



Biography Speakers

Track 6 -- Unlocking the Potential of the Furthest Behind



Mr. Thoms Gass is Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs in UN DESA. From 2009 to 2013, he served as Head of the Mission of Switzerland to Nepal (Ambassador and Country Director of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation), where he established the Embassy of Switzerland in Nepal, and ensured the delivery of a development cooperation programme of up to 33 million dollars a year. He also chaired the Donors of the Nepal Peace Trust Fund, the main instrument for international support to Nepal's peace process. Before his posting to Nepal from 2004 to 2009, Mr. Gass was Head of the Economic and Development Section at the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN in New York. In 2006, he was the Vice-President for Western European and Other Group (WEOG) of the Commission on Population and Development, and in 2008 he was the Vice-President (WEOG) of the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA. In 2007, he successfully facilitated the landmark TCPR/QCPR Resolution, the periodic review of the General Assembly operational system for development. Mr. Gass holds a PhD in natural sciences from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich and MSc and Engineering diploma in agricultural sciences from the same Institute.





Dr. Amit Mitra, a renowned economist, is now the Minister-in-Charge of Finance and Industry, Commerce & Enterprises Departments of the Government of West Bengal. He is also the Chairman of the Empowered Committee of State Finance Ministers of India. Dr. Amit Mitra has been instrumental in bringing about significant changes in the area of finance and tax administration in the State through the Country's largest e-taxation based reform and digitally driven Integrated Financial Management System in the State.

Dr. Mitra had previously served as the Secretary-General of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). He was on the board of Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL), which is the largest steel producer in the country. He also served on the boards of Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL), the largest gas transmission and marketing company in India; and IFCI (previously Industrial Finance Corporation of India), one of the largest financial institution in the country. He was on the board of the Unit Trust of India (UTI) and the National Advisory Board of Microsoft as well. Dr. Mitra represented India in the India-EU Roundtable Meetings on Track II (People-to-People) Diplomacy and India-China Eminent Persons' Group. Dr. Mitra received his Master's Degree from the Delhi School of Economics and received his PhD from Duke University in the USA. The Japanese Government honoured him with the "Order of the Rising Sun" in 2005 for his contribution towards promotion of friendly relations between India and Japan. He has also received the highest civilian award from the President of Italy in 2007. The Government of India conferred its civilian award Padma Shree to him in 2008.



Ms. Elizabeth Stuart is the Head of the Growth, Poverty, and Inequality Programme at the Overseas Development Institute in the United Kingdom. Her work addresses issues of inequality, the political economy of national policy making, and sustainable development goals; the latter constitutes the majority of her work. She was also the Director of Policy and Research for Save the Children, the Head of Oxfam International's Washington, D.C. office, and a national newspaper and radio journalist.





Mr. Ashley Jones is a serving British police officer and the executive director of trustees of the Senior Citizen Liaison Team Charity (SCLT), a Non-Government Organisation formed in 2009, which focuses upon safeguarding elder citizens from the growing threat of financial fraud and deception crime in the UK. The SCLT operates in strategic alliance with several British law enforcement organisations in England and Wales. He has been at the forefront of protective service innovation regarding the ageing population for a decade and is very active within the United Kingdom voluntary sector, holding a number of public appointments and trusteeships with third sector organisations, mostly focusing upon the senior community.



Prof. Erica Figueroa is the Secretary of Education of the government of Santa Fe city, Argentina. Her Secretary `s is on charge of develop formal and non-formal educational strategies, oriented to assist and involve community members in educational issues. Also, it plans and implements the Municipal Initial Education System, making possible the exercise of the right to education and children`s integral development. Professor in Letters, graduated for the Faculty of Humanities and Sciences, Universidad Nacional del Litoral. She was the first Director of the Initial Education Program of the Secretary of Education of Santa Fe (2011-2015) that implemented the Municipal Preschools. She is currently teacher at the Bachelor of Education in early childhood (FHUC-UNL) and used to teach in the subject "Sociology of Education". She has worked in several areas of the Universidad Nacional del Litoral, related to planning and innovation.





Ms. Gail Fairlamb is Director of Strategic Engagement, Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Gail Fairlamb is the Director of Strategic Engagement in the South Australian Department of the Premier and Cabinet. In this role Gail leads whole of government public participation work – engaging citizens, non-profits and businesses, to find new ideas to solve specific challenges. She is interested in innovation in government and better democracy, in particular, open government – where traditional models and processes are challenged by opening up to communities. Gail has worked in Australia and overseas in private enterprise and in her own business, and for the past ten years in government.



Mr. Daniel Carranza

Co-founder of DATA Uruguay (<http://datauy.org>), a civil society organization that creates tools and advocates for Open Data and Open Government locally and regionally through initiatives such as ABRELATAM. Consultant in digital tools and media for multilaterals, government, civil society and business. Specialized in Open Government and eGovernment. Organization of American States (OAS) Open Government Fellow.





Dr. Munira Aminova is a Director of Central Asian Research and Development Network; also lecturing at Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Free University of Brussels). Throughout her career she engaged in capacity building, policy analysis and policy advice to central and local governments in the countries of Central Asia. She led the joint taskforces between IIAS-UNDESA in the areas of Poverty Reduction and Local government. She engaged into developing a Model Code of Conduct for Public Service for CIS region with UNDESA. In her career as a civil servant Dr. Aminova worked in the Ministry of Finance and State Property Committee. Her areas of expertise extend to governance structures post transition, public administration reform, water governance, e-governance. Dr. Aminova has a PhD in Political Sciences from VUB, MBA in Public Service from University of Birmingham and BA in Business Management.



Ms. Andrea Vonkeman has worked in various capacities for UNHCR since 1995 and in different UNHCR operations ranging from complex emergencies in the great Lakes region in Africa to care and maintenance programmes in West Africa, East Africa, the Balkans and the Middle East, as well as with internally displaced people in Asia. Since 2011, she works as Senior Policy Officer in the Policy and Legal Support Unit of the UNHCR Bureau for Europe in Brussels, where she is responsible among other dossiers for unaccompanied and separated children.



Mr. Imad Malhas is Co-founded IrisGuard Inc. in 2005 the world-leader in Iris Recognition Technology with offices in the UK and the Middle East. He serves as the CEO and the Chief Technology Officer. He pioneered the concept of using Iris recognition to secure mass-transit national borders in the UAE and Jordan as well as large scale cross-country registration of millions of deployment of the world's first iris at bank ATM machines where customers use only their eyes to draw cash (no card and no pin) carrying out hundreds of millions of dollars of transactions. In 2013 he spearheaded the development of the EyePay® Platform, a unique payment platform in retail stores; the EyePay® is used by WFP at supermarkets and UNHCR on ATMs. It provides the unbanked with the financial inclusion they are most in need with great dignity. Married with three children, Imad is the co-inventor on many international patents and an Endeavor Entrepreneur since 2009.



Mr. Gregar M Leping is Chief Public Health Officer at the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and providing strategic direction of Environmental Health Department. He oversees provision of inspectorate services, waste management services and enforcement of Environmental Health related statutes. He is the Chief advisor to the Chief Executive Officer of Ghanzi District Council in all matters related to Environmental Health. Mr. Leping holds MSc. degree in Environmental Health.





Ms. Roshini Sen is currently the Secretary of the Department of Women and Child Development and Social Welfare, Government of West Bengal, India. Her department's work addresses the protection, equity and inclusion of populations that have been historically oppressed, neglected or excluded from development because of their gender, age, disability or situation. This includes children, women, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, transgender persons, homeless persons and persons with drug / alcohol addiction. Kanyashree Prakalpa, the Government of West Bengal's flagship scheme for the empowerment of adolescent girls, is implemented by her. An officer under the Indian Administrative Service, Ms. Sen has previously served as District Magistrate of South 24 Parganas and Hooghly, Special Secretary Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority and Deputy Chairman, Tea Board of India.



Ms. Siegrid Holler is Junior Partner at Instiglio NGO and leads the Service Delivery Unit at Instiglio, which seeks to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of organization, as well as add value to the stakeholders. She also manages a range of projects in Instiglio's Latin American and African portfolio. Ms. Holler formerly worked at the IFC, the World Bank's investment arm, at the Superintendency of Banking, Insurance and Private Pension Funds in Peru, and as an economic consultant for the World Bank and the Ministry of Education of Peru. She holds an MS in Development Management from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Instiglio NGO





Mr. Alejandro Becker Rojas is Capacity Building and Organizational Development Director at the Administrative Department of the Public Function, Republic of Colombia. He has 15 years of experience in decentralization, change management and capacity building strategies in the public sector. Designer and executor of results-oriented policies. Lecturer on topics such as Public management, Project Management and History of political ideas. Facilitator and moderator of workshops using visualization tools. Mr. Becker he worked as senior advisor of the German Development Cooperation Agency (GIZ) in the Regional Program for Support - Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Supreme Audit Institutions (OLACEFS) and for the Project for Supporting the General Controller's Office of the Republic of Colombia. He holds a B.A. in Government and International Relations from Universidad Externado de Colombia and a master of Public Management from the Universität Potsdam, Germany. Previous to his current position,

