

Item 9. Thematic session: Closing the gender gap: Effective policies to deliver on SDGs in the UNECE region

Biographies of moderator and panellists

Moderator: Ms Ruth Zugman Do Coutto, Head, Climate Mitigation Branch, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)



Ms. Ruth Do Coutto has more than 25 years of professional experience in the field of environmental, climate, and chemicals policy and programme development and management, most of it in UNEP. Currently serving as the Chief of the Mitigation Branch in UNEP's Climate Change Division, she leads teams in the areas of energy efficiency, cooling, buildings, cities, climate finance, technology, methane reduction, food waste, transparency, NDCs, and vertical funds.

Ms. Do Coutto has previously fulfilled multiple management positions in UNEP, such as manager of the GEF and GCF mitigation portfolios, Division programme and resource mobilization coordinator, and Safer Production Initiative lead. Prior to UNEP, she worked for the Environmental Agency of the State of Sao Paulo (CETESB), Brazil, on accident prevention and preparedness of industrial activities. Ms. Do Coutto is a Chemical Engineer by training with a post-graduate degree in pollution prevention from the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Panellists:**Ms. Ulla Saar, Deputy Secretary-General of Labour from Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications of Estonia**

Ms. Saar is a seasoned legal and policy expert with over a decade of experience, currently serving as the Deputy Secretary of Labour at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications in Estonia. Her career is distinguished by a strong emphasis on strategic leadership, guiding multidisciplinary teams, and driving the development and implementation of national and European Union policies. Ms. Saar's work involves coordinating cross-departmental initiatives, ensuring strategic objectives are met, and aligning efforts with broader economic and social goals.

Networking and building strong relationships have been key components of Ms. Saar's work. From representing Estonia in high-level EU negotiations to liaising with interest groups and non-ministerial institutions, she excels at connecting with diverse stakeholders to drive initiatives forward. Her international experience, including roles with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Commission, has further honed her ability to navigate complex, multicultural environments.

Backed by an extensive academic background, including master's degrees in law, gender studies, and theology, Ms. Saar brings a well-rounded perspective to her work. She is passionate about creating and implementing policies that improve labour conditions and social welfare, leveraging her strategic leadership, teamwork, and networking skills to make a meaningful impact on both a national and international scale.

Ms. Katri Viinikka, Ambassador for Gender Equality at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland



Ambassador Katri Viinikka has been serving as the Ambassador for Gender Equality at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland since September 1, 2018. Prior to this, she was the Ambassador of Finland to the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Permanent Representative of Finland to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) from 2015 to 2018. Ambassador Viinikka has held various positions within the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, including Director for United Nations and General Global Affairs at the Political Department, Chief of Cabinet of

the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and serving at Finnish embassies in Brussels, Berlin, and Bonn. She began her career at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland in 1992.

Ms. Stéphanie Lachat, Co-Director of the Federal Bureau for Equality between Women and Men, Switzerland



Ms. Stéphanie Lachat is the Co-Director of the Federal Office for Equality between Women and Men, a position she has held since September 2024. Prior to this role, she served as a Strategic Advisor for the State of Neuchâtel's Department of Employment and Social Cohesion from January 2021 to September 2024. Ms. Lachat's career also includes significant experience in the private sector, where she worked for Longines Watch Co. Francillon Ltd. as the International Communications and Heritage Manager. In this role, she was

responsible for both traditional and digital communication of the brand and the promotion of its heritage.

Ms. Lachat was an Associate Researcher at the University of St. Gallen from July 2010 to June 2013, where she completed her doctoral thesis in economic and social sciences, titled "Workers, housewives, mothers: a century of articulation of private and professional lives in the Swiss watch industry (1870-1970)." Earlier in her career, she served as the Director of the Memories of Here Foundation from October 1999 to August 2003, where she was instrumental in the creation, installation, and development of the Bernese Jura Research and Documentation Center, now recognized as a centre of expertise in regional history.

Ms. Leyla Hasanova, COP29 Presidency Youth Climate Champion Chairperson, NAM Youth Organization, Azerbaijan



Ms. Leyla Hasanova is the Youth Climate Champion for COP29 Azerbaijan and the Chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement Youth Organization. She has previously worked as Head of the Secretariat of the Non-Aligned Movement Youth Organization and Program Coordinator at the Institute for Development and Diplomacy at ADA University.

Ms. Hasanova holds a master's degree in public administration and graduated from the United National System Staff College (UNSSC) and the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR). In her role as Youth Climate Champion, she aims to amplify the voices of youth-led and youth-focused organizations to ensure that they are mainstreamed into climate diplomacy and the COP process.

Additionally, she works with YOUNGO, the official children and youth constituency of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to empower children and youth and promote youth participation in climate action.

Mr. Nabil Gangi, FAO Deputy Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia



Mr. Nabil Gangi, a national of Canada, has a background in engineering (Ain Shams University in Cairo), project and financial management (American University of Cairo) and business administration (Henley Management College and Brunel University in the United Kingdom).

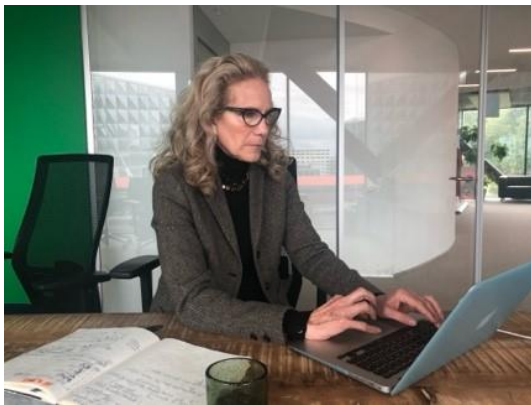
Mr. Gangi held the same post in FAO's Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa in Cairo, his city of birth. Before that, he headed the Organization's Shared Services Centre in Budapest, providing support to FAO's

backbone operations, including human resources, financial servicing, and asset and travel management.

During his career with FAO Mr. Gangi assumed senior-level positions in its headquarters in Rome, managed staff benefits, pensions, human resources, and social security for Rome-based UN agencies.

Prior to joining the United Nations, he held senior management positions with multilateral and non-governmental organizations, managing programmes and projects funded by the European Union and the United States Agency for International Development.

Ms. Caitlin Kraft-Buchman, CEO and Founder of Women at the Table, Switzerland



Ms. Caitlin Kraft-Buchman is the CEO/Founder of Women at the Table, a gender equality and systems change civil society organization (CSO) based in Switzerland, and Co-Founder/Leader of the <A+> Alliance for Inclusive Algorithms, a global multidisciplinary coalition of academics, activists, and technologists prototyping the future of artificial intelligence and automated decision-making to accelerate gender equality

through technology and innovation.

Ms. Kraft-Buchman was the co-chair of the Expert Group for the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67) in 2023, which had its first-ever priority theme on Technology and Innovation.

She leads the <AI & Equality> Human Rights Toolbox initiative, an educational platform that supports a global community working towards a human rights-based approach to AI, emphasizing equity and inclusion at the core of the code.

Ms. Kraft-Buchman is also the co-founder of the International Gender Champions (IGC), with hubs in Geneva, New York, Vienna, Nairobi, The Hague, and Paris. The IGC brings together female and male heads of organizations, including the UN Secretary-General, to break down gender barriers. She serves on the IGC Global Board and co-leads the new IGC Impact Group on Digital and New Emerging Technologies alongside Doreen Bogdan, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union.

Ms. Kraft-Buchman is a member of the Network of Experts for the UN Secretary-General's AI Advisory Body, Co-Chair of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) Gender Advisory Board, a member of UNESCO's WomenForEthicalAI working group, and a member of the Gender Advisory Group for the AI Action Summit to be held by the Government of France in February 2025.