



Biographies for participants in order of programme

High-Level Round Table 2

Addressing progress and assessing gaps and challenges in the implementation of the commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and its Programme of Action, and giving momentum towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Wednesday, 5 November 2025 - 10:00am- 1:00pm



Co-Chair:

Ms. Roxana Mînzatu

European Commission Executive Vice-President for Social Rights and Skills, Quality Jobs and Preparedness, European Union

She leads work to strengthen Europe's human capital by advancing social rights, closing skills and labour gaps, ensuring quality jobs and fair transitions, promoting education and equality, supporting youth, tackling poverty, and fostering lifelong learning and workforce adaptability. She also guides

the work to embed a new culture of preparedness to help people and societies adapt to change and to risks that exist in our society. In June 2024, Ms Mînzatu was elected to the European Parliament. She previously served in the Romanian government as Minister of European Funds and Secretary of State for Programs Financed by Public and European Funds. From 2016 to 2020, Ms Mînzatu was a Member of the Romanian Parliament. In 2015, she was appointed President of the Romanian National Agency for Public Procurement. Her political career began in 2004 as a county councilor in her home county of Brasov, later serving as Deputy Prefect. Ms Mînzatu holds a BA in Political Science (2002) from the University of Bucharest and a Master's in European Integration (2005) from the University Dimitrie Cantemir.



Co-Chair:

H.E. Dr. Geoffrey Hanley

Deputy Prime Minister, St Kitts and Nevis

Dr. Geoffrey Hanley is the current Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Youth Empowerment, Housing & Human Settlement, Ecclesiastical & Faith-Based Affairs, Social Development, Gender Affairs, Aging and Disabilities. He gave 28 years of exemplary service in the Public Sector as a teacher, an officer in the Ministry of Community Affairs, Youth and Culture, Youth Director, the Director of the People's Employment Programme (P.E.P) and as a Primary School Principal before he retired in 2016. In 2001, he completed his bachelor's degree in Psychology at the Florida Memorial College and obtained. He has held senior positions in government including Director of the Department of Youth Empowerment, manager of the People's Employment Program (P.E.P.) H.E Hanley has a doctoral degree in Leadership and Executive Management. He is the founder of the St. Kitts National Youth Parliamentary Association (SKNYPA), formed in 2001. He was also a founding member of the Basseterre Leo Club. He has been a Scout all his life and now serves as the Deputy Scout Commissioner. Mr. Hanley also has a special place in his heart for the elderly.



Keynote Speaker:

Ms. Amina J. Mohammed

Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group

Prior to her appointment, Ms. Mohammed served as Minister of Environment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria where she steered the country's efforts on climate action and efforts to protect the natural environment. Ms. Mohammed first joined the United Nations in 2012 as Special Adviser to former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon with the responsibility for post-2015 development planning. She led the process that resulted in global agreement around the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the creation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ms. Mohammed began her career working on the design of schools and hospitals in Nigeria. She served as an advocate focused on increasing access to education and other social services, before moving into the public sector, where she rose to the position of adviser to four successive Presidents on poverty, public sector reform, and sustainable development.

Ms. Mohammed has been conferred several honorary doctorates and has served as an adjunct professor, lecturing on international development. The recipient of various global awards, Ms. Mohammed has served on numerous international advisory boards and panels. She is the mother of six children and has five grandchildren.



Keynote Speaker:

Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana

Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana was appointed Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) on 13 September 2018. Prior to joining ESCAP, Ms. Alisjahbana was Professor of Economics at Universitas Padjadjaran in Bandung, Indonesia, a position she assumed in 2005. She joined Universitas Padjadjaran as a lecturer in 1988. Since 2016, she has served as Director for the Center for Sustainable Development Goals Studies at Universitas Padjadjaran and Vice Chair of the Indonesian Academy of Sciences. Among her notable achievements, she serves on the Governing Board of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), and member of the Indonesian Academy of Sciences (Akademi Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia - AIPI), the Forum of Statistics Community (Forum Masyarakat Statistik or Advisory Council of the Indonesian Statistics), the International Advisory Board of the Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies and Council Member of the Regional Science Association International (RSAI). From 2009 to 2014, she was Minister of National Development Planning and the Head of the National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS), Indonesia. She served as Co-chair of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation from 2012 to 2014. From 2009 to 2014, she was Alternate Governor of the World Bank and Alternate Governor of the Asian Development Bank representing the government of Indonesia. In 2016, she was a member of the High Level Independent Team of Advisors to support the ECOSOC Dialogue on the longer term positioning of the United Nations Development System in the context of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. Ms. Alisjahbana earned her Bachelor degree in Economics and Development Studies from Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia, a Masters degree in Economics from Northwestern University, USA and a Ph.D in Economics from University of Washington, USA.



Panellist:

H.E. Mr. Guylain Nyembo Mbwzya

Minister of State, Minister of Planning and Coordination of Development Aid, Democratic Republic of Congo

He is Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Planning of the Democratic Republic of Congo, a position to which he was appointed as part of the Suminwa government in May 2024. In 2019, he was appointed Deputy Chief of Staff to President Félix Tshisekedi. In January 2021, Guylain Nyembo was appointed chief of staff to Félix Tshisekedi and served until May 2024.

Guylain Nyembo also became Minister of State, Minister of Planning and Coordination for Development Assistance in the Suminwa II government appointed in August 2025. He studied economics and management at the University of Mons-Hainaut, Belgium, where he obtained a bachelor's degree[1]. Guylain Nyembo then worked in finance.



Panellist:

H.E. Ms. Sanni Grahn-Laasonen

Minister for Social Security, Finland

She is responsible for matters covered by the Department for Insurance and Social Security, the Department for Work and Gender Equality and the Department for Safety, Security and Health.

Sanni Grahn-Laasonen was born in Forssa, Finland, to Kari Grahn, the editor-in-chief of the local newspaper Forssan Lehti. She attended the University of Helsinki, earning a Master's degree in 2011.

In 2011, Grahn-Laasonen was elected to the Finnish Parliament, representing the National Coalition Party. She received a significant number of votes, with 5,866 supporters. Minister of the Environment From September 24, 2014, to May 29, 2015, Grahn-Laasonen served as the Minister of the Environment in the government led by Prime Minister Alexander Stubb. Minister of Education and Culture.

On May 29, 2015, Grahn-Laasonen was appointed Minister of Education and Culture in the government of Prime Minister Juha Sipilä. She held this position until 2017.



Panellist:

H.E. Ms. Buthaina Bint Ali Al Jabr Al Nuaimi

Minister of Social Development and Family, Qatar

Her Excellency Buthaina bint Ali Al Jabr Al Nuaimi was appointed Minister of Social Development and Family in November 2024.

Her Excellency has also held the positions of Minister of Education and Higher Education from October 2021 until November 2024. In that same

year, she was appointed President of the National Committee for Education, Culture and Science.

Throughout her career spanning over 20 years, HE Buthaina was able to amass several achievements and attain invaluable experience in various fields of education. She joined the Qatar Foundation in 2006 and held several leadership positions the most recent position was President of Pre-University Education from 2016 until 2021. She developed various programmes, established specialised schools and centres, served in several national education committees and trustee boards for schools and universities. Earlier in her career, HE Buthaina was a teacher at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education schools. Her Excellency holds an EMBA from HEC Paris and a bachelor's degree in Arts and Education, majoring in English from Qatar University.



Panellist:

Mr. Matthias Thorns

Vice-President to and Employers' Group spokesperson at the ILO, International Organisation of Employers (IOE)

Matthias Thorns is the IOE Vice-President to the ILO and Employers' Group spokesperson at the ILO. Mr. Thorns has held key positions within IOE, advancing from Advisor to Deputy Secretary-General. His experience with employers' organisations at the national, regional, and global levels has given him valuable insights into their challenges and needs. He also served as a member of the ILO Director-General's transition team in 2022. Overall Mr. Thorns has extensive leadership experience in multicultural contexts and international organisations. Strong expertise in Human Rights & Responsible Business Conduct, Labor Relations, Stakeholder Engagement and Employment Policies. In excess of 20 years of experience in advocacy and negotiating at the UN, OECD, EU and national institutions level as well as G20 and G7. He is highly experienced in technical cooperation, including project work.



Panellist:

Prof. Sabina Alkire

Director, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and Professor of Poverty and Human Development

Sabina Alkire is the Professor of Poverty and Human Development and directs the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) at the University of Oxford. Together with Professor James Foster, Sabina developed the Alkire-Foster (AF) method for measuring multidimensional poverty. At OPHI this has been implemented empirically to produce the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI).

Sabina Alkire was elected a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in the UK in 2021 and was voted one of the top 100 thinkers by Forbes magazine in 2010. She is currently an Ordinary Academician at the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences and sits on the Expert Panel of the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG). She is a member of the Committee for Development Policy (CDP), a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN.

Previously, she worked at George Washington University, Harvard University, the Human Security Commission, and the World Bank. She has a DPhil in Economics from the University of Oxford.



Panellist:

Ms. Inger Ashing

Chief Executive Officer, Save the Children International

Inger Ashing is Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Save the Children International - the world's largest independent organisation working to ensure every child survives, learns and is protected. A respected child rights activist, she set up her own youth organisation at the age of 12, working against racism and violence at county level. She has been associated with Save the Children for more than 25 years. Previously Inger was Director General at the Swedish Agency against

Segregation, a Swedish government agency to reduce segregation and social inequality. She has served as the National Coordinator for Youth Not in Education or Employment, Deputy Director General of the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society and the CEO of the Global Child Forum. Inger is also a member of the Ethics Council at The Swedish Migration Agency.

She has been an expert to and board member of several authorities and committees such as the Delegation for Human Rights, the Swedish National Knowledge Centre on Violence against Children, the Delegation for the Employment of Young People and Newly Arrived Migrants, the Swedish Enforcement Authority, the National Board of Institutional Care, and the Monitoring Committee for The European Social Fund. She served as Chair of 'Joining Forces' - an alliance of the six largest child-focused international NGOs, is a Principal for the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) and was appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General as a member of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement Lead Group. She is a Founder Director on the Board of Save the Children Global Ventures to leverage new finance models and catalyse private sector investment with the goal of transforming the lives of the world's most disadvantaged children and their communities. You can follow her on X at @SaveCEO_Intl.



Lead discussant:

Prof. Kaushik Basu

Professor at Cornell University and co-chair of the UN Expert Group on beyond GDP

Professor Basu is currently teaching at the Economics and Carl Marks Professor of International Studies at the Department of Economics and SC Johnson Graduate School of Management, Cornell University, Ithaca and New York. He is also a nonresident senior fellow in the Global Economy and Development program. He is also a professor of economics and Carl Marks professor at Cornell University; and former chief economist of the World Bank and chief economic adviser to the Indian Government. He currently serves as President of the International Economic Association. Basu's research interest spans development economics, welfare economics, game theory, and industrial organization. As a policymaker, he was engaged in macro fiscal policymaking, multilateral policy coordination, and development policy work in several continents. Basu was a professor at the Delhi School of Economics, where in 1992 he founded the Centre for Development Economics and served as its first Executive Director. He is also a founding member of the Madras School of Economics. He was the fourth President of the Human Development and Capabilities Association. He has held advisory posts with the ILO, the Reserve Bank of India, and was a member of the steering committee of the Expert Group of Development Issues set up by the Swedish Government. He has also served as member of the Board of Directors of the Exim Bank of India. Basu is the author of "An Economist in the Real World" and "The Republic of Beliefs," among other books. He is a contributor to Project Syndicate and Mint, and has contributed popular articles to magazines and newspapers, such as The New York Times, Scientific American, India Today, and Business Standard. He also wrote a regular column for BBC News Online and has appeared on various television programs including CNN (USA), NDTV and CNBC (India), and BBC. He holds a B.A. in Economics from St. Stephen's College, Delhi University, an M.Sc. in Economics from the London School of Economics, a Ph.D. of Economics, from the London School of Economics, and several honorary degrees, including doctorates from IIT Bombay, Fordham University New York, Bath University, England, and the University of Florence.



Lead discussant:

Ms. Diene Keita

Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Ms. Diene Keita is the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

She provides overall leadership and strategic direction to the organization in its mission to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled. Ms. Keita has more than three decades of distinguished service in the international civil service, diplomacy, and government. From 2020 she served as United Nations Assistant-Secretary-General and Deputy Executive

Director (Programme) until July 2025, when she was designated as Acting Executive Director of UNFPA.

Ms. Keita previously served as Minister of International Cooperation and African Integration of the Republic of Guinea. Ms. Keita holds a Doctorate in Law (summa cum laude), a Diplôme d'Études Approfondies (DEA) in International Economics and Development Law, and a Diplôme d'Études Supérieures Spécialisées (DESS) in International Relations, all from the University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. She is fluent in English, French, and Italian.