Speakers Biographies

**HE Dr Miro Cerar** is the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia. He previously served as Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia from 2014 to 2018, when the Modern Centre Party (SMC), a political party he founded, won the 2014 parliamentary elections. Dr Cerar is a lawyer by training and from December 2010 to June 2012 was chairman of the Judicial Council, having previously served for 18 months as its deputy chairman. He was selected as one of the ten most influential lawyers in Slovenia on 13 occasions, and as Slovenia’s top legal expert every year between 2011 and 2014. Dr Cerar acted as a legal adviser to the National Assembly and other institutions for over two decades and is the author and co-author of numerous academic books and articles published at home and abroad. He forged a reputation for himself as a critical public thinker by emphasising the importance of neglected social values, a culture of tolerance and dialogue, and the need to raise the level of political and legal culture.

**H.E. Mohammed Habib Tijani** is the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Republic of Ghana. Before ascending to his current position in 2017, H.E. Tijani served as assistant-director in charge of monitoring and evaluation at the Central Gonja District Education Office, and was the municipal district chief executive for Yendi from 2001 to 2009. He has been an MP for the Yendi constituency since 2013.

**HE Luis Filipe Lopes Tavares** is the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Communities, and Defence of the Republic of Cabo Verde. Prior to his appointment, Minister Tavares directed and coordinated several projects in the Cape Verdean Public Administration both at central and local level, that were financed by institutions such as UNDP, World Bank and the European Union, as well as acting as consultant for Cape Verde of the Municipal Development Program. He was previously Professor at the National Institute of Administration and Management and at Jean Piaget University in Cape Verde. In 2016, Minister Tavares was awarded the title "Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite" by the President of the French Republic Nicolas Sarkosy.

**Mr Peter Toš, President, Club of Former Slovenian Ambassadors, Slovenia**

**Ms Martina Vuk** is State Secretary at the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia. For the past four and a half years, under two governments, she worked as a State Secretary at the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, and was Vice-President of the National Youth Council of Slovenia. As a Council of Europe certified trainer in human rights, she has worked with various non-government organisations, in particular on promoting human rights and gender equality. For the past three years, Ms Vuk has been heading the Women's Forum of the Social Democrats.
**Dr Marius Mensah** is a Research Fellow at the Law Faculty of the University of Maribor, and Founder of MCM Consulting, one of the fastest-growing digital services companies in Eastern Europe. He is the author of ECOWAS: Ecology, Nature Management, & International Law and has written more than 20 scientific articles in English, Russian and French. Dr Mensah’s fields of expertise include migration, environmental law, humanitarian law, climate change, food security and sustainable development. He is the co-founder of the African Girls Empowerment Academy (AGEA) and the Canada-Africa Business Academy (CABA), in partnership with the Global Family Business Institute of Canada.

**Madelein Mkunu** is the President of Leading Women of Africa, one of the most influential business women’s networks in Africa. She is the Director of Leadership & Investment Development-Africa (LIDA), a company that seeks to facilitate strategic partnership between Slovenia and African countries. As a gender strategist, Madelein has presented policy recommendations on various gender and development issues for numerous international platforms, including the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre, the China-Africa Business Council, and the Investment Climate and Business Environment Research Fund. She is a Professional Fellow with the U.S Department of State at Michigan State University on Women’s Economic Empowerment, Strengthening Leadership Capacity and Professional Skills.

**Antti Karhunen** has 25 years of experience in European affairs, first serving as a Finnish diplomat in Brussels, and since 1996 as a permanent official of the European Commission. He has been shaping EU’s development cooperation for the past decade, as Advisor and Deputy Head of the Private Office of Andris Piebalgs, the European Commissioner for Development between 2010 -2014, and thereafter leading a unit in charge of private sector and trade issues in the Commission’s Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development. Antti and his team work in the interface of EU’s public development policy and private sector activities, particularly on implementing the EU’s External Investment Plan (EIP). Among Antti’s key challenges are to help improve the investment climate in EU’s developing partner countries, engage with the business community in a structured dialogue, and work on EU’s aid for trade agenda, in order to achieve sustainable development impacts.

**Martha Chilongoshi** is a journalist who is passionate about probing the gender dynamics of information and communications technologies, working towards an information society that is informed by a gender perspective as a means to inclusive and sustainable development. She is one of two Zambian representatives for the Common Futures Conversations (CFC) project, a Chatham House online platform for communication among young people from Africa and Europe. As part of the CFC project, Martha is is working with 26 other representatives from 13 countries across Europe and Africa to shape dialogue and discuss key challenges facing young people from both continents at national and global level.

**Prof. Dr. Aleksandra Kanjuo Mrčela** is Professor of Economic Sociology and the Sociology of Work at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana. She is also Head of the Doctoral School and was previously Vice-Dean of the Faculty. Dr Mrčela’s teaching, research and consultancy activities are in the fields of industrial relations, gender and economy, ownership and post-privatisation changes in Slovene companies. She is President of the Slovenian Sociological Associate and a long-standing member of the European Commission’s Network of Experts in the Fields of Employment, Social Inclusion and Gender Equality Issues.

**Takyiwaa (Te chi wa) Manuh** is Emerita Professor of African Studies at the University of Ghana. Previously, she served as Director at the Social Development Policy Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in Ethiopia, and Professor of African Studies at the
University of Ghana, where she was also Director of the Institute of African Studies between 2002 and 2009. She holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in Law from the University of Ghana, Legon, and the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and a Ph.D. in Anthropology from Indiana University, Bloomington. Her research interests lie in African development; women’s rights and empowerment; contemporary African migrations, and African higher education systems, and she has published widely in those areas.

**Damir Kurtagic** is Academy Robert Bosch Fellow with the Chatham House Africa Programme. Damir’s research focuses on how the private sector in Central and Eastern Europe can be used to further engagement with sub-Saharan Africa, with a particular focus on the new European Investment Plan. Before joining Chatham House, Damir worked with UNDP in Bosnia & Herzegovina, and UNIDO HQ in Vienna on issues of regional and rural developments, as well as private-public partnerships in development. He also worked in Brussels for organised business groups at the EESC and on an EU Commission-funded development project.

**Raphael Obonyo** is the Executive Director of the Youth Congress, a premier youth-led organization in Kenya. Mr Obonyo has extensive experience of working in public policy, international development, political economy, gender, youth, governance and human rights, and he serves on the board of the World Bank’s Global Youth Network, Global Diplomatic Forum and Africa Leadership Institute. He is also a member of the UN Habitat’s Youth Advisory Board Alumni, Les Aspin Institute of Governance and Leadership and the Ford Foundation International Fellowship Program. Mr Obonyo is a TEDx fellow, and has authored and coauthored numerous books, including the Conversations about the Youth in Kenya. In 2019 he was named the recipient of an African Motivational Award and as one of the 100 most influential young Kenyans, and in 2018 was named one of the 100 most influential young Africans.

**Audu Maikori** is an entrepreneur, lawyer and creative industry consultant. He is the founder of Chocolate City Group – a media and entertainment company which includes Chocolate City Music – one of the biggest record labels in Africa and home to some of Africa’s biggest artists. He has been at the forefront of copyrights reform in Nigeria as well as promotion of the Afrobeats music genre globally. He sits on several boards including Recycle Points, Copyright Society of Nigeria, (COSON), Nigerian British Chamber of Commerce, Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) and recently joined the board of Unanimous Games, an Esports company based in New York. Audu is a passionate advocate for social justice and entrepreneurship as the key to economic empowerment.

**Hannah Forster** is the Executive Director of the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) based in Banjul, The Gambia. ACDHRS is a regional institution with the main objective of building and maintaining a human rights movement in Africa, to promote greater respect and observance of human rights and fundamental democratic principles. Hannah has worked with both the African and International Human Rights System for over two decades, and has extensive practical experience in the development of training and education programmes on Human Rights, Governance, Gender Equality and Conflict Management. She is an expert serving on the Committee on the Prevention of Torture in Africa of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights. She serves as a Steering Committee Member of the World Movement for Democracy and the Civil Council for the Community of Democracy and is the outgoing President of the African Democracy Forum.

**Mr Bob Dewar CMG** is an Associate Fellow of Africa Programme at Chatham House. Mr Dewar was formerly a UK diplomat and served predominantly in sub-Saharan Africa, including as High Commissioner to Nigeria and Permanent Representative to ECOWAS; Ambassador to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union and United Nations Economic Commission for
Africa; High Commissioner to Mozambique; and Ambassador to Madagascar. He was awarded a CMG in 2006 and is currently also a trustee of the British Red Cross.

**Mr Matej Marn** is currently Political Director/Director-General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia. Prior to this, Mr Marn served as Chargé d'Affaires and Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Slovenia to the United Nations in New York. He has had a long political career, having held various senior roles within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including Head of the Common Foreign and Security Policy Department and Acting Director General for Global and Multilateral Affairs.

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