



Ministero degli Affari Esteri  
e della Cooperazione Internazionale



**GIACOMINI**  
WATER E-MOTION

**April 12, 2023**

UN Headquarters, New York – online  
Live streamed on UN Webcast

**Speakers' biographies**

**H.E. MARCO ROMITI**, *Minister Counsellor*, Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations



Coordination of the II Committee's work, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, environment, energy and climate change. Relations with UNDESA, with UN Funds and Programs (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNOPS). G7 and G20. ECOSOC's Reform. Global Compact.

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**NAVID HANIF**, *Assistant Secretary-General*, UN Economic Development in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)



Mr. Navid Hanif is the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). He is also the UN sous Sherpa to the G20 finance and main tracks. He joined UNDESA in 2001. He was Senior Policy Adviser in the Division for Sustainable Development and member of the team for the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002. He served as the Chief of Policy Coordination Branch and later Director in the office for Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) support and the Director for Financing for Sustainable Development Office. He was the first head of the DESA Strategic Planning Unit established in 2010. He was Principal Officer in the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General, Vice-Chair of the UN High Level Committee on Programming (HLCP) and Co-Coordinator of the UN team on repositioning of the UN Development System that led to major reforms in 2018. He has contributed several articles on financing and investing in the SDGs in various journals and reports. He holds MIA, International Political Economy, Columbia University (NY), & M.A., English Literature, Government College University (Lahore).

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**H.E. ALBERTO BARACHINI**, *Undersecretary of State*, Presidency of the Council of Ministers of Italy



Alberto Barachini is Undersecretary of State to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers with responsibility for information and publishing, appointed by the Council of Ministers in November 2022. Mr. Barachini was elected Senator in 2018 and he was nominated Chairman of the Parliamentary Commission for the General Guidance and Supervision of Media Public Services from August 2018 until September 2022. He was also a member of the 8<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary Standing Commission (Public Works, Communication). He was re-elected Senator in the XIX legislature, starting in 2022. He is now member of the 7<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary Standing Commission (Culture, Cultural Heritage, Public Education). Mr Barachini has worked as a presenter and journalist covering national and international politics, reporting from Albania, Bulgaria, Germany, Iceland, Iraq, the United States, Tunisia and Spain. In 2002 he received the "Indro Montanelli" journalism award. In recent years, he has given lectures on television journalism at IULM, LUMSA, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore and NABA. He holds a degree in Modern Literature from the Faculty of Arts of the University of Pisa.

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**ERNESTO OTTONE R.**, *Assistant Director-General Culture Sector, UNESCO*



Mr Ernesto Ottone R. is the Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO. Prior to this position, Mr Ottone R. served as Chile's first Minister of Culture, Arts and Heritage from 2015 to 2018. As Minister of Culture, he created a Department of First Peoples, a Migrants Unit and strengthened copyright laws and heritage protections. During this time, he also chaired the Regional Centre for the Promotion of Books in Latin America and the Caribbean (2016 – 2017). From 2011 to 2015, Mr Ottone R. served as Director-General of the Artistic and Cultural Extension Center of the University of Chile, which manages the National Symphony Orchestra of Chile, the Chilean National Ballet (BANCH), the Chile Symphony Choir and the Vocal Camerata. From 2001 to 2010, he held the position of Executive Director at the Matucana 100 Cultural Center in Santiago. Mr Ottone R. holds a Master's degree in Management of Cultural Institutions and Policies from the University of Paris IX Dauphine (1998) and a Bachelor of Arts in theatre from the University of Chile (1995).

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**PATRIZIO CIVILI**, *Special Advisor to the Director General, IDLO; Former UN Assistant of Secretary-General*



PATRIZIO M. CIVILI is currently serving as Special Advisor to the Director General of the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) after acting as IDLO's Permanent Observer to the United Nations in New York from 2007 to 2020. From 1998 to 2007 he was the highest-ranking Italian official in the United Nations Secretariat in New York, serving as Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Interagency Affairs in the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs and acting simultaneously as Secretary of the Chief Executives' Board (CEB) which comprises, under the chairmanship of the UN Secretary-General, the Executive Heads of all Specialized Agencies and UN Programs and Funds.

Mr. Civili joined the UN Secretariat in New York in 1969. Serving under 5 successive UN Secretaries-General, he held a number of senior positions concerned with economic cooperation, policy coordination, and institutional affairs with posting in Port of Spain for ECLAC and in New York and Geneva including: in the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation; as Chief of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs; management Director and senior member in the cabinet of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD; and Director in the Executive Offices of Secretaries-General Boutros Boutros Ghali and Kofi Annan.

Mr. Civili holds a degree of doctor in Political Science from the University of Rome, with specialization in Comparative Constitutional Law, and an MA in Comparative Government from the University of Washington in Seattle. He has also attended Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, and Johns Hopkins University (SAIS) in Bologna. In 2014, Mr. Civili was awarded the title of 'Commendatore' of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic, which recognized his international career at the United Nations as exceptional "merit acquired by the nation" in the public service field.

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**BELINDA BISCOE**, *Senior Associate Vice President, The University of Oklahoma*



Belinda P. Biscoe, PhD, serves as Senior Associate Vice President for Outreach/College of Continuing Education at The University of Oklahoma. Trained as a research psychologist, she has nearly 30 years of experience with school- and community-based programs, including higher education as an administrator, researcher, and program developer. In her current role, she bears responsibility for 26 departments and 10 support units employing over 600 professionals.

Biscoe's years of service to adult and higher education include expertise in research and evaluation, administration, program development, grant writing, and promoting diversity and equity in higher education. A momentous force for continuing education worldwide, she has led programs and support units that focus on higher education, common education, disability education and educational training, social justice and human relations, juvenile justice, executive training and team development, health and human services, public radio, American Indian education and health, research and evaluation, mental health and substance abuse treatment and prevention. Frequently asked to speak on social justice issues, Biscoe was invited to join two panels at the United Nations during the Week of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2018. She strongly believes in the importance of civic engagement, having served in leadership roles for many nonprofit agencies, including the Oklahoma City Metropolitan YWCA, where she was elected as the first African American president. She is co-founder of Eagle Ridge Institute, a community-based, nonprofit drug and alcohol treatment and prevention agency, and in 1989 founded Positive Tomorrows, a school for homeless youth and their families.

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**NICCOLÒ RINALDI**, *Head of Unit Asia, Australia and New Zealand, European Parliament*



Niccolò Rinaldi graduated in political science. He was responsible for UN information in Afghanistan, living between Peshawar, Kabul and the rest of the country. In 1991, Rinaldi left the United Nations to start working in the European Parliament as a political advisor, working mainly on Africa and Central Asia. Nine years later he became Deputy Secretary-General at the ALDE Group in Parliament. In 2009, Niccolò Rinaldi was elected member of the European Parliament with

Italia dei Valori as independent and remained an MEP until 2014. During that period, he was vice-president of the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, member of the Committee on International Trade and draftperson on the EU/Malaysia and EU/India Free Trade Agreements, and also member of Delegation for relations with South Asia, of the Delegation for the relations with Central Asia, and of the Delegation for the relation with Palestine, as well as member of the Steering Committee of WTO. From 2016 is the Head of Unit Asia, Australia and New Zealand at the European Parliament.

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**HOSSAM BADRAWI**, *Chairman, Nile Badrawi Foundation for Education & Development*



Prof. Hossam Badrawi, a prominent physician and a well-known politician, President of the Badrawi Foundation for Education and Development. He is the founder and the honorary chairman of the Egyptian Council of Competitiveness ENCC. <http://www.encc.org.eg/> and chaired the OB/GYN department in Cairo University's Medical School 2009/2010. Academically, He graduated from Cairo



University kasr El Aini 1974, with an honors degree. He fulfilled his graduate studies during 1979-1983 in Wayne State University-Detroit-Michigan, in the use of scanning electron microscopy. He completed post-graduate studies at North Western University-Chicago-Illinois. In Boston University-Boston-Massachusetts, he had intense graduate studies in methodologies for development of curricula and study programs in education. His academic activities include the publication of more than 120 research papers and participations in 8 textbooks in his academic field. He published his last book about Education reform in Arabic November 2011. In 2007, Prof. Badrawi received an honorary PhD. in science from Sunderland University in the United Kingdom, for outstanding work in higher education reform in the Middle East region. He is a visiting Professor in political science in center of Altiero Spinelli at University of Roma. In 2014, Prof. Badrawi received a new award Honorary Fellowship from Cardiff University in the UK 2014.

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### **REMY SIETCHIPING**, *Chief, Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, UN-Habitat*



Dr. Remy Sietchiping is the Chief of Policy, Legislation and Governance Section within the Urban Practices Branch of UN-Habitat. He oversees the development of strategic programmes of UN-Habitat including National Urban Policy, legislation, governance, urban-rural linkages, smart cities, metropolitan development and the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning.

He has coordinated global, regional and country projects and programmes for UN-Habitat in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Dr. Sietchiping has over 25 years working experience in the UN system, academia, private and public sector and NGOs in Australia, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Jamaica and worldwide. He holds a Ph.D in Geography from the University of Melbourne, Australia. He is fluent in English and French.

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### **LIBERATO BAUTISTA**, *President, CoNGO, the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations*



Rev. Dr. Liberato C. Bautista is the President of CoNGO—The Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations. CoNGO is an international non-governmental organization founded in 1948 that relates to the United Nations through its General Consultative Status granted by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Bautista concurrently serves as the main representative to the UN for the United Methodist Church—

General Board of Church and Society (GBCS), the international public policy and social justice agency of The United Methodist Church. He has represented GBCS at the UN for the last 25 years. Bautista teaches, writes, and lectures extensively in a variety of fields, including international affairs; NGO and civil society dynamics; social and political ethics; theology and religion; ecumenism and religious liberty; human rights and human dignity; indigeneity and indigenous peoples; and peace, justice, and social transformation. He has taught politics and civil society at Kyung Hee University in Seoul, Korea, and the dynamics of culture and community organizing at Saint Andrews {Episcopal} Theological Seminary in the Philippines. He occasionally teaches an online course on Christian social ethics at John Wesley College in Tuguegarao City. Bautista studied political science, history, and international studies at the University of the Philippines in Manila. His doctoral studies at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey, focused on religion and social and political ethics.

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**MELCHIADE BUKURU**, *Former Director, UNCCD Liaison Office in New York*



Mr. Melchiade Bukuru is the former Director of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Office at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York. A career diplomat from Burundi, he was among the key delegates who made the case, at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, that, unless the international community adopts a legally binding treaty to address desertification, land degradation and drought, the planet would continue to lose its fertile land thus compromising any efforts to achieve sustainable development, food security, water security, adaptation to climate change, protection against the loss of biodiversity among other global policy challenges. Mr. Bukuru's diplomatic and political work during his early engagement with the UNCCD secretariat led to the universal membership of the UNCCD (197 Parties), making it the most ratified treaty in the world. Before joining New York in September 1989, Mr. Bukuru served as Adviser to the President of the Republic of Burundi.

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**GUANGZHOU QU**, *Director, FAO Liaison Office in New York*



Guangzhou QU is the Director of the FAO Liaison Office in New York. He joined the Office in January 2021. He joined FAO headquarters in 2019 as Special Adviser to the Director-General and was subsequently appointed Deputy Directeur de Cabinet in the Office of the Director-General. Prior to joining FAO, he served consecutively as Deputy Chief of Mission in the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Bangladesh and in New Zealand, 2013-2019. He started his career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China, and held increasingly senior positions on Arms Control and Non-Proliferation at home and abroad. He was posted in The Hague, Netherlands, and in Vienna, Austria, then served as Director of the Department of Arms Control and Disarmament, Chinese Foreign Ministry. Mr QU holds a Master of Arts in World History from Nankai University, and a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from Anhui Normal University in China. He was also a Visiting Fellow at the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California, United States.

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**GIOVANNA SEDDAIU**, *Professor in Agronomics and EWA-BELT Project Coordinator, Università di Sassari, Desertification Research Centre*



Associate Professor of Agronomy and Crop Sciences at the University of Sassari (UNISS) and EWA-BELT project coordinator. Within Ewa-belt, Giovanna Seddaiu is involved in developing a composite indicator of sustainable intensification for several agricultural technologies in Sub-Saharan cropping systems. Through her 25 years of research, she gained experience on the interrelations between Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan cropping systems, the associated ecosystem services, and their environmental impacts. She is currently serving as Secretary-General of DeserNet International, and from 2016 to 2019, she was the scientific responsible for UNISS in the H2020 project "FLOWERED" that aimed to find strategies to deal with fluoride contamination in cropping systems in Kenya and Tanzania. She is also currently the project coordinator of the Horizon Europe project "Monalisa" that will start in autumn 2024 aiming to monitor and assess prevention and restoration solutions to combat desertification in European and Mediterranean drylands.

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**YOUSSEF BRAHIMI**, *Member of the EWABELT Scientific Advisory Board, Founding member of the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS)*



Youssef BRAHIMI worked for 20 years in Algeria as a senior civil servant in higher education and scientific research, before becoming involved at international level. He has solid experience of international organisations, notably as a founding member of the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) and as an international consultant, working for various bilateral development agencies and for African and international organisations. He worked for 6 years as a United Nations official as

Programme Coordinator at the UNCCD/Global Mechanism, based in Rome (Italy). Since 2013, he has been Managing Director of CAP & DEV, based in Paris (France).

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**FRANÇOIS TAPSOBA**, *Member of the EWABELT Scientific Advisory Board, Professor at University Joseph KI-ZERBO*



François TAPSOBA is a Senior Environmental Economist, with a special focus on land degradation and rehabilitation issues. He extensively worked with FAO and African Union Commission on the implementation of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative.

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**MARCO CEREDA**, *Silicon Biotech Researcher, STMicroelectronics*



Marco Cereda is the Biological Application R&D Team Manager in the Silicon Biotech R&D team at STMicroelectronics, which he joined in 2007. He earned a Master's Degree in Industrial Biotechnologies at "Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca" in 2008. His work focuses on applied research in the biotechnology field, in particular the study of the applications of microelectronics and microfluidics to biotechnology techniques, like qPCR, DNA/RNA extraction, and protein analysis.

Currently he is mainly involved in the development of the Q3 qPCR portable platform, whose biological testing and validation he is leading, besides supporting partners and customers in developing new tests on it. He is co-author of several papers published on peer-reviewed scientific journals, and co-inventor of three granted patents, and he has already participated to three other EU- funded research projects.

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**NICOLA MORGANTI**, *President, Fondazione ACRA*



Nicola Morganti is a socio economist of Italian and Swiss nationality with 40 years of working experience and specifically 23 years' experience in rural development in Africa with several international organisations and companies. Since 1983 he is member of ACRA, an Italian NGO born in Milano in 1968. He has been elected President of ACRA Foundation Board of Directors in 2014 and re-elected in 2017, 2020 and 2023. Within ACRA Board of Directors he is supporting the development

of the energy programme in Africa and Latin America and to develop partnership with private sector companies.

In 2009 he has started African Ways Ltd, a consulting firm involved in development cooperation with its headquarters in Switzerland.

Passionate of cycling he is member of the Advisory Board of Velafrica, a Swiss organization supporting the development of small workshops for the repair and maintenance of bicycles and the development of cycling as sport in Africa. From 2011 to 2014 he has been the Team Manager of the Tanzanian National Team of cycling.

In 2018 he became Founding member of AIDA, Associazione Italiana di Agro-ecologia and Member of the Board of Guarantors of COLOMBA (Associazione delle Organizzazioni di Cooperazione e Solidarietà Internazionale della Lombardia).

Since 2021 he is member of the Technical Committee of FOSIT, the NGOs federation of the Italian speaking part of Switzerland (Ticino) and is a founding member of AIDA, the Italian Agro-ecology Association (2018).

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### **JOHN BIDZAKIN, *Research Fellow, Cranfield University***



John Kanburi Bidzakin is an agricultural economist with interest in socio-economic evaluations and bio-economic modelling of African land use systems. He has interest in analysing commodity value chains to identify upgrading opportunities and has done this on maize, sorghum, soyabeans, peanuts, finger millet and fonio in Ghana and Kenya. John has a PhD. and MSc. in Agricultural Economics and a BSc. in Agriculture Technology. John works for Cranfield University as a research

fellow and his current research focus is on the economics and social analyses of African land use systems for east and west Africa. He previously worked as a Research Scientist for Council for Scientific and Industrial Research Savanna Agricultural Research Institute (CSIR-SARI), Ghana for 10 years. He has led and supported the development of several agricultural development and research projects including AGRA funded Quality Rice Development Project, Ghana, USDA web-base marketing project, Ghana, USDA Cowpea Value Chain Development Project, Ghana. He has served as principal investigator and coordinator for some these projects and has published some of his research work.

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### **JASMINA BOJIC, *Founder and Executive Director, UNAFF & UNAFF Traveling Film Festival, Stanford University***



Jasmina Bojic has been teaching at Stanford since 1991, and has been a lecturer in the Program in International Relations since 1996. Jasmina is also the Founder of Stanford's Camera As Witness Program, which she created in 2010, and Executive Director of the United Nations Association Film Festival (UNAFF), one of the oldest international documentary film festivals in the U.S. that she founded in 1998. In 2000, UNAFF's mission was broadened to include the UNAFF Traveling Film

Festival. She has worked as a journalist for more than thirty years, covering political and cultural events such as the Academy Awards, Cannes, Sundance, Venice, and Tribeca film festivals. She has served on juries at many international film festivals and has extensive connections with filmmakers and the film industry worldwide. She has worked as a producer/director on several documentaries and TV Programs dealing with human rights issues. In 2007, Jasmina received the "Community Treasure Award" from Stanford University President John Hennessy for her contribution in



promoting dialogue and education about different cultures and issues. In 2014, the International Council for Film, Television and Audiovisual Communication of UNESCO (ICFT) presented the UNESCO Fellini Medal to Jasmina in recognition of her exceptional contribution in promoting the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights through the art of documentary film. Last September, Jasmina was honored with "Human Kind Institute 'ImpactThrough Film' Award" during the 78th Session of the UN General Assembly in New York.

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**CLAUDIO AZZOLINI MD**, *Founder of Eumeda Telemedicine Platform, AS, Insubria University, Varese-Como*



Claudio Azzolini is Professor of Ophthalmology at Insubria University. He directed Vitreoretinal Surgical Unit San Raffaele Hospital in Milan and Ophthalmic University Eye Clinic University of Insubria, Varese-Como, Italy.

Author, editor or co-editor of hundreds of scientific publications in national, international, peer-reviewed journals, books and books' chapters. President and co-founder of many scientific national and international societies. He founded the

Eumeda® Telemedicine Platform in 2001.

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**FRANCESCO OGGIONNI ITS**, *Advisory Board Member, CDAOS.cat non-profit Data & Digital Health Innovation*



With over 20 years of experience in the Pharma Industry, he has held crucial leadership roles in the Healthcare and Biomedical sectors. His responsibilities have continuously scaled from country-level to regional and global roles. This progression has included the establishment and management of large-scale global programs and service organizations in various areas such as Sales Force Effectiveness, Customer Relationship Management, Business Intelligence, e-

Commerce, Multi-Channel and Digital Marketing, Digital Transformation, Compliance, Big Data, Real World Evidence, Research & Development, and Manufacturing and Supply Chain Management. In addition to my industrial accomplishments, he has engaged in academic pursuits as a guest professor at the University of Medicine San Raffaele Milano, ESADE Business School Barcelona, and Geneva Business School Barcelona. He is a founding member of COMED Research, a non-profit organization devoted to the promotion and development of Telemedicine initiatives. He serves as a Data & Digital Health Innovation Advisory Board Member at CDAOS.cat

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**SIMONE DONATI MD**, *Associate Professor, Department of Medicine and Surgery, Insubria University, Varese-Como*



Simone Donati is Associate Professor in Ophthalmology at the University of Insubria of Varese-Como, Italy. His research activity is directed on medical and surgical maculopathies and actually on pediatric ophthalmology. He joined several national and international research projects on prevention and treatment of ocular degenerative diseases, with a particular attention to the e-health and telemedicine applications. He is author of more than 40 peer reviewed articles and

he has been invited as speaker to international and national medical congresses.

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**ANDREA FALCO**, *Alfa Design Studio, Italy*



Founder of the AlfaDesignStudio, he soon discovered that pixels are more fun when paired with programming codes. For him elements like ``>://@\*\*"/ are like notes on a stave: if you know them well, they compose wonders! Capable of building any type of site from scratch, from the most basic to the most complex, it always finds the most suitable solution for every need with style and elegance. He appreciates functionality and visibility the most.

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**ANTONIO CAPONE JR MD FACS**, *Associated Retinal Consultants, Royal Oak, Michigan*



After completing his Fellowship in 1991, Dr. Capone joined the faculty at Emory University, where he was a tenured Associate Professor of Ophthalmology and Director of the Vitreoretinal Fellowship Training Program until he joined ARC in 2000. He is a board-certified ophthalmologist whose special interests include pediatric vitreoretinal diseases, complicated retinal detachment, ocular oncology and macular disease. Dr. Capone is an internationally recognized clinician, surgeon and educator. He has authored or co-authored over 200 publications in peer-reviewed medical journals, book chapters, and publications from clinical trials. He is currently a Professor of Biomedical Sciences at Oakland University, and Professor at the European School for Advanced Studies in Ophthalmology, Lugano, Switzerland. He is Co-Director of the Vision Research-ROPARD Foundation, overseeing the clinical research initiative at ARC. He has been actively involved in resident and fellowship education for more than 20 years, and serves as Co-Director of the Associated Retinal Consultants Vitreoretinal Fellowship Training Program. He has been named to America's Who's Who in Medicine, The Best Doctors in America, The Best Doctors in the Southeast and Hour Detroit Magazine's Top Docs. He is a member of many professional organizations, including the American Academy of Ophthalmology, American College of Surgeons, American Society of Retina Specialists, Club Jules Gonin, Macula Society, Retina Society, Association for Research in Vision in Ophthalmology, and the International Society for Eye Research, and serves on the Executive Committee of both the American Society of Retina Specialists and the Retina Society.

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**CLAUDE BOSCHER MD**, *Former Surgeon of the Pôle Tête et Cou, Hôpital Américain de Paris, Neuilly sur Seine*

Former Retinal Physician and Surgeon of the Pôle Tête et Cou, Hôpital Américain de Paris, Neuilly sur Seine, France. Has given contribution in endoscopy- assisted Vitreo-Retinal surgery. Her research activity is nowadays directed on Aging, chronic diseases, i.e. Neurodegenerative diseases and Age Macular Degeneration and co-morbidities, and the utility of databases in e-Health for their Prevention.

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**ANAT LOEWENSTEIN MD, MHA, Professor and Director, Division of Ophthalmology, Tel Aviv University**



Anat Loewenstein, MD, MBA, Professor of Ophthalmology, Chairman of the Division of Ophthalmology, VP Ambulatory Services at the Tel Aviv Medical Center, Sidney Fox Chair of Ophthalmology at the Sackler Faculty of Medicine at Tel Aviv University, President of the Israeli Ophthalmological Society and President Elect of the Euretina.

Main field of interest is the investigation of drug administration and toxicity to the retina, early detection of macular degeneration and home monitoring of retinal disease. She has been leading several cutting edge technologies implemented in large scale clinical trials and in clinical setting: the home OCT, a first-of-a-kind artificial intelligence-enabled algorithm for monitoring retinal diseases, utilizing an OCT device in the patient's own home, and the development of a technology implementing virtual reality in vitreoretinal surgery in order to replace the standard operating microscope. She also took a pivotal part in the early development of the Port Delivery System - an innovative, FDA approved, intraocular drug delivery system. She serves on advisory boards of most large current pharmaceutical companies. Published more than 450 papers in peer reviewed journals, and contributed multiple chapters to ophthalmology textbooks.

Serves as the Editor in Chief of the Journal Case Reports in Ophthalmology, is an associate editor of Investigative Ophthalmology & Visual Science Journal, European Journal of Ophthalmology and of Ophthalmologica.

Has many additional national and international roles as a leader in the field of retinal disease: is a member of the national council of surgery, a member of the Israeli Academy of medicine, is a member in the Academia Ophthalmologica Internationalis, leads mentorship groups of ARVO, Euretina and programs sponsored by industry.

Currently serves on the Board of NotalVision and Pulsenmore companies as well as on the board of ESASO (European school for advanced studies in ophthalmology) and previously was a board member at Given Imaging.

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**UMBERTO PAOLUCCI Dr Eng, Dr BE Hc, Dr Stat HC, Up Invest Srl; Former Chairman, Microsoft Europe, Middle East and Africa**



Umberto Paolucci has been senior chairman of Microsoft EMEA and vice president of Microsoft Corp. He was born in Ravenna, Italy, in 1944, and graduated in 1969 from the University of Bologna, Italy, with a degree in electrical engineering. After serving in the Italian army as Lieutenant of the Technical Corps, Paolucci began his technical career as a professor at High Technical School in Italy. Before joining Microsoft, he worked for Hewlett-Packard Co. as a systems analyst and then at

General Automation in Anaheim, Calif., in a variety of management positions. Paolucci joined Microsoft in 1985 as general manager in charge of establishing and running Microsoft's Italian subsidiary. In 1994 he became the regional director of the Southern European region before being promoted in 1997 to vice president of the Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region, with responsibility for operations in Southern Europe (Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece), Switzerland, Austria, the Nordic region (Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway and the Baltic countries), Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg, and the South African region (including sub-Saharan countries and Indian Ocean islands). In 1998 he received a *honoris causa* degree in information technology and business statistics from the University of Bologna. In 1998 he became VP of Microsoft Corp.. In 2002, as vice president of Microsoft Corp., Paolucci took responsibility for EMEA's strategies in the corporate and

government markets. From 2003 to 2010 he was Sr Chairman of Microsoft Europe Middle East and Africa. On 2 June, 2002, he was nominated Cavaliere del Lavoro by Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, president of the Republic of Italy. Paolucci has been a board member in several companies. In 2009 he was appointed Grande Ufficiale dell'Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana.

In 1998 the Cardinal Archbishop of Milan appointed him Doctor Hc of the Biblioteca Ambrosiana established in 1607 by Cardinal Federico Borromeo.

From 2006 to 2010 he has been President of the US Chamber of Commerce in Italy.

In 2010 he was awarded with the "Premio America" from the Italia-USA Foundation

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#### **NIKKI SMITHERS, *President*, The Christopher Smithers' Foundation**



Mrs. Nikki Smithers is President of The Christopher D. Smithers Foundation. She was elected a Board member of the Foundation in August 2013. She is co-founder of the Smithers Center at Columbia University Medical Center, and a United Nations Representative from OCCAM (Observatory for Cultural and Audiovisual Communication in the Mediterranean and the World) dealing with economic and social issues in Africa.

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#### **BRINKLEY SMITHERS, *Vice-President*, The Christopher Smithers' Foundation**



Brinkley Smithers, daughter of Christopher B. and Nikki Smithers, was elected Vice President of the Smithers Foundation at its Annual Meeting in 2022. She served as Secretary from 2019-2022. Brinkley Smithers is attending NYU's Tisch School of the Arts for film.

While volunteering at the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (LICADD), when she was a high school senior, Brinkley zeroed in on an idea of writing a script for a PSA video on the opioid crisis, titled "Hey Charlie." The project came to life. The impactful film, "Hey Charlie" is also the centerpiece of a broader effort, titled #StoptheSpiral. LICADD honored Brinkley Smithers with the Community Champions Award for the creation of "Hey Charlie" PSA video at the 2018 Annual Adele C. Smithers Angel Ball. The award reads, "In grateful appreciation of your creativity, vision, and dedication to recovery." She also received the "Suffolk County Citation of Achievement" from the Suffolk County, New York, Legislature and the District Attorney's office for her vision and motivation to combat the substance abuse crisis on Long Island. "Hey Charlie" was nominated at the Cannes Lions International Film Festival and received a Clio Health Award in 2018. Brinkley Smithers is a youth designated representative of OCCAM (Observatory for Cultural and Audiovisual Communication in the Mediterranean and in the World) to the United Nations Department of Global Communications.

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**NICHOLAS SMITHERS, *Director, The Christopher Smithers' Foundation***



Nicholas is a sophomore at NYU studying psychology. During high school, Nicholas was an intern at LICADD, where he created a PSA demonstrating the effects of the pandemic & quarantine on young adults and their alcohol and drug use. It was showcased at five NY state and local conferences, as well as over 100 public schools on Long Island, NY. Nicholas was also an intern at NIH for a statewide study on the opioid epidemic. More recently, Nicholas was a research assistant at Columbia University Medical Center in the Sultan Lab for mental health informatics.

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**CHRISTOPHER B. SMITHERS, Jr., *Secretary, The Christopher Smithers' Foundation***



He was elected Secretary of the Smithers Foundation at its Annual Meeting in October 2022. He is attending Cornell University, studying at the School of Industrial and Labor Relations.

A former intern at the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (LICADD), he has conducted thorough research on the opioid epidemic. Under the mentorship of Columbia University's Dr. Milton Wainberg, he created a first-of-its-kind prototype system to track prescription pills through an implementation of blockchain technology into the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP). Through this research he was able to conclude that the PDMP is flawed and a blockchain based system can be used to detect hotspots where opioids are being overprescribed in real time. In May 2019 Christopher presented his research at the Global Mental Health Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa. While at this conference, he connected with researchers at the Foundation for Professional Development where he accepted a summer internship in East London, South Africa. During this internship he collected data on HIV Vulnerable women and their willingness to take Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis to prevent them from an HIV infection. Christopher has a deep interest in Astronomy and Astrophysics, having taken many related courses back in high school at Stanford Online High School as well as in college at Cornell University. While having finished calculus and advanced physics mechanics by his sophomore year of high school, he conducted research at California Institute of Technology under the mentorship of Dr. Anton Kapustin. While here Christopher, co-ran simulations in C# and Python on a problem in statistical physics involving an Ising Model.

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**ALIYE P. CELIK, *Chair of the Board, Consortium for Sustainable Urbanization (CSU)***



Aliye P. Celik is the Chair of the Board Consortium of the Consortium for Sustainable Urbanization. She has a degrees in architecture from Middle East Technical University, Princeton University, and a PhD from Istanbul Technical University. Prior to founding the CSU, as the Chief of Economic, Social and Inter-organizational Cooperation Branch, UNDESA, Dr. Celik held a crucial role in establishing innovative participatory mechanisms to build alliances addressing several pressing concerns in developing countries. She was the representative of United Cities and Local Governments to the UN. As the Director of the New York office of UN-HABITAT, she was responsible for the preparations of the HABITAT II Conference in Istanbul, Turkiye in 1996. She worked for UN-HABITAT in Nairobi and New York, on building technologies, sustainable urbanization, energy, and gender issues. As a principal researcher in the Scientific and Technical Research Council



of Turkiye, Building Research Institute, she focused on affordable housing, energy conservation and solar buildings. She wrote books, articles, and gave lectures and received awards.

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**LANCE JAY BROWN**, *Founder, Consortium for Sustainable Urbanization (CSU)*



Lance Jay Brown, FAIA, is an architect, urban designer, author and ACSA Distinguished Professor at the School of Architecture, CCNY where he was two-term Chair and Director. He is a Fellow of the Institute for Urban Design and three-term Board member of the AIA/NYC. He was 2005 Chair of the AIA national Regional and Urban Design Committee. From 1979 –1983 he served as Special Consultant to the Design Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts. In

2007 he was awarded the AIA / ACSA Topaz Medallion, the highest honor given to an architectural educator in the United States. He recently co-authored *Urban Design For An Urban Century* (Wiley, January 2009). Born in Brooklyn, NY in 1943, Brown previously taught at Princeton, was educated at the Cooper Union and holds two masters degrees from the GSD at Harvard University.

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**FRANCESCA DE FERRARI**, *Programme Management Officer, UN-HABITAT New York*



A Sustainable Development expert with over 23 years of work experience, 20 of which in the United Nations in various capacities and duty stations. I cover an extensive variety of roles and responsibilities, from political engagement with Member States in writing policies, drafting resolutions, and supporting governmental negotiation on an array of subjects, to donor relations, fundraising, project reporting, liaison, and representation, I also worked on a technical issue, in particular, I have 10 years experience working on Water Sanitation and Hygiene promotion, as well as engagement in Education from Early Child Development to University level. I have been a change agent and contributed to various organizational restructuring exercises.

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**ANDREA ALESSANDRO GIACOMINI**, *CEO & Head of Public Affairs, Giacomini Spa*



In 1998 Andrea Alessandro Giacomini joined Giacomini Spa, his family's company, while still a student. Rising through the ranks, he now serves as co-owner and CEO overseeing operations in the production department and public affairs. Additionally, he leads as President of the Board of Directors at 1225 North Loop Investments, the premier Italian-based Real Estate Investment Group in Houston, Texas. Committed to his heritage and community, he founded The Cavaliere Del Lavoro Alberto Giacomini Foundation, which promotes tourism, art, culture, and environmental conservation in the lake Orta territory. Andrea embodies entrepreneurial leadership and philanthropic vision, shaping a brighter future for business and society.

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**MARIAMA SAMAKE**, *Communication & Institutional Relations*, Giacomini Spa



Mariama Samake, hailing from Senegal, boasts a diverse background in marketing and communication. She began her career at Hotel San Rocco, known for pioneering eco-sustainability with the first zero- emission hydrogen burner patented by Giacomini. Rising to the hotel manager position, Mariama has since transitioned to Giacomini Spa, leading institutional relations, public affairs, and hospitality. She also serves on the board of directors at 1225 North Loop Investments, the premier Italian-based Real Estate Investment Group in Houston, Texas, and co-founded The Cavaliere Del Lavoro Alberto Giacomini Foundation with her husband, exemplifying her commitment to philanthropy and community empowerment.

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**GUIDO GALLIANI**, *Technical Development* with R&D Giacomini,



Guido Galliani is the Chief Technology Officer at Giacomini S.p.A., where he leads the company's research and development efforts. With more than thirty years of experience in R&D, Guido started his successful career in the automotive industry, making significant contributions to well-known companies such as Toyota. He later transitioned to the HVAC industry, working with Honeywell before joining Giacomini. Guido's expertise is backed by a Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Genoa, which further strengthens his deep knowledge of the field.

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**ANDREA BIGHINZOLI**, *Chief Marketing Officer*, Giacomini Group



Andrea Bighinzoli is the Chief Marketing Officer at Giacomini Group, utilizing his extensive experience of more than twenty-five years within the company. In his capacity, he leads the way in driving product innovation and strategic growth and oversees communication, promotional activities, and customer support efforts. Andrea obtained his Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering from the renowned Polytechnic University of Turin, highlighting his deep comprehension of the industry.

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**EMMANUEL AMOS**, *Founder*, Programas Foundation



Chief Software Architect/CEO, of Programas Software Group, Mr Amos is a prolific IT Entrepreneur, Social Innovation Developer, Software Developer, and Machine Learning Engineer, who has served as the ICT backbone to numerous financial and investment research institutions like the Rims Merchant Bank group in Nigeria, in the early '90s. Amos Emmanuel invented Nigeria's pioneer award-winning capital market software #CloudIntegra and #CIMobile for licensed stock market dealers of African Stock Exchanges. His indigenous software has served Nigeria and Ghana regions for more than 2 decades and a half. He is the Founder, Programas Foundation - a not-for-

profit, non-governmental organization conducting a National ecosystem for Multi-Disciplinary Career Transformations in Computing & AI" and powering world-class innovators on the InnovationbedAI (WSA-Nigeria Startups Network). He is the UN World Summit Awards Eminent National Expert for Nigeria and a WSA Grand Jury member. He is charged with the responsibility of tech-scouting, mentoring, and showcasing homegrown, purpose-driven, digital innovation with a highly positive impact on improving Nigerian society to the world stage. Mr Amos is a life member of the Nigeria Computer Society, NCS, Institute of Software Practitioners of Nigeria, ISPON, Information Technology Association of Nigeria, ITAN, Institute of Information Management, IIM, and Chief Data Officer Ambassador, CDOA. He is a postgraduate product of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning at the University of Texas, Austin. Contact: [Programos.amos@gmail.com](mailto:Programos.amos@gmail.com), [wsanigeria@innovationbed.com](mailto:wsanigeria@innovationbed.com)

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**PETER PSARAS**, *Founder Chios Capital, Chief Strategy Officer & Managing Director Global Futures Group LLC, Advisory Council International Science Reserve ISR, New York Academy of Sciences NYAS*



Peter A. Psaras is a global business executive with over two decades of global technology, software, and business experience with the IBM Corporation, one of the world's foremost enterprises with nearly \$60 billion in revenues and 300 thousand employees in over 170 countries around the world. During his career at IBM, Peter was a member of the corporate strategy and technology staff for two consecutive Chairman, President & CEOs of IBM. In addition, he served as a global brand leader for IBM technology businesses that grew from \$100 million to over \$1 billion in revenue world-wide. Later, Mr. Psaras had a similar role for IBM's global enterprise software portfolio generating revenues in excess of \$1B annually. While with IBM, he was engaged in several multi-million-dollar strategic consulting engagements, including with McKinsey & Company. He has received both US and international patents for his inventions while carrying out research as a member of the IBM Thomas J. Watson Research Center. Mr. Psaras is the Chief Strategy Officer and Managing Director of Global Futures Group GFG LLC a worldwide transformation company that guides both public government sector and private corporate sector clients in using urban technologies such as AI, IOT and big data to create Smart Cities around the world. We build innovative ecosystems and optimize the use of AI and IOT technology and big data for economic growth and sustainability. Mr. Psaras is an observer member of the Board of Directors of Singapore based Creator 2 Business Foundation Limited which is a blockchain technology platform for content creators to monetize their short-form audio and video intellectual property. Mr. Psaras is CEO and a member of the Board of Directors of GFG US-India LLC a corporation that transacts bilateral joint business ventures between the two countries in the areas of national security, space and technology. He is a member of the Advisory Council for the International Science Reserve ISR of the New York Academy of Sciences NYAS. The ISR is a network of scientist reserves bringing together sophisticated resources from across the globe to prepare for and help mitigate complex urgent global crises. Mr. Psaras was named a Fellow of the National Academy of Engineering NAE, the first in IBM's 100 year history to receive this honor. While based at the National Academy of Sciences NAS Headquarters in Washington D.C. he studied and wrote on issues of national significance. Mr. Psaras is a published scientist and author, including editor of the National Academy of Science's book "Advancing Materials Research" and over two dozen peer-reviewed journal articles. [Peterpsaras@gmail.com](mailto:Peterpsaras@gmail.com)

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**HONORABLE JERRY M. HULTIN**, *Former Under Secretary of Navy, President Emeritus New York University Tandon School of Engineering*



Jerry MacArthur Hultin is an leader, educator, and author on innovation, urban science and technology, smart city design, the future of AI, automation and work, and national security. He currently is CEO of Global Futures Group based in New York City. He is an passionate supporter of science and technology, serving as Chair of the New York Academy of Sciences, founded in 1817 with the mission of “shaping the future of science.” He also is Chair of Educational Housing Services, a non-profit real estate company that provides affordable housing to students in NYC. As a university president, he led the strategic turnaround of Polytechnic University and its successful merger with New York University. In addition, he created some of NYC’s first technology incubators in collaboration with NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg, an innovation that started NYC’s rise to technology prominence. As Under Secretary of the Navy, he crafted the strategy that built the Navy Marine Corps Intranet, at the time the world’s largest private communications network. He was appointed by President Clinton to the board of Freddie Mac and he was a member of the Defense Business Board and the American Battle Monuments Commission for President Obama. He is a co-founder of Smart Cities NY, a leading urban technology conference; a Distinguished Fellow of the Global Federation of Competitiveness Councils; and a co-founder of Fighting Chance Ukraine. Mr. Hultin graduated from Ohio State University and Yale Law School.

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**JEFFRY WILLIAMS**, *Founder and CEO, Worldwide Tech Connections*

Jeff created Worldwide Tech Connections to provide fast and accurate translation of languages to a new and unique platform to bring an abundance of benefits to the world. Jeff presents a unique synthesis of technology and linguistics through a highly accredited career in the Entertainment and technology industries. Using smart technology, deep learning and other neuro-AI components, Jeff has engineered commercial high-accuracy translation & linguistic machine learning technologies for global adaption, integration, immersion and scalability. Our architecture guidelines adhere to multiple compliancy:

- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Integrating one or more of the following speech technologies: translating live speech-to-text, text-to-text, text- to-speech synthesis, and voice biometrics, Worldwide Tech Connections is breaking down language barriers and creating equity in the communication or materials and live discussion to promote understanding and equal access to anyone, any time, anywhere.

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**ESTHER WOJCICKI**, *Founder* Global Moonshots in Education, *Founder* Palo Alto High Media Arts Program, *CEO* Woj.Education



Esther Wojcicki is famous for three things: teaching a high school class that has changed the lives of thousands of kids, inspiring Silicon Valley legends like Steve Jobs, and raising three daughters who have each become famously successful. What do these three accomplishments have in common? They are the result of TRICK, Esther's secret to raising successful people: Trust, Respect, Independence, Collaboration, and Kindness. Simple lessons, but the results are radical. Esther

Wojcicki is a leading American educator and journalist. Mother of former YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki, Fulbright scholar Janet Wojcicki, and 23&Me founder Anne Wojcicki, as well as a teacher and mentor to hundreds. Esther is widely heralded as the most successful parent and educator in the United States. Esther offers essential lessons for raising, educating, and managing people to their highest potential. She is the author of *Moonshots in Education* (2014) and International bestseller *How to Raise Successful People* (May, 2019) published in 31 languages. Esther is the Founder of WOJ. Education visit [www.woj.education](http://www.woj.education). She graduated from UC Berkeley with a B.A. in Political Philosophy and English Literature. She also has a Master's Degree in Journalism from the Graduate School of Journalism at UC Berkeley, another Master's Degree in Educational Technology from San Jose State University and an Advanced Degree in French History from the University of Paris. She also has a Secondary Teaching Credential from UC Berkeley and an Administration Credential from San Jose State. She taught secondary English, Journalism, Social Studies and Math in her 45-year secondary school teaching career. She served as Chair of the Board of Creative Commons.org and still serves on their Advisory Committee. She is one of the founders of the Google Teacher Academy and worked on many of the tools used in the Google Classroom. In 2002, she was named a California Teacher of the Year. She also worked with Hewlett Foundation on the Open Education Curriculum and with Carnegie Foundation as a Scholar. She is on the Board of the Exploratorium in San Francisco. Her passion in life is empowering young people to be innovative and creative. She advises multiple startups and serves as Chief Education Advisor on several. Some of her former students include Lisa Brennan Jobs, Steve Jobs daughter, James Franco, actor; Jeremy Lin, basketball player, Alfonso de los Rios, CEO of Nowports.com....and many more

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**NADAIT GEBREMEDHEN MD**, *Founder & Executive Director*, Hagush



Dr. Nadait Gebremedhen is the founder and Executive Director of Hagush, a social enterprise dedicated to making technology access universal. She leads Hagush, designing and deploying cost-effective, sustainable, and scalable development solutions primarily focused on advancing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure. Hagush's vision is to bring about a world where all technological advances are available to all

humanity. That vision is realized in the organization's comprehensive, solution-focused approach to addressing the widening digital divide between the Global North and South. Hagush's inaugural program — an innovative technology financing service — is democratizing digital device access in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Uganda and is enabling the impact of local NGOs and social enterprises working on SGD 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SGD 4 (Quality Education), SGD 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SGD 13 (Climate Action). Dr. Gebremedhen is an experienced physician. She holds an M.D. from Orotta School of Medicine and a Master of Science in Cognitive Psychology from the University of Pittsburgh. Her passion for development economics and inclusive, innovation-led progress drives her pursuit of solutions to global challenges.



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**KIYOSHI NAKANISHI**, *CEO, Homeost Corporation, USA*



Spearheaded a groundbreaking project merging supercomputing technology with imaging diagnostics. Using a Supercomputer developed with Fujitsu and the University of Tokyo, this innovation has revolutionized the evaluation of cardiac function using echocardiograms and various other imaging modalities, a feat previously deemed unattainable. It facilitates the preoperative assessment of cardiac function in congenital heart defects and the post-implantation evaluation of heart failure treatments following pacemaker procedures. In addition, his heart simulator can predict future pathology of the heart using data taken only from an EKG together with AI and 40,000 virtual hearts. For his outstanding contributions, Mr. Nakanishi has been rightfully recognized with esteemed honors such as the Japan Academy Prize and the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare Award for most innovative medical device for congenital heart defects. In addition, he has engaged in advancing regenerative medicine at the Peninsula Hotel Clinic in Tokyo, bringing together a multitude of healthcare professionals, thus enriching the landscape of medical progress.

"Driving innovation in medical technology, Homeost Corporation, led by CEO Mr. Nakanishi, is pioneering breakthroughs in cardiac care. From spearheading transformative projects merging supercomputing with cardiac diagnostics to championing regenerative medicine, our mission is to bring life-saving innovations to the forefront. With a commitment to excellence and a vision to revolutionize cardiac healthcare, we're poised to bring the heart simulator to market in the USA, shaping the future of patient care worldwide."

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**SIMON DOWNES**, *FDA correspondent, Japan Medical Device Corporation*



Simon Downes attended the University of Tsukuba, Japan & IUHS International University of the Health Sciences. His personal goal is to use my experience in regulatory submissions and knowledge of medicine, particularly within cardiology to bring to market a ground- breaking medical device. After 30 years in Japan, he is fluent in Japanese and have PhD in developmental psychology. Now completing MD in preparation for US licensure.

"As the USA Representative and Regulatory Correspondent for Japan Medical Device Corporation, hailing from Royal Leamington Spa, UK, and nurtured by the academic excellence of the University of Tsukuba, Japan, I blend a unique fusion of cultural insight and regulatory expertise. With a steadfast commitment to pioneering innovation, my personal mission intertwines with my professional journey as I strive to introduce a groundbreaking medical device in cardiology. Fluent in Japanese after three decades immersed in its culture, and equipped with a PhD in developmental psychology, I'm currently pursuing an MD to broaden my impact and pave the way for transformative advancements in healthcare."

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**LUIS HERNANDEZ**, *International Attorney, Regulatory Affairs Specialist*



Luis Amadeo Hernandez Situ has a long exposure to International Commercial practice in the United States, Japan and Latin America, in the areas of foreign investment, corporate compliance, international joint ventures, restructurings, mergers and acquisitions, and large public procurements contracts. He advises multinational companies on cross-border transactions and complex commercial and licensing arrangements. He previously worked in project finance, Private-Public Partnership projects in Latin America, and banking finance from private, and multilateral development institutions. He is a multicultural professional also with vast experience in mobilizing resources by building partnerships among international constituencies: governments, corporations, trade and professional organizations, NGO's, philanthropic organizations and academia. Mr. Hernandez is admitted to the New York State Bar and is member of the American Bar Association.

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**JOHN STEFFENS, *Executive Director Emeritus*, University of Oklahoma**

Dr. John Steffans holds a PhD in general administration from the University of Oklahoma and served as Executive Director of PSI. His background incorporates a broad spectrum of educational experiences, including teaching and administration in schools, international programs, development of a broad variety of human and social service programs, the evaluation of social service programs, and the organizational analysis of schools and social service organizations. He has served as a special consultant to the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, the U.S. Department of Education, the National Advisory Council on Equal Educational Opportunity, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Institutes of Health, the U.S. departments of Energy, Defense, and Labor, the Urban League, the U.S. Air Force, the Organization of American States, and a host of other state, local, and community agencies, departments and programs, nationally and internationally.

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**DAVID NEELY, *President and CEO*, Affecting Change International (ACI)**



David Neely is the President and CEO of Affecting Change International (ACI), an international nonprofit based in Kansas. ACI works to mobilize individuals and non-governmental organizations to improve the physical, emotional, and economic conditions of the underprivileged around the world through collaborative partnerships. He has traveled extensively throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, Central and Eastern Asia, the Middle East, and Canada. David has been an ardent supporter of and participant in the Infopoverty World Conference of the United Nations since 2006 and has promoted ICT4D-UNSDGs as a collaborator partner with the Public Service Institute of the university of Oklahoma (PSI/OU) and the Education and Training Institute (ETI). He co-founded the Unfinished Task Network and the Indigenous Church Planting Network in May 2017. He recently retired after 15 years as the Executive Pastor of Blue Valley Church, in Overland Park, KS where he lead all BVBC multi-site missions efforts, counseling with specific emphasis in PTSD-trauma recovery, made hospital/homebound ministry visits, all the while directing all personnel and operational aspects of the church. Having lived and worked in East Africa for eleven years and has led development projects in the region for over twenty-eight years, Mr. Neely held a number of leadership positions within the nonprofit community, including: Executive Director of Brackenhurst International Conference Center in Kenya, Logistics Coordinator for the Northern Frontier Cluster of the International Mission Board in Southern Sudan, Northern Uganda, and Northern Kenya, member of the regional Member Care Team, Director of Operations and Development for Rosslyn Academy

in Nairobi, to name a few. He is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma and Trinity Theological Seminary.

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**GIACOMO MAZZONE**, *Secretary-General, EUROVISIONI*



Giacomo Mazzone is the Secretary General of Eurovisioni but is also a Public Service Broadcasting and Media Manager with 30 years of experience in the fields of news, sports and international relations. A journalist by training, he has gained extensive experience in international companies and organizations (RAI, Euronews, Eurosport and, since 2002, at the EBU, European Broadcasting Union, a member of the WBU, World Broadcasting Union). He has worked for all traditional media (press, radio, general interest TV) but also for new media (all-news channels, Internet portals). An expert in European and multilateral negotiations, he was chosen to represent the Italian government at UNESCO in the negotiations for the Convention on Cultural Diversity. From 2011 to 2020, he was Head of Institutional Relations and Southern Member Relations at the European Broadcasting Union, in charge of monitoring members from the MENA region (Algeria, Morocco, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Tunisia, Lebanon) and the northern shore of the Mediterranean (Italy, France, Spain, Malta, Cyprus, Greece, Turkey, etc.).

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**ALDO TORREGGIANI**, *High-Level Advisor for Sustainable Policies*

Aldo Torreggiani is AD and Senior Project Manager at T&C Company specializing in residential, field training and distance learning projects for healthcare professionals. We use the most innovative teaching methods to make training interesting, engaging and useful in clinical practice through the use of role-plays, group work, case discussions. We use innovative technologies for content delivery, such as interactive tables, webinars, simulation centres, cadaver workshops.

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**IMTIAZ DHARKER**, *Poet, Chancellor, Newcastle University*



She is a poet, artist and video filmmaker. She was awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry in 2014 and became Chancellor of Newcastle University in 2020. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, she has been Poet in Residence at Cambridge University Library and has worked on several projects across art forms in Leeds, Newcastle and Hull, as well as the Archives of St Paul's Cathedral. Her six collections include *Over the Moon* and the latest, *Luck Is the Hook*, all published by Bloodaxe Books UK, and her poems have been broadcast widely on BBC Radio 3 and 4 as well as the BBC World Service. She has had eleven solo exhibitions of drawings around the world, and scripts and directs video films, many of them for non-government organisations working in the area of shelter, education and health for women and children in India.

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**PIERPAOLO SAPORITO**, *President, OCCAM and Infopoverty Programme*



As President of OCCAM – Observatory on Digital Communication established in 1996 by UNESCO and in Special Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC since 2005, Saporito chairs the Infopoverty World Conference, the annual forum gathering experts and stakeholders at UNHQ in New York to elaborate concrete solutions for the development of disadvantaged communities and promote a better society.

As President of the International Council for Film, Television and Audiovisual Communication, ICFT – CICT at UNESCO, Saporito valorizes cinema as the expression of different cultures in the digital era.

Saporito also plays a longstanding pioneering role in studying and experimenting ICTs and new technological applications. As founder of Environmedia, during the 70s the Venice Biennale appointed Saporito to a project of community communication involving over 200.000 people in an open process of participation. The same years see him occupied with the magazine 'IN Argomenti e Immagini di Design' that he founded and directed. As Architect and Planner with a universalistic imprint, he enriched his professional portfolio realizing projects such as Milano Central Station Renewal Plan for Ferrovie della Stato, and exhibitions including Les Temps des Gares at Centre G. Pompidou in Paris. Saporito also conducted research on new materials for ENI, planning the dismissed railways in large areas and the urban Bastion Circle for the City of Milan, private villas, social housing and public buildings empowered by advanced solutions and clean technology. His experimentation on new 3D printing was awarded in 2019 by UN-HABITAT/ WB Resilient Homes Design Challenge competition. Cofounder at the Oklahoma University of the Infopoverty Institute, he is a distinguished speaker at Conferences and a High-level advisor for public and private institutions facing the emerging challenges of the Digital Revolution to build a more sustainable development and fairer society.

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**GIOVANNI ZANONI**, *Junior Project Manager, OCCAM*



I have recently obtained my master's degree in International Relations at Università degli Studi di Milano, where I graduated with a thesis on the participation of the European Union in other international organizations. During my academic career, I had the opportunity to spend a semester in Prague as part of the Erasmus Student Program. At the end of 2022, I started my 6 months internship at OCCAM. Since then, I have worked on several tasks, especially related to the organization of the XXII Infopoverty World Conferences and the XXV Euromediterranean Conference on Cinema. Since 2023, I work on the EWA-BELT project, where I assist the team in managing communication and developing the PlantHead diagnostic platform.

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**MARTINA BALDESSIN**, *Programme coordinator, OCCAM*



I have started my experience at OCCAM in 2019 during my undergraduate. Since then, I have worked on a series of tasks, mainly related to the organization of the Infopoverty World Conferences, the Infopoverty Webinars, and various events, while also managing and contributing to several international projects in the fields of food-security, telemedicine, rural development and digital technologies. I obtained my MSc in Economics and Political Science at the University of Milan with

a thesis on the implications of Brexit on Anglo-Norwegian trade relations. I've also studied in the USA, France (SciencesPo – Lille) and Norway (University of Oslo). I am a passionate of interior design.