

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Senator The Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells

**Minister for International Development and the Pacific
Senator for New South Wales since 2005**

Prior to her ministerial appointment, Senator The Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells was the Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs, with responsibilities in the Attorney-General, Immigration and Border Protection, and Social Services portfolios. She also served as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services, with special responsibility for multicultural affairs and settlement services.

She served as Ministerial Advisor to the Global Diversity Conference in 1995 and as a member of the Multicultural Advisory Committee for SOCOG, Australia's coordinating body for the 2000 Sydney Olympics. For 25 years before entering the Senate, she was involved in many different community organisations and is a strong advocate for the Australian-Italian community.

The Minister graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and European Languages, and a Bachelor of Laws. She was born in Wollongong, New South Wales, and is the daughter of Italian migrants.



Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie MBE

Director, Up!-Africa Ltd.

Chukwu-Emeka's development work spans the private sector, diaspora groups and migration, with a focus on policy, program design and practical interventions.

As cofounder of London-based African Foundation for Development (AFFORD) and Freetown-based AFFORD-SL, he advised African governments on private sector development strategies, including diaspora components. Among his assignments were post-Ebola transition and recovery strategies in Sierra Leone, and diaspora investment to support small-to-medium enterprises and trade. He served as senior adviser to governments of Mexico (2010) and Mauritius (2012) in their respective capacities as chairs of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD).

Chukwu-Emeka is of Sierra Leonean and Nigerian heritage, has lived in the UK for many years, and now operates transnationally between the UK and Sierra Leone. He was awarded a Member of the Order of the British Empire in 2016 for services to African diaspora communities in the UK.

Abstract: Diasporas as Transnational Actors

Diasporas have the potential (often realised) to have impacts on events in their countries of origin and location. This presentation will survey the field of diaspora and development from a UK/Europe-Africa perspective and underscore the significance of diasporas as potential private sector actors as well as the role of diaspora knowledge networks in (re)shaping national innovation systems, especially in emerging fields such as renewable energy.



Denise Cauchi

Executive Director and Founder, Diaspora Action Australia (DAA)

Led by Denise since its inception in 2008, DAA has been pioneering the field of diaspora engagement within the development and humanitarian sector in Australia. The organisation supports diaspora-led initiatives and promotes the inclusion of diasporas in policy discussions relating to their countries of origin.

Denise is a human rights and development advocate and practitioner, with a focus on armed conflict. She has worked to protect human rights defenders in Colombia with Peace Brigades International and as a human rights researcher with a Colombian women's NGO. She has also held positions with Oxfam Australia and the Human Rights Alliance of Australia.

She is currently a member of the Federal Advisory Group on Africa Australia Relations. She sits on the boards of the Australian Council for International Development and the International Council of Peace Brigades International. She holds a Master of Development Studies from University of Melbourne.

Abstract: Diaspora Initiatives in Australia: An overview

Diasporas are innovators in the development of humanitarian landscape. How are they operating in Australia today? What are their key strengths and challenges? What is the current state of engagement with other sectors such as government, NGOs and other actors?



Laurent de Boeck

Chief of Mission in Yemen, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Laurent's work in Yemen merges migration and development, and emergency response to migrants and displaced populations.

With more than 20 years of experience in migration issues, he has developed mechanisms, policies and frameworks to engage diaspora communities in long-term development and the reconstruction of their countries of origin. His work with IOM has taken him to Indonesia, Haiti and Madagascar where he played a key role in developing long-term programming strategies, post-earthquake, cyclone and tsunami contingency responses, and early warning and disaster-risk reduction activities. He was also involved in post-crisis reconstruction and development programmes in Rwanda, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo.

Laurent obtained a degree in public and international affairs, diplomacy, and international economy from the University of Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium) and the University of Tilburg (Netherlands), as well as a degree in social and economic sciences.

Abstract: Engaging with Diasporas in the Reconstruction and Transition of Countries of Origin after Man-Made or Natural Disaster - A Global Overview

It is important to recognise refugee-led initiatives in peacebuilding and humanitarian responses across various contexts. Focusing on their strengths and knowledge as development enablers in their countries of origin, how do we facilitate innovative and systematic approaches to establishing positive impact programs in partnership with diaspora communities?



Dr. Will Jones

Departmental Lecturer, University of Oxford

Besides lecturing in forced migration at the University of Oxford's Refugee Studies Centre, Will works with Alexander Betts on *The Nation Outside the State: Transnational Exile in the African State System* as part of the Leverhulme Oxford Diasporas Programme.

Will is also a lecturer in the politics of sub-Saharan Africa at Hertford College (Visiting School), Co-Convenor of the Oxford Central Africa Forum and a Junior Research Fellow at Balliol College. He is a former editor of the *St. Antony's International Review*, and contributor to reports by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative for submissions to the UN Human Rights Council and African Human Rights Commission.

Will completed his doctorate in politics at Balliol College on the post-genocidal reconstruction of the Rwandan state. His current research interests include the contemporary politics of the Great Lakes region, African diasporas, and the state building, authoritarianism and historical sociology of political elites.

Abstract: Challenging the State

For the nationals of authoritarian regimes, places beyond the state's borders become a vital space for politics, and for challenging incumbent regimes. So what explains when and how diasporas mobilise? What determines the vast array of different organisational strategies? Most importantly, when do they win?



Finau Heuifanga Limuloa

Humanitarian Diplomacy and Disaster Law Delegate, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Suva

Finau supports 14 governments in the Pacific region to strengthen their disaster-related legal frameworks. Her work during "peacetime" or before disaster strikes involves international humanitarian assistance, disaster risk reduction, shelter and housing, land, and property. She has also worked alongside governments in the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster.

In 2015, she received the National Presidential Medal by the President of Vanuatu for her services to the humanitarian response during Tropical Cyclone Pam. A former diplomat and international lawyer, Finau holds qualifications from Victoria University (New Zealand), Hong Kong University (Hong Kong SAR) and Oxford University (UK).

Abstract: Beyond Canned Tuna

Alternative ways for Pacific diaspora groups to support and facilitate humanitarian response having understood and navigated the political, social and cultural landscapes of two, oft-times very different, country contexts: their country of origin and their country of residence.



Jeremy Liyanage
Director, Bridging Lanka

Jeremy currently works on socio-economic projects in Mannar District to identify constructive roles for diaspora communities in post-conflict Sri Lanka. These projects aim to bridge ethnic, religious and geographic divides through people-inspired action.

For over 10 years, he has worked in senior policy positions in local governments in Victoria and Queensland. His primary focus has been to influence institutional mindset for increased social and economic inclusion, especially of marginalised people. He has worked with migrants, refugees, indigenous peoples, international students, prisoners, and more recently, asylum seekers in detention in ways that build greater consciousness, inner strength and capacity.

Jeremy holds a Bachelor of Arts (Semiotics), Diploma of Fine Arts (Etching), Grad Diploma of Education and Master of Social Planning. He recently abandoned a PhD in post-conflict reconciliation due to the demands of his “on the ground” activities in Sri Lanka and Australia.

Abstract: Transcending Dissention

The Sri Lankan diaspora in a ‘dialogue through action’ for reconciliation - the important role of the diaspora in being facilitators of peacebuilding and development.



HE Abel Guterres
Ambassador of Timor-Leste to Australia, New Zealand And Republic of Fiji

Just before the Indonesian occupation of Timor-Leste in 1975, Abel came to Australia as a refugee. He first returned to Timor-Leste in 1999 to take part in the UN-supervised referendum on independence. Abel advocated for the liberation of Timor-Leste as representative of Conselho Nacional de Resistencia Maubere for Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Island countries. During his years in Melbourne, Abel volunteered as a Timorese presenter and broadcaster for Community Radio 3CR.

His various diplomatic roles include the Desk of the nascent Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation for Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Islands, Deputy Director for Timor-Leste’s Independence Day celebration in 2002, acting Chief of Staff for former Timor-Leste Prime Minister Dr. José Ramos-Horta, and Director of Bilateral Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Abstract: The Role of the Diaspora in Nation Building

Drawing upon personal experience as a member of a diaspora community living in Australia during the times of the Indonesian occupation, this presentation examines the contribution made by the diaspora during the independence movement and the subsequent building of the new state.