



**Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-ninth session**

National mechanisms for gender equality: advocates for action and accountability, catalysts for change.

**Wednesday, 11 March 2015
3.00 pm to 6.00 pm**

SPEAKER BIOS

Panelists

Ms. Makhfirat KhidirZoda has been Minister and Head of the Committee on Women and Family Affairs Tajikistan since 2013. She began her career at the Department of Political Sciences at Tajik State Commercial University in Dushanbe city from 1995-2000, and continued working as Deputy Dean of the Faculty of “World Economics and Law” between 2002 and 2005. In 2005 she was elected to parliament in and also worked as the Deputy Head of the Committee on Science, Education Culture Youth Policies of the Parliament of the Republic of Tajikistan (2010-2013). From 23 November 2013 Ms. Khidirzoda has been the Head of the Committee on Women and Family Affairs under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. Ms. Khidirzoda is a distinguished holder of the Medal of Ismoili Somoni from 2000 as well as being awarded the medal commemorating 20 years of independence of Tajikistan in 2011.

Ms. Maria de Lurdes Martins de Sousa Bessa was elected a Member of the National Parliament of Timor-Leste in 2012. Among other positions, Ms. Martins is the Chair of the Democratic Party in National Parliament and is a member of the Committee on Economic and Development Issues. Before becoming a member of parliament, Ms. Martins de Sousa Bessa served as a Political Assistant in the Embassy of the United States of America in Dili, Timor-Leste from 2004 to 2012 and was elected Vice-President of the Democratic Party in 2011. Ms. Martins de Sousa Bessa holds a Bachelor’s degree in Modern Languages and Literatures in Portuguese and English, Faculty of Arts of Porto University in Portugal.

Ms. Rose Rwabunhihi is the Chief Gender Monitor, Gender Monitoring Office in Rwanda a position she has held since 2013. The Gender Monitoring Office is a government institution tasked to ensure gender accountability of public, private and civil society organizations. Prior to joining the Government of Rwanda, she worked for many years with several UN agencies including UN Women, UNFPA and UNDP in New York and in Africa. She has worked with gender machineries in Africa especially in promoting women participation in governance, peace processes and setting up mechanisms to end violence against women.

Ms. Nicole Ameline, MP is member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) since 2008 and was formerly the Chair of the Committee (2013 to 2015). She is a Deputy in the French National Assembly and, among the many roles she has held, was Minister for Equality in

Employment. She currently sits on the French National Advisory Committee on Human Rights and the French Foreign Affairs Committee.

Ms. Roxana Alvarado is the current First Vice President of the National Assembly of Ecuador (2013–2015). Prior to her election to the National Assembly in 2009, she served as a member of the Constituent Assembly. She has served on a number of committees, including the Commission of Legislation and Control, the Specialized Commission on Civil and Penal Matters (as Vice President) and the Permanent Commission of Biodiversity and Natural Resources. Prior to her parliamentary career, Ms Alvarado worked in academia, where she coordinated projects on governance and leadership, and provided policy advice and training on development and decentralization.

Ms. Absa Wade is the current Director of the Department of Women in the Ministry of Women Family and Children of Senegal, having been appointed in 2009. She is in charge of elaborating policies for gender equality and ensuring gender mainstreaming in sectorial policies and programs. In addition she coordinates the implementation of the National Strategy for gender equality. Prior to becoming the Director Department of Women in the Ministry of Women Family and Children of Senegal she was appointed as coordinator of the UNFPA gender project funded by UNFPA.

Ms. Ana Arganashvili, is the current Head of the NGO, Partnership for Human Rights, a position she has held since 2013. She has served as the head of the Gender Equality Department, Centre for Child Rights and the Center for Disability Rights at the National Human Rights Institution, and the Office of the Public Defender of Georgia from 2007 until 2013.

Dr. Salma Nims is currently the Secretary General of the Jordanian National Commission for Women. She holds a PhD in Development Planning (2004) and a Masters in Sustainable Development (1998) from University College London, University of London. Since 2004, she has provided professional development and gender consultancy services to several government and international organizations, including: the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Education, UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and CIDA. Before being appointed Secretary General of the Jordanian National Commission for Women, she was the Executive Coordinator of “Taqaddam” Platform, a social movement aiming at building a positive discourse towards change in Jordan. Dr. Nims is active on social media where she raises issues relating to social equity and human rights, with a specific focus on women rights. Dr. Nims brings her extensive background in various government and international organizations as she joins the consultative committee.

Dr. Ing Kantha Phavi was appointed Minister of Women’s Affairs of the Royal Government of Cambodia in July 2004 following the formation of the new government. Prior to becoming Minister, Dr. Phavi served five years as Secretary of State of Women’s and Veterans’ Affairs, where she was responsible for elaborating gender-responsive policies, strategies and plans of action. She ensured the management and follow-up of technical programs in health and economic empowerment and of the capacity-building program of MWVA staff on financial and administrative management. She was an active contributor to several international and national workshops and seminars on gender mainstreaming in reproductive health and HIV/AIDS issues, and on women’s economic empowerment. Dr. Phavi was directly involved in the National Poverty Reduction Strategy drafting process.

Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin is a global leader of public health, women’s empowerment and young people, particularly focused on promoting human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as population and development. Since his appointment as UNFPA Executive Director, effective 2011,

he has spearheaded efforts by the international community to advance the milestone consensus of the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994. The Executive Director currently serves on various advisory boards and committees, including the Family Planning 2020 Reference Group and the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on Population Dynamics. Dr. Osotimehin completed his medical studies at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, in 1972 and received a doctorate in medicine from the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom in 1979.

Ms. Alejandra Mora Mora is Minister for Women's Affairs of Costa Rica and President of the Interamerican Commission of Women since 2014. Prior to becoming Minister and the President of the Interamerican Commission of Women she served as a Professor of Family Law, Registry and Notary Law from 2008 until 2014. She has also served as the Director of the Ombudsman's Office for the Rights of Women of Costa Rica from 2007 until 2014. Ms. Mora holds a Post Graduate Degree on the Human Rights of Women at the University of Chile, a Master's Degree on Constitutional Law at the Distance University of Costa Rica and a Bachelor of Arts Law at the University of Costa Rica.