



**Building a Sustainable and Resilient Future:
Subnational Governments Leading Integrated Approaches for People, Planet, and Prosperity**

High-Level Event on the occasion of the 2021 High-level Political Forum

1 July 2021

08:30-10:00 EDT | 14:30-16:00 CEST

Speakers' bios

OPENING

Regions4 President and Minister for Economic Development, Sustainability and Environment of the Basque Government, Spain



Hon.
Arantxa Tapia

Ms Arantxa Tapia was appointed Minister of Economic Development, Sustainability and Environment of the Basque Government in July 2020. Her mission is to lead the economic reactivation of the region, strengthening the competitiveness of the productive structure, while placing the environment at the centre of all sectoral policies. In 2021 she has introduced the Basque Green Deal, the new roadmap for green, fair, and sustainable economic development, which will have the industry and the technology as the main transformation drivers and will count on important legislation resources such as the Energy Transition and Climate Change Law or the Natural Heritage Law.

Ms Tapia is an Industrial Engineer, specialised in Electricity and Doctor Cum Laude in the University of Navarre. Among her professional activities, she has been Professor at the University of Basque Country (UPV/EHU), and previous political positions in the Basque Government include Former Minister of Economic Development and Infrastructures and Deputy Minister of Transport and Public Works.

She was appointed Regions4 President in 2020 to bring the global voice of regional governments to the UN and international processes on biodiversity, climate, and sustainable development.



THE PATH AHEAD: FROM RECOVERY TO A RESILIENT FUTURE



Ms. Lotta Tahtinen

Chief, Outreach and Partnership Branch, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Ms Tahtinen leads the work of UN DESA's Division for Sustainable Development Goals to support, facilitate and monitor multi-stakeholder partnerships and voluntary commitments forged in support of sustainable development and the SDGs, by strengthening collaboration between stakeholders and sectors. Her trajectory within the UN is longstanding and previous roles include Stakeholder Engagement Program Coordinator at UN DESA, Political Affairs Officer at the ECOSOC Affairs Branch, and Program Officer at the UNICT- United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force.



Dr. Susan Chomba

Global Ambassador of the UNFCCC's Race to Zero and Race to Resilience campaigns

She is the Director of Vital Landscapes at the World Resources Institute (WRI) and leads the institution's work on Forests, Food systems and People which includes forest landscape restoration, sustainable agriculture/food systems and thriving rural livelihoods in Africa.

Dr. Chomba is a scientist with over 15 years of research and development experience in Africa. She previously led the Regreening Africa Programme at CIFOR-ICRAF and has been instrumental in setting the agenda for landscape restoration through local, national, and global platforms. She holds a PhD in forest governance from the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, a double MSc. in agricultural development and agroforestry from the university of Copenhagen and Bangor university respectively; and a BSc. in forestry from Moi university in Kenya. She was named one of Global Landscape Forum (GLF) 16 Women Restoring the Earth in 2021.

Dr. Chomba is a distinguished global ambassador for the Race to Zero and Race to Resilience under the UN High Level Champions for Climate Action.



THE PATH AHEAD: FROM RECOVERY TO A RESILIENT FUTURE



**Ms. Elizabeth
Maruma Mrema**

Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema was the Director of the Law Division and has worked with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for over two decades. Before joining UNEP, Elizabeth worked with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Ms Mrema holds a Master of Law degree from Dalhousie University (Canada), a Postgraduate Diploma in International Relations and Diplomacy from the Centre of Foreign Relations and Diplomacy in Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania), and a Bachelor of Law from the University of Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania).

She has published several articles related to international environmental law, compliance and enforcement of conventions and developed, among others, a number of multilateral environmental agreements, negotiation tools, handbooks and guidelines currently used by UNEP in its capacity-building programmes.



THE LEADERSHIP OF SUBNATIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN INTEGRATING THE GLOBAL AGENDAS

First Minister of Wales, UK



Rt Hon.
Mark Drakeford MS

Mr Drakeford was born and brought up in West Wales before moving to Cardiff more than 30 years ago. Since then, he has lived in the Pontcanna area of Cardiff. A former probation officer, youth justice worker and Barnardos project leader in Ely and Caerau, he has been a professor of Social Policy and Applied Social Sciences at Cardiff University. Mark has also taught previously at Swansea University.

In the 1980s and 1990s Mr Drakeford was a Labour Councillor on South Glamorgan County Council, specialising in education issues, including Welsh medium education. Between 2000 and 2010 he worked as the Cabinet's health and social policy adviser at the Welsh Government and was latterly head of the First Minister's political office. He has a 40-year knowledge of the Cardiff West constituency.

He became the Assembly Member for Cardiff West in May 2011. He was Chair of the Assembly's Health and Social Care Committee from July 2011 - March 2013 and of the All-Wales Programme Monitoring Committee for European funds from July 2011 – March 2013. He was appointed Minister for Health and Social Services in March 2013. He was appointed Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government in May 2016. Mark was appointed Cabinet Secretary for Finance in November 2017. On 12 December 2018 Mr Drakeford was appointed First Minister of Wales and became a member of the Privy Council on 13 February 2019. Mark was appointed First Minister on 13 May 2021.



THE LEADERSHIP OF SUBNATIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN INTEGRATING THE GLOBAL AGENDAS

Premier of the Basque Government, Spain



Rt Hon.
Iñigo Urkullu

Mr Iñigo Urkullu Renteria has been the Lehendakari (Premier) of the Basque Government since 15 December 2012. Mr Urkullu has been committed to politics from a young age, and he was chairman of the Euskadi Buru Batzar, the National Executive Committee, of the Basque Nationalist Party (EAJ- PNV) between 2007 and 2012. He had previously chaired the Bizkaia Territorial Executive (BBB) for eight years.

During his four terms as a member of parliament for Bizkaia in the Basque Parliament (1994-2007), he sat on different committees, including the Education and Culture Committee, the Special Committee on Self-government, or the Committee on Legislative Urgency, Regulations and Government. During three terms of office, he chaired the Human Rights Committee (1998-2008). He was also a member of the Basque Language Advisory Board (1994-2001) and previously of the University of the Basque Country (EHU-UPV) Social Council. Lehendakari Urkullu is a teacher by profession, specialised in Basque Philology.

Mr Urkullu was re-elected as Basque Premier in 2020 and he introduced the new government programme in alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The programme has four pillars - prosperity, people, planet, and self-government -, and has the Euskadi Basque Country Agenda 2030 at the core. Under his leadership, Basque Country has adopted a territorial, multi-level governance and collaborative approach and has developed its own SDGs ecosystem to enhance implementation across policies, institutions, and stakeholders. The Basque model has been internationally recognised as a global leading example for the promotion of a people-centred vision and its interlinkages with the protection of nature and the health of the planet.



THE LEADERSHIP OF SUBNATIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN INTEGRATING THE GLOBAL AGENDAS



Rt Hon.
Abdessamad Sekkal

President of Rabat-Salé-Kénitra, Morocco

Mr Sekkal is the President of the Council of the Region Rabat-Salé-Kénitra, capital region of the Kingdom of Morocco.

He currently represents different bodies and organisations in several leadership roles such as: President of the United Regions Organization "Forum of Regional Governments and Global Associations of Regions" - ORU-FOGAR; Treasurer of the Association of Moroccan Regions "ARM"; and President of the Working Group "Economic Development" of the International Association of Francophone Regions "AIRF".

Mr Sekkal is an Architect Urbanist from the ISCAE in Rabat.



Rt Hon.
Cecilia Méndez Mora

Prefect of Azuay, Ecuador

Ms Cecilia Méndez Mora was appointed Prefect of Azuay, Ecuador (2020-2023), being the first woman to hold this position. She was previously Deputy Prefect of Azuay (2019-2020).

She holds a degree of Sociology from the University of Cuenca with a master's degree in Sociology and Development, as well as in Gender and Development. Ms Méndez Mora has been an Undergraduate and Postgraduate Teacher and Researcher at the University of Cuenca for more than thirty years.

She is an advocate for women's rights and in her previous role in the Provincial Government of Azuay, she has focused on guaranteeing the rights of rural women.



THE LEADERSHIP OF SUBNATIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN INTEGRATING THE GLOBAL AGENDAS

Governor of Cross River State, Nigeria



Rt Hon.
Benedict Ayade

Governor Benedict Bengiushuye Ayade was born on 2 March 1968 in Cross River State. Ayade earned his B.Sc. (Honours) (1984–1988), an M.Sc. in microbiology (1989–1990) and a Ph.D (1990–1994) in environmental microbiology all from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, winning the Best Doctoral Dissertation Award in Environmental Microbiology. He also has an MBA (2000–2002) from Ambrose Alli University Ekpoma, Edo State. He has a Law Degree (2006– 2010) from Delta State University, Abraka where he also lectured and was a professor.

From his work in groundwater remediation in Nigeria, Ayade invented a sewage treatment plant powered by solar energy. Ayade won a seat in the Nigerian Senate in the 2011 elections. While in Senate, Ayade held the position of Vice-Chairman, Senate Committee on Environment and Ecology. He was elected Governor in April 2015 and re-elected in 2019. As the current Governor of the cleanest and greenest State in Nigeria, Ayade has won many awards, including the 2016 Vanguard Governor of the Year, the 2019 Champion Newspaper Governor of the Year, 2020 Leadership newspaper Governor of the year and Blueprint Newspaper Governor of the Year on Agro-industrialization 2021. It is his passion to sustainably utilize the rich heritage of Cross River State to yield multiple economic, social, and environmental benefits for the advancement of an all-round growth and development of Cross River State, the Peoples' Paradise.



THE LEADERSHIP OF SUBNATIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN INTEGRATING THE GLOBAL AGENDAS



Rt Hon.
Pere Aragonès

President of the Government of Catalonia, Spain

Mr Aragonès holds a degree in Law from Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and a Master's degree in Economic History from the University of Barcelona. He has furthered his studies on public policies for economic development at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

He was Vice-President of the Government and Minister of Economy and Finance since May 2018 and has assumed functions of the Presidency of the Catalan Government in September 2020. Previously, he was Secretary of Economy of the Government of Catalonia and member of the Parliament of Catalonia for ten years.

In May 2021 Mr Aragonès has been invested 132nd President of the Government of Catalonia.



Rt Hon.
Aka Aouélé

President of Sud-Comoé, Ivory Coast

A native of Aboisso (Ivory Coast), AKA Aouélé, holds a state doctorate in pharmacy from the University of Caen. He is the President of the Regional Council of Sud Comoé since April 21, 2013. Doctor AKA Aouélé was Minister of Health and Public Hygiene from March 2010 to December 2010. Commander in the Order of Public Health, Commander in the "National Education Order of Merit"; Commander in the Order of Agricultural Merit; Officer of the National Order of Côte d'Ivoire. On July 10, 2018, Doctor AKA Aouélé was again appointed Minister of Health and Public Hygiene. He was awarded the Best Manager of the COVID19 Pandemic by the West African Economic and Monetary Union in 2020.

Doctor AKA Aouélé is the current President of the Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural Council of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.



THE LEADERSHIP OF SUBNATIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN INTEGRATING THE GLOBAL AGENDAS



Hon.
Annette Holmberg-Jansson

Minister of Social Affairs and Health of Åland Islands, Finland

Ms Annette Holmberg-Jansson was member of the Åland Parliament from 2013 to 2019. She was Chair of the Board for Hospital Committee of Åland (2015-2019), Chair of the Board for Moderate Coalition for Åland (2016), and Member of the Local Council of Jomala (2019).

Since 2019, she is the Minister of Social Affairs and Health, and Minister of Nordic Cooperation with responsibility for social and health care issues and Åland's Environmental and Health Protection Authority (ÅMHM), Åland's Health and Medical Care (ÅHS).



Hon.
Sergio Graf

Secretary for the Environment and Territorial Development of Jalisco, Mexico

Mr Sergio Graf is an Agricultural Engineer graduated from the University of Guadalajara (UdeG), specialist in sustainable forestry production, with more than thirty years of experience in the study and conservation of nature. He has a diploma in Sustainable Development from the LEAD-COLMEX program (1998), and a master's degree in Rural Development and Social Forestry from the Ecole Supérieure d'Agronomie Tropicale in Montpellier, France.

Recipient of the National Ecological Merit Award 2018, the highest award given by the National Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), a recognition of the Government of Mexico gives to women, men, institutions, public and private organizations, which have carried out programs, projects, and/or transcendent environmental actions that contribute to Mexico's transition towards sustainable development.

He is currently the head of the Secretariat of Environment and Territorial Development of the State of Jalisco, Mexico, and was appointed Regions4 Vice-President for the Americas in 2020.



THE LEADERSHIP OF SUBNATIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN INTEGRATING THE GLOBAL AGENDAS

Sub-Secretary of Environment of São Paulo, Brazil



Hon.
Eduardo Trani

Mr Trani holds a degree in Architecture from University of São Paulo and a Master's and Doctoral degrees in Urbanism and Regional Planning from the University of Paris XII (Val-de-Marne) and a Master's in Theater and Cinematographic Studies from the University of Paris VIII (Vincennes-Saint- Denis). He developed a professional career as a doctoral professor at private colleges.

In the public sector, he started his activities in 1985 at the Housing Secretariat and at CDHU - São Paulo State Housing and Urban Development Company, where he was Planning Superintendent, Executive Secretary of the State Housing Council, Chief of Staff of the State Secretariat of Housing. In the environmental area, he served as Environmental Planning Coordinator (1995-2000), Deputy Secretary (2017) and Secretary of State for the Environment (2018).

CLOSING

Envoy for Climate Change, Nordic and Arctic Affairs, Government of Québec, Canada (MODERATOR)



Mr. Jean Lemire

Biologist and renowned science communicator, Jean Lemire has conducted work on climate change and biodiversity that has led to major scientific missions. In 2001, he converted an oceanographic schooner into a scientific research platform and production studio that took him across the world's oceans to raise awareness about key environmental issues. In 2012, following missions to the Arctic (2002) and Antarctica (2005-2006), he and his crew, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity, began the 1000 Days for the Planet series, involving a three-year world expedition to examine the state of the planet's biodiversity. In association with the Sedna Foundation, he has also designed many instructional programs that have become references in the field of education.

Jean Lemire was appointed Envoy for Climate change, Northern and Arctic Affairs by the Government of Québecin 2017, thus becoming the first envoy in the history of Québec diplomacy.