Book Launch

Redefining Development: The Extraordinary Genesis of the Sustainable Development Goals
UNITAR New York Office

Background

The UNITAR New York office is pleased to host this event and book launch to support this significant look at the lessons that can be learned in the wake of the importance of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) quickly and steadily.

The event will be based on the book written by Paula Caballero with Patti Londoño, a team of authors who have worked directly with international public policies and the establishment of global agendas at the United Nations and at their national level. This book will be essential reading for professionals and policymakers involved in diplomacy, as well as students and scholars interested in international relations, global governance, negotiation, and sustainable development.

The book takes a practical look at the genesis of the SDGs. At this global inflection point that humanity is at, where diverse crises converge and there is growing hunger for actionable solutions, the incredible history of the SDG’s genesis can inspire and incite. In understanding how difficult it was to get agreement on the SDGs, the book forces a reflection on what it takes to drive and advance the transformations needed across our societies and economies. The fact that the SDGs were crafted against all odds should be a call to finally implementing them with renewed vigor and determination. And as we underline, we regard the SDG and the climate agendas as one. The years ahead call for transformation and disruption and the SDG journey demonstrates that it is possible. The book speaks to the plethora of constituencies committed to action across the SDGs and aims to incentivize many more once they understand the degree to which the SDGs broke through outdated notions of development.

By sharing for the first time the rich and improbable history of the SDGs, we also aim to seed more robust scholarship and research around a remarkable process in the history of international negotiations. The Rio+20 negotiations encompassed a multitude of tracks covering most of the main arenas of international development, and yet attention has been mostly focused on the process post-Rio under the Open Working Group. There is scant research and insights into the Rio+20 process itself, the negotiations and outcomes. The book aims to inspire research into the process and the strengths of informal diplomacy. Ours is a practitioner’s narrative grounded in a comprehensive database with most of the negotiation documents - a wealth of unique materials.
Date, format, and venue:

Tuesday, June 14th, 2022 from 10am to 11:30am EST. The event will be held in English at the ECOSOC Chamber.

Agenda

10:00 to 10:10 am  **Opening remarks**  
*Marco A. Suazo, Director, Head of the UNITAR New York Office*  
*Nikhil Seth, Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director of UNITAR (pre-recorded video statement)*

10:10 to 10:15 am  **Welcoming remarks**  
*H.E. Mr. Collen Kelapile, Permanent Representative of Botswana and President of ECOSOC*

10:15 to 10:30 am  **Colombian Legacy to the World (Keynote Speaker)**  
*Juan Manuel Santos, President of Colombia 2010-2018 and Nobel Peace Prize 2016 and author of the Foreword of the Book*

10:30 to 11:10 am  **The genesis of the SDGs and what it took to make them a reality**  
*Paula Caballero, co-author*  
*Patti Londoño, co-author*

11:10 to 11:30 am  **Comments and Questions**  
*Moderator: Paloma Durán, Full Professor at University Jaume I*
**Speakers Biographies:**

**Juan Manuel Santos**, President of Colombia 2010 to 2018, and the sole recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2016 for “his resolute efforts to bring the country’s more than 50-year-long civil war to an end”. He actively participated in Rio+20 Summit in 2012 where the SDGs were adopted and promoted and supporting his own team to make the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) the world agenda in 2015. He worked hard during his government to protect Colombian biodiversity and deal with climate change. For his work, he was awarded the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew International Medal and the Wildlife Conservation Society Theodore Roosevelt Award for Conservation Leadership. Furthermore, the National Geographic Society honored him for his for unwavering commitment to conservation and Conservation International awarded him the Global Visionary Award. Before being President, he was Minister of Foreign Trade, Minister of Finance and Minister of Defense. He graduated with honors from the Colombian Naval Academy in Cartagena. He holds a Business and Economics degree from the University of Kansas (1969) and did post-graduate studies at the London School of Economics (1973-1974), in the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and in Harvard University as a Fulbright fellow, where he obtained a Master’s in Public Administration from the Kennedy School of Government (1981). He was a Nieman Fellow (1987-1988) and Angelopoulos Global Public Leaders Fellow also at Harvard (2018-2019). He has been awarded honorary doctorate degrees in various universities, including La Sorbonne and the London School of Economics. He is currently the Chairman of the Board of COMPAZ Foundation, which he created to promote peace, protect the environment and fight poverty. He is also part of The Elders and the Global Commission on Drug Policy, as well as a member of the board of the International Crisis Group and the Wildlife Conservation Society. He is a visiting professor at Oxford University. In addition, he was recently elected as a member of the Rockefeller Foundation Board of Trustees, and he was appointed as Arnhold Distinguished Fellow by Conservation International.

**Nikhil Seth**, Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research. Before assuming the post of the UNITAR Executive Director, Nikhil Seth was the Director of the Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) at the United Nations Secretariat in New York. In this role he served as head of the Rio+20 secretariat and of the secretariat for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, spearheading the preparations for these conferences in Rio, Brazil, and Apia, Samoa. He was also closely engaged in coordinating and advancing their follow-up. Mr. Seth’s Division was also responsible for supporting the intergovernmental negotiations for the post-2015 development agenda, which was adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015 in September 2015. During his career with the United Nations since 1993, Mr. Seth has served as Special Assistant and Chief of Office to the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs (Sept 1993 – Jun 2001), Chief of the Policy Coordination Branch in the Division for ECOSOC Support and Coordination (Jun 2001 – Jan 2003), as Secretary of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Second Committee of the General Assembly (Feb 2003 – Aug 2006), and as Director of the DESA Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination (Aug 2006 – Aug 2011), where he
guided the ECOSOC’s work in implementing several new key mandates, including its Annual Ministerial Review and Development Cooperation Forum. Before joining the UN Secretariat, he was a delegate to the UN in the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations (Sep 1990 – Sep 1993) and involved with various UN conferences and summits including the Rio Summit on Environment and Development and the climate change related process. After joining the UN, he has been involved in the organization of the Copenhagen Summit on Social Development, the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development, the Mauritius Conference on Small Island Developing States, the Millennium Summit, World Summit on Sustainable Development and the UN World Summit, beside the Rio+20 Conference. He joined the Indian diplomatic service in 1980 and his diplomatic assignments included Geneva, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. Before joining the Indian diplomatic service, he worked as a Lecturer in Economics in St. Stephen College, Delhi University for 2 years (Aug 1977 – Sep 1979). Mr. Nikhil Seth holds a Masters degree in Economics from Delhi University.

His Excellency Collen Vixen Kelapile, elected the seventy-seventh President of the Economic and Social Council on 23 July 2021. Ambassador Vixen Kelapile is currently the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Botswana to the United Nations in New York. His Excellency Collen Vixen Kelapile has an accumulated career of 26 years in multilateral diplomacy, both as a government representative, intergovernmental expert and is also a former United Nations (UN) Secretariat staff member. Before his appointment in 2018 as Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN in New York, he was the Chief of Staff to the Executive-Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 2014 to 2018. From 2013 to 2014, he served as the Deputy Director in the Department of Africa and the Middle East at the Ministry of International Affairs and Cooperation of Botswana overseeing Central, East, North and West Africa as well as the Middle East. He was elected by the UN General Assembly as a member of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) from 2004 to 2012, where he served for three consecutive 3-year terms amounting to 9 years. During his tenure in the Committee, he served as Vice-Chair of the ACABQ for 3 years from 2008 to 2010 and subsequently as its Chair for 2 years from 2011 to 2012. Ambassador Kelapile was posted at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Botswana in New York from 1998 to 2003, where he rose through diplomatic ranks from Second Secretary to level of Counsellor prior to his successful election to ACABQ in 2003. As a member of the diplomatic staff of the Mission of Botswana in New York he was the delegate to the Administrative and Budgetary (or Fifth) Committee of the UN General Assembly for 6 years from 1998 to 2003. He was also delegate to other related bodies such as the Committee for Programmes and Coordination (CPC), which is a dual subsidiary Committee reporting to both the UN General Assembly and ECOSOC. During his tenure at the Mission of Botswana in New York Ambassador Kelapile also simultaneously served as focal point on the Legal (or Sixth) Committee of the UN General Assembly, coinciding also with the time of the elaboration of the Rome Statute on the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC).
He served in the Bureau of the Fifth Committee as the Vice-Chair at the 55th Session of the General Assembly in 2000/2001, and subsequently as the Vice-Chair of the CPC at its 42nd Session in 2002. He was the Coordinator of the African Group of experts in the Fifth Committee from 2001 to 2003. In conjunction with his present position as Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN in New York, he is also concurrently Botswana’s Ambassador to Cuba and the High Commissioner to Jamaica, on a non-resident basis. Ambassador Kelapile joined the Ministry of International Affairs and Cooperation in 1995 as Desk Officer for the UN, soon after graduating with a Bachelor’s Degree (Political Science and Public Administration) from the University of Botswana in the same year. Among other diplomatic career capacity-building and leadership development, Ambassador Kelapile also received professional diplomatic training at the Foreign Service Institute in New Delhi, India, in 1996. Ambassador Kelapile was Born in Maitengwe, Botswana, on 10 July, 1968. He is married with one son.

Paula Caballero is widely recognized as the lead proponent of the Sustainable Development Goals, a process she led while serving as Director for Economic, Social and Environmental Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia. She has received several awards in recognition of her role in delivering the SDGs to lead the international development agenda. She has a long-standing trajectory in the field of sustainable development, including service as Senior Director at the World Bank; Global Director for Climate at the World Resources Institute; Energy and Environment Unit for Latin America & Caribbean at UNDP; Managing Director of the Lands for Life Program at Rare and currently as Regional Managing Director, Latin America at TNC, as well as working with NGOs, academia, media, and the private sector.

Patti Londoño has combined an academic career with public service. Professor and researcher of International Affairs at the Faculty of Government, Finance and International Relations of the University Externado de Colombia, where she authored and co-authored in several publications on a range of international affairs issues. She has served the Colombian Government in a range of capacities including tenures at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, both at the Colombian Mission to the United Nations in New York (1993-1995 and 2002-2006) and at the Ministry’s headquarters in Bogota (1996-1999 and 2006-2009, 2010-2018). During the two-term administration of President Juan Manuel Santos she served as Deputy Minister of Multilateral Affairs (2010-2013) and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (2013-2018). Currently, she is an independent consultant on United Nations affairs.

Marco Suazo is the Head of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research New York Office (UNITAR-NYO) and Senior Advisor to the Executive Director of UNITAR since October 2015. Mr. Suazo is a career diplomat and former Ambassador who served as Deputy Permanent Representative of Honduras to the United Nations in New York. During his tour of duty in the United Nations for 27 years, Mr. Suazo served as Chair of two of the Main Committees of the General Assembly. In 2002, he chaired the Second Committee on Economic and Financial issues during the 57th session of the General Assembly (throughout this session, the Office of Finance for Development was created in the United Nations Secretariat, following the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development); and in 2008, he chaired the First Committee on Disarmament and International Security during the 63rd session of the General Assembly.
Mr. Suazo has served as representative of Honduras in the Security Council 1995-1996 as political coordinator and after as an Advisor in the Public Administration Division at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA); ex officio member at the United Nations Foundation Executive Board; Deputy Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Honduras; and Minister Counsellor in the Embassy of Honduras in Managua, Nicaragua.