

COMMISSION for SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

United Nations Headquarters, New York

Bios of Speakers

Panel discussion on Emerging Issues

“Policies to bolster social resilience in the context of more frequent and complex crises”

Wednesday, 12 February, 10:00 am – 11:30 am, Conference room 4

Moderator:

**Ms. Angela Chomba
Kawandami**



Ms. Angela Chomba Kawandami serves as the Permanent Secretary, overseeing the implementation of essential social protection services in Zambia, including Community Development, Social Welfare, and Child Development. In this role, Ms. Kawandami dedicated to improving the living standards of the poor and vulnerable, fostering inclusive and sustainable human development.

A key aspect of Ms. Kawandami’s responsibilities includes coordinating the implementation of social protection programmes within the Human and Social Development cluster of the National Development Plan, which outlines Zambia’s strategic development priorities. Passionate about social protection, Ms. Kawandami views it as the cornerstone of Zambia’s development agenda, playing a crucial role in building citizens’ resilience and reducing vulnerabilities, poverty, and risks.

With a strong academic foundation, Ms. Kawandami has studied designing and implementing Adaptive Social Protection Systems with the Economic Policy Research Institute and has completed the World Bank Core Course on Adaptive Social Protection. Additionally, Ms. Kawandami is an active member of the World Bank’s global community of practice for government leaders.

Prior to the current role, Ms. Kawandami served as Permanent Secretary-Special Duties under Cabinet Office. Beyond government, Ms. Kawandami has extensive experience in the banking and energy sectors, further enhancing leadership capabilities and strategic expertise.

Mr. Michael Woolcock



Mr. Michael Woolcock is Lead Social Scientist in the World Bank's Development Research Group, where he has worked since 1998. For nineteen of these years he has also been an Adjunct Lecturer in Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School. His research focuses on strategies for enhancing state capability for implementation, on crafting more effective interaction between informal and formal justice systems, and on using mixed methods to better understand the effectiveness of "complex" development interventions.

In addition to more than 100 journal articles and book chapters, he is the co-author or co-editor of fourteen books, including *Contesting Development: Participatory Projects and Local Conflict Dynamics in Indonesia* (with Patrick Barron and Rachael Diprose; Yale University Press 2011 – a co-recipient of the 2012 best book prize by the American Sociological Association's section on international development), *Building State Capability: Evidence, Analysis, Action* (with Matt Andrews and Lant Pritchett; Oxford University Press 2017), and co-lead author (with Samuel Freije-Rodriguez) of the World Bank's *Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report 2020: Reversals of Fortune*. An Australian national, he has an MA and Ph.D. in comparative-historical sociology from Brown University.

Ms. Obiageli "Oby" Ezekwesili



Ms. Obiageli "Oby" Ezekwesili is the President of Human Capital Africa (HCA), the Founder of School of Politics Policy and Governance (TheSPPG.org) and Senior Economic Adviser for Africa Economic Development Policy Initiative (AEDPI). She is the Founder and Chairperson of SPPG (School of Politics, Policy, and Governance), established by the #FixPolitics Initiative, which she also co-chairs. Ezekwesili is a former Vice President of the World Bank, Africa Region. She was a Minister of Education and also of Mineral Resources in Nigeria. Ezekwesili is the Co-Convener of the #BringBackOurGirls Campaign. She was a Presidential Candidate in the 2019 election in Nigeria.

Ms. Ezekwesili was a Senior Fellow at the Yale Jackson Institute for Global Affairs, USA, and was also a Richard von Weizsäcker Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin, Germany. Ms. Ezekwesili is currently the Board Chair of Women Political Leaders (WPL), Brussels.

Mr. Marek Kaminski



Mr. Marek Kamiński is a globally renowned explorer, entrepreneur, and social innovator, celebrated as the first person to reach both the North and South Poles in a single year without external support. This extraordinary achievement, recognized by the Guinness World Records, shaped his understanding of resilience—not merely as physical endurance but as a mental strength that can be cultivated to overcome life’s challenges.

During his expeditions, Mr. Kamiński realized that “it’s not the legs that conquer the poles, but the mind.” This profound insight inspired him to dedicate his life to promoting mental resilience as a cornerstone of prevention in mental health and as a foundation for individual and societal well-being.

As the founder of the Marek Kamiński Foundation and the Kamiński Academy, he has pioneered transformative programmes such as Life Plan Academy, which equips young people with tools to build mental resilience, overcome adversity, and develop leadership skills. His foundation focuses on prevention by supporting children and youth from underserved communities and those at risk of mental health challenges.

Mr. Kamiński’s work aligns closely with advancing social resilience and the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. His initiatives demonstrate how fostering resilience, particularly as a form of prevention, can drive inclusive growth, enhance mental health, and strengthen societies in an era defined by frequent and complex crises. His unwavering commitment to these principles makes him a valuable contributor to discussions on social policies designed to leave no one behind.

Mr. Meir Bing



Mr. Meir Bing is the CEO of the Open University in Israel, in which a significant portion of the students are the first in their families to pursue higher education. Prior to this role, he served as the CEO of the Ministry of Social Equity, working on policies affecting minority groups, including religious and ethnical minorities and LGBT persons, persons with disability, Holocaust survivors, ageing population and more.

During his tenure, the Ministry has led many programmes in collaboration with civil society organizations and has specific experience in response and resilience in times of crises.