Canola Growers Association's board of directors in 2016, and currently serves as Vice-President. He is also a farmer-director of SaskCanola, a provincial canola association.



Sabrina Meharali Co-Founder and Managing Director Quality Pulses

Sabrina Meharali has spent the past eight years as an entrepreneur working across Tanzania, Kenya and Mozambique. Sabrina started and grew an agro-processing business across those three countries which identifies and works with co-ops of farmers to raise pulses, sesame and sunflower seeds. She also served as an adviser and consultant to various East Africa-based start-ups and early stage companies.



H.E. Mr. Juan Carlos Mendoza-García Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN

Before his appointment as Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN, Mr. Mendoza-García was a presidential candidate in Costa Rica. Previously, he served as Congressman in his country. Mr. Mendoza-García is also the founder and leader of "Movimiento Esperanza" within the Citizens Action Party. Holding a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Costa Rica, Mr. Mendoza-García is a candidate for a Master's degree in communication and development.



John Mimikakis Vice President Oceans, Environmental Defense Fund

John leads the Oceans Program's mission to make sustainable fishing the norm at a global scale. John has also worked at EDF as a Senior Policy Manager in the Climate & Air program. From 2001 to 2006, John was Deputy Chief of Staff for the Committee on Science in the US House of Representatives. Prior to that, John served as a legislative advisor to US Congressman Sherwood Boehlert on environmental and agriculture issues.



Howard Minigh
CEO
CropLife International

Before being President and CEO of CropLife International, Howard founded HM Advisors, a management advisory firm, and was a partner in a boutique private equity partnership. From 2000-2003 he served as Group Vice President of Agriculture and Nutrition with DuPont. From 1995-2000 he was President of Cyanamid Global Agricultural Products. Academically, he earned a PhD in organic chemistry and two executive MBA degrees.

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H.E. Mr. Necton Mhura Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Malawi to the UN

From 2015 until his latest appointment, Mr. Mhura was his country's Ambassador to the United States, Canada, Mexico, Cuba, Bahamas and Puerto Rico. With a background in law and academia, Mr. Mhura served as Deputy Chief Secretary to the Government of Malawi, and Commissioner of Lands for the country's Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development. Mr. Mhura holds a Master of Laws and a Bachelor of Laws.

Margaret Munene Co-Founder and General Manager Palmhouse Dairies Limited

Margaret Munene is an entrepreneur, business leader and philanthropist with over 20 years of experience in Kenya's Dairy industry. Margaret is the co-founder of Palmhouse Dairies and the founding trustee of the Palmhouse Foundation, an education trust whose mission is to finance the secondary education of students in need. Margaret holds a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and a Master's Degree in Crop Protection.



H.E. Ms. Mary Mubi Senior Principal Director Department of Public Affairs and Knowledge Office of the President and Cabinet, Government of Zimbabwe

The former Ambassador to Italy and Permanent Representative of the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe to UN Agencies, H.E. Mary Mubi served for one term as a Board Member of the CFS and Chair of the CFS Open Ended Working Group on Monitoring. Since 2014, Ambassador Mubi is heading a new department of Public Affairs and Knowledge Management in the Government of Zimbabwe.



Steve Ngunyi Managing Partner ICON

Steve Ngunyi is young Kenyan, founder of Icon (be one) Ltd, a social company in Nairobi that runs a program focused on positioning youth entrepreneur farmers in Agribusiness. Steve has 10 years of experience in global advertising, communication and business strategy in Kenya. He firmly believes that agriculture is an open gate to help eradication of poverty and liberalization of many communities in Africa.



David Nielson Co-Chair Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS)

David Nielson is a Lead Agriculture Economist at the World Bank working on Agriculture and Rural Development. Dr. Nielson has worked on rural development at the World Bank for nearly twenty five years. Prior to joining the World Bank, he held appointments at the Giannini Foundation at the University of California at Berkeley and in the Department of Economics at California State University at Hayward. He also served as an agribusiness advisor to senior management at Kraft, Inc., and managed a family farm in South Dakota.

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Venge Nyirongo **Policy Specialist in Sustainable Development UN Women**

Venge Nyirongo joined UN Women's Economic Empowerment Section at the organization's Headquarters in March 2014, to support the organization's strategic and policy focus on Sustainable Development. Holder of a Master of Sciences Degree in Industrial Economics from the University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK, Nyirongo is currently pursuing a PhD in Economics at the University of Antwerp in Belgium.



Dr. Steven Were Omamo

Deputy Director and Coordinator of Food Systems Strategy, Policy and Support in the Policy and Programme Division **UN World Food Programme (WFP)**

Dr. Omamo first joined WFP in 2006. He has served as Chief of Social Protection and Livelihoods, Chief of Food Security and Safety Nets, Deputy Director of Policy, Planning and Strategy, and Director of WFP Office and Representative to the African Union and UN Economic Commission for Africa.



Stineke Oenema Coordinator

United Nation Standing Committee on Nutrition

Stineke Oenema, is nutritionist (Wageningen University, 1993) and agricultural economist (London University, 2005). She has worked several years for FAO and UNICEF, after which she worked for considerable time with civil society (ICCO, Netherlands) where she was in charge of food and nutrition security policy and programme development. During this period, she contributed to the Right to Food and Nutrition Watch as member of the editorial board. She chaired the European Food Security Group and she was part of the Coordinating Committee of the Civil Society Mechanism for the CFS, facilitating the participation of Western European CSOs as well as the Nutrition working group of the CSM.



Cristino (Tito) Panlilio **President Balibago Waterworks**

Mr. Panlilio has been working at Balibago Waterworks since 1997, leading the company since 2013. His extensive experience includes senior positions in the sugar industry and the processing sector in the Philippines. He has also held senior positions in two banks and has been the Chairman of six companies. His career also includes several years working for the Undersecretary of the Department of Trade and Industry in the Philippines.

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Stefano Prato Managing Director and Editor Society for International Development

Besides his current position, Stefano is one of the coordinating members of the ICN2 Civil Society Group and member of the Editorial Board of the Right to Food Watch. He recently served as one of the Advisors to the UN Secretary General's High Level Panel of Eminent Personalities for the Agenda 2030. A very active participant of the Civil Society Mechanism of the CFS, Stefano has graduated in Economics and completed a PhD in Animal Health, Food Safety and Livestock Management.



Rocco Renaldi Secretary General International Food & Beverage Alliance (IFBA)

An Italian national, Rocco Renaldi is Secretary-General of the International Food and Beverage Alliance (IFBA). In this role, he brokers industry commitments on health and nutrition, interfaces with relevant UN agencies, international NGOs and other industry groups, and facilitates dialogue at national level to replicate IFBA commitments in local contexts.



Katrina Sasse Nuffield 2017 Scholarship Winner

Katrina Sasse, from Morawa in Western Australia, received a 2017 Nuffield Scholarship with the support of the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) West. Katrina is involved in her family's business, a cereal and oilseed cropping enterprise. She has a keen interest in continuing part of the family farm for future generations, and currently works full-time on the property as a manager, after a successful career in agribusiness banking.



Fritz Schneider Chair Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock (GASL)

Fritz has been active in the Livestock Environment and Development Initiative (LEAD) since 1997, and has been co-editor of the publication "Livestock in a Changing Landscape". He holds a degree of Agriculture and Livestock Science and a Master of Science in Animal Science. He is affiliated to the Bern University of Applied Science, School of Agriculture, Forest and Food Science, where he was Professor for livestock systems and Vice Director responsible for research & consulting services.



H.E. Mr. Fode Seck Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Senegal to the UN

H.E. Seck was a member of the Senegalese delegation to several sessions of the Human Rights Commission and the 2002 session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In the area of disarmament, Mr. Diallo served as his delegation's Rapporteur for the first three Conferences of the Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, in Maputo, Mozambique (1999); Geneva, Switzerland (2000); And Managua, Nicaragua (2001).

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Marie-Helene Semedo Deputy Director-General of FAO Italy

Maria Helena Semedo is the Deputy Director - General, Coordinator of Natural Resources of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). She has been a minister and a parliamentarian in Cape Verde.



Jimmy Smith
Director General
International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)

Mr. Jimmy Smith has been the Director General ILRI since 2011. Before joining ILRI, he worked for the World Bank. He also held senior positions at the Canadian International Development Agency and the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute. Still earlier in his career, Mr. Smith worked at ILRI and its predecessor, the International Livestock Centre for Africa. Widely published, with more than 100 publications, Jimmy has completed a PhD in animal sciences.



Latha Swamy
Senior Advisor Planetary Health
Rockefeller Foundation & Yale Centre for the Study of Globalization

Latha Swamy's research explores the linkages between tropical resources, health systems, gender equity, food justice, poverty, and postcolonialism in the midst of global environmental change. Currently, she is Senior Advisor in Planetary Health to Ernesto Zedillo, Chair of the Rockefeller Foundation Economic Council on Planetary Health and former President of Mexico. Latha serves as UN Ambassador for Women's Environment and Development Organization and is a Junior Board Member of EcoHealth Alliance.



Govind Venuprasad Coordinator Supporting Indian Trade and Investment for Africa (SITA) and International Trade Center (ITC)

Besides coordinating the SITA project, Govind is also ITC's Programme Manager for South-South trade and investment, and Country Manager for India. Govind has previously worked with the United Nations since 1998. Prior to this, he worked in the private sector dealing with international trade, logistics and project syndication. He has earned degrees in Social Science and International Business.



Gerda Verburg SUN Movement Coordinator Scaling up Nutrition

Ms. Verburg has a long career in multilateral affairs as Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN Organizations for Food and Agriculture in Rome. Due to her knowledge and passion for nutrition, she was appointed Chair of the Global Agenda Council for Food and Nutrition Security of the World Economic Forum (WEF), and Chair of the CFS. Ms. Verburg has also served as speaker in the Dutch House of Representatives on economics, energy and innovation and as Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality.

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Will Warshauer President and CEO TechnoServe

Will has more than 25 years of experience in international development and the private sector. He launched his career as a Peace Corps volunteer in Sierra Leone and has since then worked in 40 developing countries. Warshauer also served as chief operating officer of Pact, Inc. and president of the Pact Global Microfinance Fund. Previously, he served as executive vice president for health and development solutions with Voxiva Inc.

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