



Interactive dialogue on the priority theme

**Building back better: women’s participation and leadership
in COVID-19 response and recovery**

Thursday, 18 March 2021, 9.00 – 11.00 a.m., Informal virtual meeting

Speaker Bios

Moderator

Dr. Maria Van Kerkhove is the COVID-19 Technical Lead and the Head of the Emerging Diseases and Zoonoses Unit and the MERS-CoV Technical Lead at the World Health Organization (WHO). She is interested in investigating factors associated with transmission between animals and humans, and ensuring research directly informs public health policies for action. Prior to WHO, Dr. Van Kerkhove was the Head of the Outbreak Investigation Task Force at Institut Pasteur’s Center for Global Health. She completed an MS Degree at Stanford University and a PhD in infectious disease epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Panelists

Dr. Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, a human rights lawyer, is the Founder and Chief Executive of Rozaria Memorial Trust, Zimbabwe. She is the Chair of the Women’s Coalition of Zimbabwe’s COVID19 Frontline Responders, and a member of the Government of Zimbabwe COVID19 Risk Communication and Community Engagement Committee. She serves as the African Union Goodwill Ambassador on Ending Child Marriages since 2014. She is a member of the External Advisory Group to IMF Managing Director. She is also the current Chair of Action Aid International. Dr. Gumbonzvanda previously served as General Secretary of the World Young Women’s Christian Association and has worked with the United Nations in various roles for almost 10 years, focusing on women’s and children’s human rights.

Ms. Lina Abou-Habib is the Interim Director of the Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship at the American University of Beirut, Chair of Collective for Research and Training for Development – Action, Board Member for Gender at Work, and MENA strategic advisor for the Global Fund for Women. She is also a member of the Editorial Board of the Gender and Development journal published by Oxfam. Ms. Abou-Habib was previously the Executive Director of Women’s Learning Partnership and before that, the director of Collective for Research and Training on Development-Action.

Dr. Müge Kökten Finkel is the Director of the Masters in International Development Program and a faculty member at the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, and the Co-Director of the Gender Inequality Research Lab (GIRL) at the University of Pittsburgh, USA. Her expertise includes gender and development, poverty and inequality, and Japanese politics. Previously, she worked as a Social Development Specialist for the MENA Region at the World Bank. Since 2015, she has worked with the United Nations Development Programme to analyze global trends in gender equality in public administration. Dr. Finkel holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Virginia.

Ms. Luba Kassova is a co-founder and director of the international audience strategy consultancy AKAS, which aims to help purpose-led organizations globally to understand their audiences. Over the last 20 years, Ms. Kassova has used her enthusiasm for telling audience-centric stories to assist organizations such as BBC Journalism & Channel 4/ITN grow. Ms. Kassova is passionate about gender and racial equality, free news media, and social cohesion. Her “The Missing Perspectives of Women in COVID-19 News” and “The Missing Perspectives of Women in News” reports commissioned by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation have been quoted in leading media. Luba is a TEDx speaker. She holds an MA in Sociology and an MA in Contemporary European Studies.

Ms. Rohey Malick Lowe is the first elected woman Mayor of Banjul, the Gambia, and is currently the President of the African Capital Cities Sustainability Forum, President Refela-The Gambia National Chapter, Executive Member Global Parliament of Mayors, and the 2nd Vice President of United Democratic Party National Executive. Mayor Rohey Malick Lowe has a background as an entrepreneur in the tourism industry. She studied International Relations at the University of Falun in Sweden and subsequently became a member of a political party which allowed her to serve as a key member of the Child Welfare Committee in Sweden.

Dr. Jennifer M. Piscopo is Associate Professor of Politics at Occidental College in Los Angeles, California. Her research on women, representation, and political representation in Latin America, the United States, and the globe has appeared in over twenty peer-reviewed journals and multiple edited volumes. She consults regularly for international organizations. Recent policy papers include "Effective, Decisive, and Inclusive: Women’s Leadership in COVID-19 Response and Recovery" and "Pathways to Advancing Feminist Policies in a Challenging Political Context: Building Back Better from COVID-19." Her public-facing writing on women and political empowerment has appeared in outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Boston Review*, and *Ms. Magazine*, among others.