

## 34<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council

### Panel discussion on climate change and the rights of the child

#### *Biographies of Speakers*

##### **Ms. Peggy Hicks (Introductory Statement), OHCHR**



Since January 2016, Peggy Hicks has served as director of the Thematic Engagement, Special Procedures and Right to Development Division at the UN's human rights office. From 2005 to 2015, she was global advocacy director at Human Rights Watch, where she was responsible for coordinating Human Rights Watch's advocacy team and providing direction to its advocacy worldwide. Ms. Hicks previously served as director of the Office of Returns and Communities in the UN mission in Kosovo and as Deputy High Representative for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She has also worked as the Director of Programs for the International Human Rights Law Group (now Global Rights), clinical professor of human rights and refugee law at the University of Minnesota Law School, and as an expert consultant for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Ms. Hicks is a graduate of Columbia Law School and the University of Michigan.

##### **H.E. Ms Maria Teresa Torres Almojuela (Moderator), Philippines**



H.E. Ms. Maria Teresa Torres Almojuela assumed her position as Ambassador and the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva in August 2016. Ambassador Almojuela has over 20 years of experience in the Philippine Foreign Service, having served in various capacities, including foreign assignments in Beijing and Vienna. In the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila, she has served as Director for North Asia of the Office of Asian and Pacific Affairs, Executive Director of the Maritime and Ocean Affairs Office and Senior Special Assistant to the Undersecretary for Policy. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, she worked as a Legislative Staff and Information Officer in the Office of the Senate President of the 9th Congress of the Philippines. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts in Communications (Journalism) from the University of the Philippines and Master of Public Policy from Oxford University.

## H.E. Mr. Ha Kim Ngoc, Viet Nam



H.E. Mr. Ha Kim Ngoc is the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, appointed in May 2013. Working in the Foreign Service since 1988, he has accumulated professional experience in bilateral diplomacy, particularly in relations between Viet Nam and the Americas. In the period of 1997-2000, he was sent to the Consulate General of Viet Nam in San Francisco as Deputy Consul General. From 2001 to March 2004, he assumed a variety of positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, notably the Head of the North America Division in the Americas Department, and as Deputy Director General of the Office. In the period of 2004-2007, he served as Counselor at the Embassy of Viet Nam in Japan. From August 2008 to August 2011, he held the position of

Director General, Secretary of Deputy Prime Minister and then Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam. He graduated in 1985 from the University of Diplomacy (now the Diplomatic Academy of Viet Nam). He obtained a Master of Arts in International Relations, the Diplomatic Academy of Viet Nam, and is also fluent in English and Russian.

## H.E. Mr. M. Shameem Ahsan, Bangladesh



H.E. Mr. M. Shameem Ahsan is the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations Office in Geneva. He is also the current Global coordinator of LDCs in the UN System, Member of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) representing Bangladesh, and Member of the Management Board of Advisory Centre for WTO Law, Geneva. Ambassador Shameem Ahsan is a career diplomat with 31 years of

service. He was appointed to his current position in Geneva in 2014 and prior to this he was the Ambassador of Bangladesh in Brazil and Iran and High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Brunei. Previously, he served in the Bangladesh Missions in New Delhi, Geneva, Kualalumpur and New York in various capacities. Mr Ahsan is a Medical Graduate of the University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh and holds a post-graduate “Diplôme d’études Supérieures Spécialisés (DESS)” in Diplomacy and Administration of International Organizations from the Jean Monnet-Sceaux Law Faculty of the University of Paris XI in 1988 and ‘Diplome de l’Institut’ from Institut International d’Administration Publique (IIAP), Paris, France.

## **Ms. Marilena Viviani, UNICEF**



Ms. Marilena Viviani has been appointed in late 2015 as Director of UNICEF Geneva Liaison Office, in the Public Partnerships Division. In this capacity, she's responsible for coordinating and leveraging UNICEF's strategic engagement in Geneva on children's issues with Member States, UN agencies and other key partners in areas cutting across UNICEF's work.

Her professional profile is enriched by almost 29 years of service in the UN system, including 25 years with UNICEF, with a good combination of field experience and global positions. She spent 18 years of her career in the Middle East and in Africa, including in emergency complex assignments, and 11 years in New York and Geneva Head Quarters, with different management and leadership positions, at multi-agency level (UNESCO, UNRWA, and OCHA, in addition to UNICEF).

Ms. Marilena Viviani is an Italian national. She holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Political Sciences/Development Studies from the University of Trieste, Italy, 1986 and a degree in Middle East Studies from the University of Venice, Italy, 1985.

## **Ms. Kirsten Sandberg, Committee on the Rights of the Child**



Ms. Kirsten Sandberg is a Norwegian jurist and expert on the rights of the child. She is a member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child since 2011, served as the Committee's chairperson 2013-2015 and is now its general rapporteur. She is a distinguished lawyer, researcher and international expert in the field of children's rights. She is a Professor of Law at the University of Oslo and has been a Visiting Fellow at the European University Institute in Florence and the University of Chicago.

Professor Sandberg has also lectured in women's and child law for lawyers from southern and eastern Africa in Oslo and Harare and on children's rights in Yunnan, China. As part of her research, she has co-edited a comprehensive study of the CRC and its implementation in Norway, and has published and lectured extensively on children's rights including the right of children to be heard, discrimination against children and the rights of children who are asylum-seekers. She has served as acting Justice in the Supreme Court of Norway and has worked in the Legal Department of the Norwegian Ministry of Justice.

## **Ms. Kehkashan Basu, Green Hope Foundation**



Ms. Kehkashan Basu is the founder of the Green Hope Foundation and winner of the 2016 International Children's Peace Prize. At just 16 years of age, Ms. Basu, has made an impact with her work to engage children and youth in sustainable development with a particular focus on mitigating climate change, promoting gender equality and social justice. She is the Youth Ambassador of World Future Council and has been working passionately for the rights of future generations for several years. In 2013, at the age of 12, she was elected for a two-year term as UNEP's (United Nations Environment Programme) Global Coordinator for Children & Youth and a member of its Major Groups Facilitating Committee. She is the youngest person and the first minor, ever, to be elected into this position. For her environmental advocacy at a global level, Ms. Basu has received international awards from UNCCD (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification) in 2012, the 2012 Korea Green Foundation award, the 2013 International Young Eco-Hero award from Action for Nature, USA & the 2014 Kids are Heroes, USA award, 2014 Global Educational Supplies Solutions award as Ambassador for the Environment, the 2014 Solar Pioneer Award, the 2014 Non-Resident Indian of the Year, 2015 Diana Award, 2016 International Children's Peace Prize and the 2016 Turner Social Change Prize.