

Biographies of speakers

Digital Event “Towards a Summit for Democracy”

Friday, 23 April 2021 - 15:00 CET/ 9:00 EDT



Thomas E. Garrett, Secretary General, Community of Democracies

Thomas E. Garrett has worked in the field of politics and advocacy for more than three decades. Appointed as the Secretary General of the Community of Democracies in September 2017, he supports the Community's Presidency and Governing Council in providing strategic leadership of the CoD. Prior to his appointment as the CoD Secretary General, he supported reformers and democrats across the world with his work at the International Republican Institute (IRI), a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that supports democracy, civil society, women and youth political empowerment and democratic governance in more than 80 countries. Over the past 23 years, Garrett directly led more than 325 training programs on topics relating to political participation. He has worked on election observation missions in Afghanistan, Albania, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Mali, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia, the Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tunisia and Ukraine. An enrolled member of an American Indian tribe, the Chickasaw Nation, Garrett moved to Washington, D.C. to join the Federal government to work in support of indigenous rights. He served as a legislative assistant for Alaska Native and American Indian issues in the U.S. Senate in 1994. Before that, as a political appointee in the government of President George H.W. Bush, Garrett was a Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs and then director of the Office of Legislative Affairs at the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In 2017, the Government of Mongolia conferred the Order of Friendship on Garrett for his work in support of Mongolian democracy. His master's degree is in diplomacy and international relations and his undergraduate degree is in political science.

Kevin Casas-Zamora, Secretary-General, International IDEA

Casas-Zamora has more than 25 years of experience in democratic governance as a researcher, analyst, educator, consultant and public official. He embodies the rare combination of a distinguished academic career—strongly focused on electoral systems and democratic institutions—with practical experience as a high-level public official in his home country as well as multilateral organizations. Casas-Zamora is Senior Fellow at the Inter-American Dialogue, a Washington, DC-based policy research centre. Until recently, he was member of Costa Rica's Presidential Commission for State Reform, and managing director at Analitica Consulting (Analitica Consultores). Previously, he was Costa Rica's Second Vice President and Minister of National Planning; Secretary for Political Affairs at the Organization of American States; Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution; and National Coordinator of the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Report. He has taught at Georgetown University, George Washington University, and the University of Texas at Dallas, among many higher education institutions. He holds a Law degree from the University of Costa Rica, a Masters in Government from the University of Essex, and a PhD in Political Science from the University of Oxford. He has authored several studies on campaign finance, elections, democratization, citizen security and civil-military relations in Latin America. His doctoral thesis, entitled “Paying for Democracy in Latin America: Political Finance and State Subsidies for Parties in Costa Rica and Uruguay”, won the 2004 Jean Blondel PhD Prize of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) and was published in 2005 by the ECPR. He was selected as Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum in 2007. In 2013, he became a member of the Bretton Woods Committee.





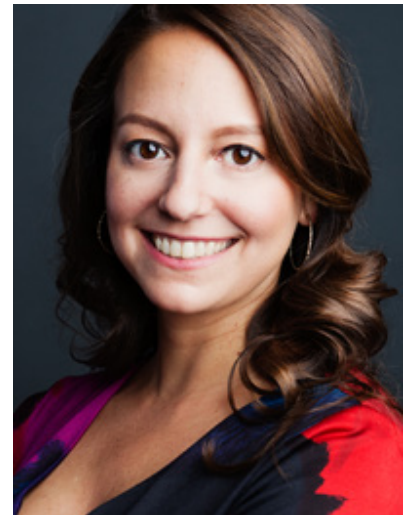
Joe Powell, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Open Government Partnership

He joined OGP shortly after its founding and has played a leading role in its growth to 78 member countries and thousands of civil society organizations, representing a strong global coalition for open government and democracy, and against authoritarianism and corruption. Joe leads the organization's strategy development, global advocacy, fundraising, and a wide range of partnerships with multilateral organizations, civil society organizations and governments. He leads engagement with OGP's Steering Committee of ministers and civil society leaders and is a regular spokesperson for the Partnership. In 2020, Joe was named an inaugural Obama Europe Leader, as part of the Obama Foundation's mission to inspire, empower, and connect people to change their world. Joe also serves on the advisory council for the OECD Observatory of Civic Space and on the Board of the Forum on Information and Democracy, an initiative of Reporters Without Borders. Prior to OGP, Joe worked as a

Senior Policy and Advocacy Manager at the ONE Campaign, where he was managing ONE's global campaign for increased transparency in the extractive industries and worked on campaigns to increase the quality and level of UK aid. Joe also led global advocacy for the G20 and policy development for the G8. Before working at ONE, Joe launched an online current affairs platform called 'Uganda Talks' for the Independent, a weekly East African news magazine, and worked for Action Aid Uganda. He studied at Makerere University. Joe holds a BA from the University of Cambridge.

Suneeta Kaimal, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI)

Suneeta joined NRGI's predecessor organization, the Revenue Watch Institute (RWI) in 2009 as the deputy director responsible for regional and country engagements across Africa, Asia-Pacific, Eurasia, Latin America, and the Middle East and North Africa. Following the merger between RWI and the Natural Resource Charter in 2013, Suneeta became chief operating officer, ensuring NRGI's strategy and approach was relevant, demand-driven, and evidence-based. Overseeing the leadership and senior management teams, she guided the translation of the strategy into innovative, impactful thematic and regional programs and supported NRGI's institutional effectiveness and sustainability. Suneeta served as interim president and chief executive officer in 2020, surmounting the strategic and operational challenges of the global pandemic. Suneeta is the secretary/treasurer of the board of directors of The International Center for Not-For-Profit Law, working to improve the legal environment for civil society, philanthropy, and public participation around the world. She was the first female civil society chair of the Open Government Partnership, an organization of reformers inside and outside of government from more than 75 countries and served on the steering committee for eight years. Suneeta was the first chair of the global council of Publish What You Pay, a civil society movement of more than 1000 organizations working to improve natural resource governance. She is also a founding board member of Roots of Health, a local NGO focused on improving the health of women and girls and their communities, in the Philippines. Suneeta holds a master's in international affairs from the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University, and a bachelor of arts from Duke University, where she was a Hart Leadership Fellow.



Ted Piccone, Chief Engagement Officer, World Justice Project

Ted Piccone is the Chief Engagement Officer at the World Justice Project, where he leads WJP's efforts to advance the rule of law through strategic partnerships and convenings, coordinated advocacy, and locally led initiatives around the world. Mr. Piccone has more than 30 years' experience in international relations, policy, and law, most recently as a Senior Fellow specializing in international order and strategy and Latin America at the Brookings Institution. Previously, he served as the acting vice president and deputy director for Brookings' Foreign Policy program and remains affiliated as a nonresident scholar. Mr. Piccone was a senior foreign policy advisor at the State Department, National

Security Council and the Pentagon, and Executive Director of the Democracy Coalition Project. He was also the Washington office director for the Club de Madrid and continues as an advisor.

Mr. Piccone is a recognized expert on global democracy and human rights policies, emerging powers, multilateral affairs, and U.S.-Latin American relations. In 2017-18, he was the inaugural Brookings-Robert Bosch Stiftung Transatlantic Initiative Fellow in Berlin. He is the author or editor of multiple publications on international affairs, including books on Five Rising Democracies and the Fate of the International Liberal Order, and Catalysts for Change: How the UN's Independent Experts Promote Human Rights. His legal career includes a clerkship in the U.S. District Court of New Jersey and as Counsel to the UN Truth Commission for El Salvador. He holds honor degrees from Columbia University's Law School and the University of Pennsylvania and teaches international human rights law at American University's Washington College of Law.

María Baron, Global Executive Director, Directorio Legislativo

María Baron is the Global Executive Director of Directorio Legislativo in Argentina. She is a journalist, has received a Masters Degree in International Relations from the University of Bologna, Italy, and is a PhD candidate in Political Science at Universidad Nacional de San Martín, Argentina. She is also a Fulbright-APSA Congressional Fellow and holder of the 2013 NDI's Civic Innovator Prize. She has worked for civil society non-profit organizations in Argentina and abroad with the aim of reducing unethical practices of lawmakers and public officials. María initiated and currently chairs the Latin American Network for Legislative Transparency composed of 24 organizations in 12 countries of the region. She has published nine editions of Directorio Legislativo. *Quiénes son nuestros legisladores y cómo nos representan.* With her team at Directorio, María



developed a methodology around building consensus across polarized stakeholders on different issues and has managed to bring many of those agreements to Congress where they were signed into laws. Within Directorio Legislativo she created the Regulatory Alert Service, which by using political analytics they can predict changes in regulation in 19 countries of the Hemisphere. María has been a civil society member of the OGP Steering Committee since 2016. She is the currently serving as the Lead Civil Society Co-Chair (2020 – 2021). María's second on the OGP Steering Committee is Michelle Voplin.

Maria Sarungi Tsehai, Activist, #ChangeTanzania



Maria Sarungi Tsehai is not one easy to define or characterize. By profession, she is a communication expert and a media personality however in reality, Ms. Sarungi- Tsehai is known for a wide varied action-packed career. Her evolution in her career has today made Maria a recognizable brand in Tanzania. She is one of the most vocal and active media personalities, and mentor to young Tanzanians. She is director and owner of Compass Communications, which she founded with her husband David Tsehai. The most recent endeavor of Compass Communications is the launch of a television channel – Kwanza TV that is active online and aspiring to be a full-fledged broadcaster. Maria is founder and director of Kwanza broadcasting company and the CEO of Kwanza TV . Kwanza TV has quickly grown into a recognized brand known for its balanced, fearless coverage of events in an increasingly closed civic space in Tanzania. Kwanza TV has been suspended twice by the govern-

ment of President Magufuli on spurious charges, the latest suspension in July 2020 is for 11 months. This has not slowed down Maria and her team who are now seeking other avenues to provide needed coverage for Tanzanians.

Maria is also director/producer of award winning films and documentaries. She is also presenter and producer of many well-known and highly viewed shows in Tanzania since 2000. Aside from the independent production, Maria is also a communication consultant, having provided communication advice, PR management and training to various organizations including UN agencies, civil society organizations and individuals. Her detailed CV lists some of these organizations including Bloomberg Philanthropies, UNDP and Foundation for Civil Society But there is more to Maria Sarungi-Tsehai than this Maria's name recognition however extends beyond the TV screen onto the new media namely social media as she is the founder of the citizens' social media movement called Change Tanzania. She personally has a following over 600,000 on Twitter, with wide following from a number of major verified accounts in and outside Tanzania. Through her activism,

hashtag #ChangeTanzania has now over 300,000 members and followers on Facebook and Twitter. Change Tanzania has been able to do some impressive social media action including repealing section of the Financial Act 2013 which created a Sim Card Tax (Petition and protest was done under #NoSimCardTax) and ongoing petition and activism against repressive Cyber Crime Law (#CyberCrimeBill). It was through Change Tanzania, that Maria was also appointed by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania to be a member of the Constituent Assembly in 2014. Since then Change Tanzania has been deregistered by the government of President Magufuli but the movement lives on. Maria has also been on the forefront on social media through her Medium blog writing articles, advocating for human rights, media freedom and freedom of expression. She was the most vocal on the internet shutdown and targeted Twitter attacks of human rights activists during the 2020 General Elections in Tanzania.

Maria has also filed a submission with the International Criminal Court against Tanzanian officials and security services following the highly controversial election in 2020 that saw the incarceration, beating and killing of civilians and members of the opposition party in various parts of the country including Zanzibar and Mara region. Her submission was accompanied by video, audio and social media evidence collected extensively and sourced publicly through social media from citizens and opposition parties. The submission and evidence has been accepted by the Court and is under review.

Some of her recent advocacy has also included raising the alarm on the COVID19 Situation in Tanzania through her Medium platform and social media and promote masks and social distancing to Tanzanians through her popular social media accounts on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. Maria Sarungi Tsehai is also founding director of Inclusive Development for Citizens Tanzania – a non-governmental organization that has become well known for its activism around the reentry of pregnant school girls in Tanzania, who have faced discrimination and expulsion following a speech by President Magufuli. IDC Tanzania remains one of the most dynamic CSOs that has remained vocal and giving voice to the voiceless in Tanzania around various SDGs including gender equality, education and poverty. Maria has since resigned from the Board as IDC was targeted by the Government of Tanzania and suspended from June to December 2020.

In addition to this, Maria Sarungi Tsehai is also board member of Open Society Eastern Africa Initiative (OSIEA); chair of Tanzania Independent Producers' Association; Regional Secretary of Eastern Africa in the Pan African Federation of Filmmakers (FEPACI); founding member of Roots and Shoots – Jane Goodall Institute and board member of Sauti Za Busara Music Festival in Zanzibar. She also remains available for advice and mentoring for various other organizations and a well-known moderator and public speaker at different events like the OGP Africa Regional Meeting 2015, World Bank conference on Data (2016) and many other major events.

Maria Sarungi is also an Eisenhower Fellow class 2016 of the first ever All African Program and one of the fellows of the International Leaders Program 2017 organized by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office – UK.