

**SDG ACTION WEEKEND  
SEPTEMBER 2023**



# **“Towards a Rights-Centered Gender-Transformative Economy, including a new International Financial Architecture”**

**Organized by the Women's Major Group, with the support of UN Women**

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.un.org/en/conferences/SDGSummit2023/SDG-Action-Weekend/women>

The session will be livestreamed at:

[Towards a Rights-Centered Gender-Transformative Economy, including a new international financial architecture](#)

## **Speaker bios**

### **Moderator - H.E. Maria Fernanda Espinosa**

María Fernanda Espinosa was the President of the United Nations General Assembly 2018-2019, becoming the fourth woman and the first from Latin America and the Caribbean to hold the position. Maria Fernanda, a distinguished academic, diplomat, politician, poet, and linguist, has also served in high-level government positions, including as Ecuador's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Integration, and Minister of National Defense.

Maria Fernanda's expansive professional portfolio spanning over three decades includes roles in academia, NGOs, international organizations, and the government. With graduate studies in social sciences, anthropology, geography, and Amazonian studies, she has established herself as an expert in areas such as public policy, international relations, sustainable development, climate change, gender equality, and the rights of indigenous peoples.



She began her career working with indigenous communities in the Ecuadorian Amazon, and later transitioned to working in civil society organizations and academia. She honed her skills in multilateral diplomacy and international political affairs, with key roles at the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), where she served as an advisor on biodiversity and climate change policy, and later as regional director. She represented Ecuador at the United Nations in both New York (2008-2009) and Geneva (2014-2017), culminating in her historical tenure as the President of the United Nations General Assembly.

In her roles as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Integration (2007-2008 and 2017-2018) and Minister of National Defense (2012-2014), she played an instrumental part in leading international negotiations on climate change, establishing bilateral and multilateral agreements, and implementing significant reforms in Ecuador's armed forces, with a strong emphasis on human rights and humanitarian standards.

Today, Maria Fernanda continues to hold several influential positions in the global arena. These include Executive Director of Global Women Leaders for Change and Inclusion, member of the Board of Trustees of the International Crisis Group, and a member of the High-Level Advisory Council for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. She is also the Chair of the Board of Women in Global Health and a Commissioner to the World Commission on the Economics of Water.

Her tireless work and leadership were recognized in 2019 when the BBC listed her as one of the 100 most inspiring and influential women worldwide. An adept linguist, fluent in Spanish, French, and English, she continues to contribute significantly to international diplomacy and sustainable development.

### **Speakers (in order of appearance)**

#### **Sevidzem Ernestine Leikiki**

Sevidzem is a climate and gender activist from Cameroon's North-West region. She is a founding member and board chair of Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW) and works as the organization's Women Empowerment Officer.

The organization incorporates gender into solving local environmental problems and has received recognition locally, nationally, and globally for outstanding work in caring for nature, empowering communities on agroforestry techniques, forest conservation, and promoting gender equality.

Sevidzem has received numerous awards for her work over the years, and in 2020, she was named one of the BBC's 100 Women of the Year for "women who create lasting change." She was also named one of the TOP100 Young African Conservation Leaders for 2021.

#### **Maria Sjödin**

Prior to becoming Executive Director, Maria served as Outright's Deputy Executive Director, leading the work of the development and communications teams. In this position, they oversaw a period of extraordinary growth in visibility, diversification and increase in funding. They also launched



groundbreaking initiatives, such as Outright's COVID-19 Global LGBTIQ Emergency Fund and pioneering engagement with international businesses.

Maria previously served as Executive Director of RFSL, Sweden's largest LGBTIQ organization. While in this position, Maria established RFSL's international program, played a key role in ensuring that the human rights of LGBTIQ people become ingrained in the Swedish government's agenda for development and foreign affairs, advocated for marriage equality (achieved in 2009) and the abolishment of forced sterilization of trans people as a requirement for legal gender recognition (outlawed in 2013).

Maria has conducted leadership training for hundreds of LGBTIQ activists on topics including strength-based coaching and appreciative inquiry. They regularly provide expert opinions to governments, foundations, U.N. agencies and corporations.

Maria (they/she) is frequently quoted by the media, including by outlets like Time magazine and Thomson Reuters.

### **Dorodi Sharma**

Dorodi Sharma is Senior Advisor – Advocacy & Engagement at the International Disability Alliance (IDA), where she supports IDA's advocacy initiatives particularly on new and emerging issues. In the past she also led IDA's projects on inclusive education and inclusive employment, actively operationalizing innovative ways for meaningful participation of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities in development programming. Dorodi has 14 years of experience working with national and international OPDs, with and within the UN on disability inclusion. She holds a masters degree in communication and journalism, and another masters in public policy. She is fluent in English, Hindi, Assamese; understands and speaks Bengali, and has basic proficiency in French. She hails from the north-eastern part of India and has been living in Delhi for over a decade.

### **Naomi Nyamweya**

Naomi is a Research Officer at Malala Fund, where she conducts data-driven research and policy analysis to support Malala Fund's advocacy for girls' education.

### **Chenai Mukumba**

Chenai is recently appointed as the Executive Director of Tax Justice Network Africa, where she previously has the role of the Policy Research and Advocacy Manager. Currently based at the secretariat in Nairobi, Kenya, she was recently elected to sit on the board of ATAF's African Tax in Women Network and am also a member of the International Lawyers' Project Advisory Group,

Previously, Chenai worked as the Director of the Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS) International, Lusaka, a research and advocacy think tank with offices in Africa and Asia. Prior to this role, she worked as a Policy Analyst at CUTS' Centre for Trade, Economics and Environment in India; and worked at the World Trade Organization where I spent time in the Agriculture and Development Divisions.



Chenai has a Masters in International Relations from Wits University, Johannesburg.

### **Carola Mejia**

Carola Mejia is a Bolivian economist and climate justice activist, master in Economics of Development, with 16 years of experience as advisor, consultant and regional coordinator for public, private and international cooperation institutions and networks, with main experience in environmental projects, climate finance and sustainable development in Latin America. She currently works as Climate Finance Analyst for LATINDADD.

### **Terry Dale Ince**

Terry Dale Ince is a development specialist, social entrepreneur, and human rights advocate/activist. She is the founder and convener of CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago (CCoTT), a UN ECOSOC accredited volunteer non-governmental organization incorporated under the 1995 companies act of Trinidad and Tobago, focused on Advocacy, Education and Public Awareness on and for the sustainable implementation of the principles of the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Using a collaborative approach, CCoTT uses the recommendations advanced at state periodic reviews to ensure compliance within a national and human rights context. She is also the Managing Director of TDI and Associates, a Change and Development Management consulting practice which integrates the principles of change management into daily practice for behavior change.

Prior to joining the civil society sector, Terry enjoyed a career in business and technology where she managed territories in the private and public sectors while contributing her skills and knowledge to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in developed and developing countries and underserved communities.

She serves on the board of non-governmental organizations in Trinidad, Nigeria, and the USA. She is the current Chair of the National Steering Committee of the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Program (GEF SGP) (Trinidad & Tobago), the Spotlight Initiative Civil Society Regional Reference Group (Caribbean) and Team Leader on the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons working group, Prevention and Effective Identification of Victims and Witnesses Team (2022-2025). The working group is a three-year initiative of the Counter Trafficking Unit within the Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of National Security.

### **Maria Theresa (Tetet) Lauron**

Tetet is a development worker with 30 years' experience in multidisciplinary and multi-cultural settings at grassroots, national, regional and international levels. She is a policy and advocacy expert on diverse thematic areas including climate justice, sustainable development, financing for development, trade, human rights, gender and women's rights among others. She has served as co-chair in regional and global advocacy platforms and has represented civil society in different advocacy arenas.

Tetet is an out-of-the-box thinker/doer, passionate about the power of civil society and social movements to bring about much needed systemic transformations.



## Memory Kachambwa

Memory Zonde-Kachambwa is the executive director at the African Women's Development and Communication Network (known as FEMNET). Memory is a pan-African feminist, gender, and women's rights activist, with more than 20 years of experience developing, managing, and implementing programs promoting women and girls' rights regionally and globally. She is a seasoned cross-cultural thought leader and strategist bridging national, regional, global women's rights networks with policy leaders.

In 2016, Memory was instrumental in conceptualization of the current Economic Justice and Rights Program in FEMNET, and the inaugural African Feminist Maco-Economic Academy (AFMA). She sits on several working groups at a global, regional, and national levels and has represented her organization at high-level convenings as a keynote speaker, technical advisor, and representative of African Women civil society. She has engaged in mobilizing and building movements around trade, illicit financial flows, tax justice, care economy and natural resource governance and has co-created policy briefs and manifestos that include the Feminist Natural Resource Governance to Herald a Just Transition-Policy Imperatives, The Care Manifesto, and the African Feminist Post COVID-19 Economic Recovery statement. She is one of the co-leaders of the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights.

## Dr. Savitri Bisnath

Dr Savi Bisnath is the senior economist working with the [Surge Initiative at OHCHR](#), Geneva since August 2019. She leads the Surge team of economists. She is a feminist economist with over 20 years' experience working on issues related to international trade, development planning, economic justice, women's rights, and conflict and natural disasters in countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and the Middle East, as well as the UK and the US. Savi is accomplished at macroeconomic research and policy analysis, and has demonstrated ability to successfully bridge interests of diverse stakeholders, build teams, and foster collaborative efforts. She has worked with civil society, philanthropic and multilateral institutions.

## Diego Ubfal

Diego Ubfal is Senior Economic in the World Bank's Gender Group. He is part of the core team working on the World Bank Gender Strategy 2024-2030. He leads work on entrepreneurship and gender and coordinates the Federation of Gender Innovation Labs. He is also focal point for Latin American and the Caribbean and Europe and Central Asia, and as part of that role, provides and supports to use evidence from what works on fostering women empowerment to inform the uptake of effective policies. Before joining the World Bank, he was Assistant Professor at Bocconi University. He earned a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Buenos Aires, a master's degree from the University of San Andres, and a PhD from UCLA. He was a Fulbright Scholar and he taught courses on Impact Evaluation and Development Economics at Bocconi and Columbia University.

