

**Interfaith Harmony Week: Multi-religious Partnership for Sustainable Development**

Friday, 6 February 2015

10 am – 1 pm

Trusteeship Chamber, United Nations, New York

*These brief bio data are in the order of presentations.*

**H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa**

Sam Kahamba Kutesa is the President of the United Nations General Assembly's sixty-ninth session. Prior to this, he was Uganda's Minister for Foreign Affairs, a post he held since 2005. Mr. Kutesa is a lawyer, parliamentarian and businessman. During his tenure as Foreign Minister, Uganda has hosted high-level meetings of key intergovernmental bodies such as the Commonwealth Heads of Government Summit, the Council of Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the African Union (AU) Heads of State Summit.



At the regional and sub regional levels, Mr. Kutesa has hosted top-level gatherings of organizations such as the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). From 2011 to 2014, he chaired the ICGLR's Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee which deals with challenges such as consolidating peace and stability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), promoting transparency in the exploitation and sale of natural resources, and countering sexual and gender-based violence. An elected Member of Parliament for more than three decades, Mr. Kutesa

was a member of Uganda's Constituent Assembly and Chairman of that body's Political Systems Committee, during which time he contributed to drafting a new Constitution for the country, adopted in 1995.

**Ms. Cristina Gallach**

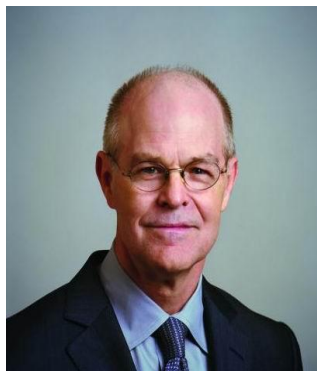
Ms. Gallach is the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information. Prior to this role Ms. Gallach was the Head of the Public Relations Unit in the Council of the European Union, Directorate General for Information and Communication in Brussels. Prior to that appointment, she was Spokesperson of the Spanish Government for the European Union rotating Presidency (2010), Spokesperson and Chief Media Advisor of the European Union High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Brussels (1999-2009) and Deputy Spokesperson of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Chief Media Advisor for the Secretary-



General, Brussels (1996-1999). Prior to those roles, Mr. Gallach spent over 15 years as a journalist.

**Dr. William F. Vendley**

Dr. Vendley is the Secretary General of Religions for Peace, the world's largest and most representative multi-religious coalition advancing common action for peace. He is a pioneer in advancing multi-religious cooperation to help resolve conflict and has been engaged in multi-religious peacemaking efforts in Syria, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Liberia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Iraq, and other countries. Dr. Vendley is an advisor to a number of governments on matters related to religion and peace. He advised US President Barack Obama through his service on the Multi-religious Cooperation and International Affairs Task Force of the White House Faith-Based Council. He was appointed by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton as one of ten members of the US



State Department's Advisory Committee on Strategic Partnership with Civil Society and is a Co-chair of the Religion and Foreign Policy Working Group. Dr. Vendley is a recipient of the UNICEF Lifetime Achievement Award.



**Ms. Sara Rahim**

Sara Rahim is a graduating senior from Saint Louis University, where she majored in Public Health and International Studies. Sara has served as intern to the White House Interfaith & Service Challenge at and has been an active member of SLU Interfaith Alliance. Off campus, she has worked in refugee resettlement and as an intern and former Better Together Coach and with Interfaith Youth Core. Her passion for public health has allowed her to conduct research in Morocco, where she has also worked in migrant healthcare. Sara was recently selected to serve as Parliament of the World's Religions Youth Representative to the United Nations. She will be returning to St. Louis

as a Coro Fellow in Public Affairs.



Michael Katz

**Mr. Michael Katz, Cellist**

Born in Tel-Aviv, Mr. Katz began his cello studies at age seven, and his early teachers included Zvi Plessner, Hillel Zori and the late Mikhail Khomitzer. Mr. Katz received his Bachelor of Music degree from the New England Conservatory as a student of Laurence Lesser and his Master of Music from the Juilliard School where he studied with Joel Krosnick. He is currently pursuing a Doctor of Music at SUNY Stony Brook as a student of Colin Carr. Mr. Katz is currently a Fellow in Ensemble ACJW, a program of Carnegie Hall and the Juilliard School which trains the next generation of performers to be artists and teachers that hold a deep commitment to the communities in which

they live and work.



**H.E. Ambassador U. Joy Ogwu**

Ambassador Uche Joy Ogwu is the Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the United Nations. She was a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria (2006 – 2007). A Professor of Political Science and International Relations, she served as the First Female Director-General of Nigeria's Foreign Policy Think-Tank – The Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) (2001-2006). From January 2002, she served as a Member of the United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, culminating in her appointment as the First African female Chair of the Board from January 2006-July 2007. She

served as the First President of the First Executive Board of the newly-created entity, UN Women. She has served as President of the Security Council three times – first in July 2010, October 2011 and April 2014. Since 2008, she has served as Chair of the Special Committee of Peacekeeping Operations. In 2011, she was elected the First African President of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and led the 193 Member States of the UN to adopt a landmark consensus Outcome Document in 2012.



### **H. E. the Most Revd. Bernadito C. Auza**

H.E. Revd. Auza was born in Talibon, Republic of the Philippines an ordained priest for the Diocese of Tagbilaran on 29 June 1985; then in 1986 he was incardinated to the newly created Diocese of Talibon. He earned a doctorate in Theology and entered the diplomatic service of the Holy See in 1990. He has Served at the Apostolic Nunciature in Madagascar, in Bulgaria, and then in Albania. He then served in the Secretariat of State in the Vatican and from there was appointed to the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations in New York in 2014. Appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Haiti on 8 May 2008 and was ordained Titular Archbishop of *Suacia* on 3 July 2008. He was also appointed Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the Organization of

American States on 16 July 2014.



### **Imam Shamsi Ali**

Imam Shamsi Ali is the founder and President of Nusantara Foundation. He currently leads two major Islamic institutions in New York City, including Jamaica Muslim Center, the City's largest congregation. A renowned Muslim scholar, Imam Ali has long been active in interfaith activities, serving as an Advisor & Board member to several organizations. He was chosen as one of seven "most influential religious leaders in New York City" by New York Magazine and was a recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor Award in 2009 for his work building bridges between religious communities in the city. Author of several books, Imam Ali is known as the moderate face of Islam in the West

and a bridge builder between the Muslim world and the West.



### **Rev. Dr. Usman J. Fomah**

He serves as President of the Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone, Chairman of the Board of Directors for The Evangelical College of Theology (TECT) and General Secretary of the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL). The Rev. Dr. Usman Jesse Fomah has participated and presented papers in various international conferences. Rev. Usman has served the Wesleyan Church of Sierra Leone for twenty nine years as local pastor in a number of local churches in Sierra Leone. He was appointed National Director for the Youth and Young Adults of the Wesleyan Church and served in that capacity from 2004 -2006. During this same period, he was also

District Superintendent of the Makeni Wesleyan District. Prior to that, he served as National Secretary and Director of Administration of the Wesleyan Church. He is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Ministerial Leadership through Wesley Seminary.



### **Rabbi Roger Ross**

Rabbi Ross is the Chair of the Board and CFO of the New Vision Interspiritual Seminary as well as the Interfaith Community International. Rabbi Ross graduated from and received his Rabbinical Ordination from the Rabbinical Seminary International in 1995. He is the Executive Director of the Rabbinical Seminary International as well as the Rabbinical Fellowship of America, International, and is an active member of the International Federation of Rabbis. He is the Senior Rabbi of the New Synagogue in partnership with the Actors' Temple in New York City. Rabbi Ross is a representative of United Religions Initiative to the United Nations.



### **Dr. Uma Mysorekar**

Dr. Uma Mysorekar is the president of the Hindu Temple Society of North America. As such she has initiated numerous programs to bring the community together including spiritual, educational and cultural activities and has initiated several interfaith meetings to bring about awareness of Hinduism. She has received several awards over the years for her contribution and community service. She studied medicine at Grant Medical College, University of Bombay where she was awarded the Gold Medal for academic excellence. She came to the United States in 1970 and has been practicing Obstetrics and Gynecology since 1975. She pioneered the fund raising for “Aid to the Disabled, Orphaned and Poor” (ADOP) under the auspices of the Hindu Temple Society of North America.

### **H.E. Ambassador Irene Susan B. Natividad**

H.E. Natividad, is currently the Charges d’Affaires of Philippines Mission to the United Nations. Holding degrees in Journalism and Law from the University of Philippines, H.E. Natividad served as Special Assistant to the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs in 1995. As Director for Treaties during 2002 and 2005, she was responsible to review draft agreements, participate in negotiations and facilitate the ratification and defense of treaties and international agreements before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. She served in Philippine diplomatic and consular posts in Honolulu in the following two years. From 2010 to 2013, she served as Executive Director and then as Assistant Secretary of Office of Legal Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs. She has completed a research fellowship on non-traditional security issues at the Center of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong.



### **H.E. Mr. Ufuk Gokcen**

H.E. Ufuk Gokcen, in addition to be the Permanent Observer of the OIC to the UN in New York since April 2010, is presently also acting as the focal point with the US State Department for the US-OIC cooperation. Before his current post, he served as the Political Advisor to the OIC Secretary General at the OIC Headquarters in Jeddah from 2005 to April 2010. Prior to that, he served as at the Turkish Embassies in Damascus, Muscat and Riyadh and at the Middle East Department of the Turkish Foreign Ministry in Ankara.



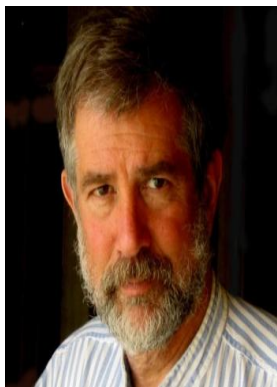
### **Dr. Azza Karam**

Dr. Azza Karam's programmatic experience spans the fields of global multi-religious collaboration, gender issues, governance, human rights, conflict, and political Islam. Prior to joining UNFPA, she was the Senior Policy Research Advisor at the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in the Regional Bureau for Arab States where she worked on the Arab Human Development Reports, among other portfolios. Dr. Karam has also worked at the World Conference of Religions for Peace where she founded the first Global Women of Faith Network, and advised on issues related to Muslim and Arab affairs. Also during this time, she served as the President of the Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations. She has served as Lecturer at the School of Politics at the Queens University of Belfast, as Lecturer in Development, Conflict and Humanitarian issues at the University of Amsterdam, and as Senior Programme Officer at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IIDEA) in Stockholm.



### **Dr. Katherine Marshall**

Katherine Marshall has worked for over four decades on international development, focusing on the world's poorest countries. A senior fellow at Georgetown's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs and Visiting Professor in the School of Foreign Service, she is the executive director of the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD). As a professor and researcher, working both from the Berkley Center and WFDD, she is active in policy research on wide-ranging issues. She spent a large part of her career at the World Bank, in many leadership assignments focused on Africa, Latin America, and East Asia. She was a mentor to many young people and especially young women during 35 years at the Bank. She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and a visiting professor at the University of Cambodia. She writes regularly for the religion page of the *Huffington Post*.



### **Mr. Doug Hostetter**

Doug Hostetter is the Director of the Mennonite Central Committee United Nations Office. He is an ordained Peace Pastor in the Mennonite Church, USA. Doug was a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War, and chose to do his alternative service working for Mennonite Central Committee in Vietnam, in the middle of the war zone during the height of that war. Doug's graduate work was in Sociology, and he has taught briefly as an Adjunct Professor in Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies at Goshen College, Goshen, IN, and as a Visiting Scholar in the Sociology Department at Northwestern University, Evanston, IL. He has worked with faith-based nongovernmental organizations in Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, Europe, and the United States.