

# IRENA Global Council on Enabling Youth Action for SDG 7

## *Global Council Members*



### **CHAIR OF THE IRENA GLOBAL COUNCIL ON SDG 7**

**FRANCESCO LA CAMERA, Director-General of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)**

Francesco La Camera was appointed at the Ninth Assembly of IRENA, the ultimate decision-making body of the Agency. Mr. La Camera took office on 4 April 2019 and brings more than thirty years of experience in the fields of climate, sustainability, and international cooperation.

Under his leadership the Agency has forged a series of new strategic partnerships with UN organisations including UNDP, UNFCCC and Green Climate Fund among others. A key priority of his tenure is to implement a more action-oriented approach to the Agency's work. Previously, Mr. La Camera served as Director-General of Sustainable Development, Environmental Damage, EU and International Affairs at the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea since 2014. In this capacity, he developed cooperation and partnership agreements with a wide range of countries, particularly developing countries including Small Island Developing States (SIDS). At the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea, Mr. La Camera led the Italian delegation to UNFCCC's COP 21 to 24 and the EU Presidency at COP 20. He was responsible for the preparation and organisation of Italy's G7 Environment Presidency in 2017. He was a leading member of the Italian delegation to the G7 Environment Ministers meetings in 2016 and 2018. Author of many publications, Mr. La Camera was a Lecturer of Sustainable Development at the University of Cosenza and of Environment & Land Economics at the University of Roma 3. He began his career as an economic analyst at the Italian Ministry of Budget and Planning.

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### **VICE-CHAIR OF THE IRENA GLOBAL COUNCIL ON SDG 7 (and Moderator of the first meeting)**

**PASSY AMAYO OGOLLA, Regional Focal Point for East and Southern Africa, SDG 7 Youth Constituency**

Passy Amayo Ogolla is a Chevening scholar in Energy and Climate Policy at the University of Sussex. She has served as the Program Manager leading the implementation of the Sustainable Energy Futures Programme at the Society of International Development (SID) since 2017. The publications, *Energy for Whom? Scenarios for Eastern Africa* (2018) and *Energy*

for What? Contemporary energy issues and dilemmas in Kenya (2021) stand as landmarks of the programme. In reference to youth work, Passy is working within various local and international youth networks in reimagining and shaping a desirable future for next generations. She is the Africa Network Weaver for the Next Generation Foresight Practitioners Network in Africa at the School of International Futures (SOIF) where she leads and impact network of emerging leaders, innovators, activists and futurists from across Africa. Passy is the Regional Focal Point for East and Southern Africa at the SDG7 Youth Constituency, coordinating the engagement of young energy professionals and students with various multilateral energy processes and institutions such as UNIDO, SEforALL and IRENA. She has been Policy Influence Lead at the Kenya Environmental Action Network(KEAN)where she has successfully conceptualized and lead various youth organising secretariats in implementing national youth consultations on the NDCs in Kenya(#NDCYouthKE)and the Local Conferences of Youth on Climate(#LCOYKe)prior to the annual UNFCCC COPs. She is recognized by the Nation Media Group as one of the 2021top 30 under 30 women inspiring Kenyans and shaping the future of the country.

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**BENIAMIN STRZELECKI, Global Focal Point, SDG 7 Youth Constituency**

Benjamin Strzelecki serves as the Global Focal Point of the SDG7 Youth Constituency. The constituency supports the leading intergovernmental organisations focused on energy, including IRENA, SEforALL, UNIDO, IEA and CEM, in facilitating youth engagement and bringing the voices of youth to the decision-making table. Benjamin also serves on the Youth Advisory Panel of the Global Center on Adaptation.

Benjamin is a full-time civil engineering student at New York University Abu Dhabi. As an emerging scholar, he worked as a researcher on the economics of renewable energy at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and the German Institute for Economic Research.

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**CHIAGOZIE UDEH, Global Focal Point, SDG 7 Youth Constituency**

Chiagozie Udeh is a young Nigerian climate activist who in 2019, served as the YOUNGO Global South Focal Point of YOUNGO, the Youth Constituency to the UNFCCC where he facilitated meaningful global youth engagement in the international climate change processes and negotiations primarily within the UNFCCC and other spaces within and outside the United Nations finishing his mandate at the end of COP25 in Madrid.

Over the past years, Chiagozie helped facilitate the creation of a youth space in intergovernmental processes of renewable energy through relentless advocacy and serves as the Global Focal Point for the Major Group of Children and Youth SDG7 Youth Constituency ensuring meaningful youth engagement in intergovernmental processes led by IRENA,

SEforALL, UNIDO, IEA, and CEM. He worked with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Nigeria helping create a coalition of labour union and civil society organizations that are seeking to end gas flaring in Nigeria, promote energy democracy, and ensure just transition. He served together with Energy Ministers globally, as one of the two youth representatives in the IEA Global Commission on People-Centred Clean Energy Transition in the build-up to COP26. He is currently a Masters's candidate on Innovation, Human Development, and Sustainability at the University of Geneva and has worked on a human-rights-based approach to Sustainable Environment Management and currently, on climate adaptation.

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**DIEGO PAVIA, CEO, InnoEnergy**

EIT InnoEnergy, created in 2010 as a European public-private partnership, is an investor and an accelerator in sustainable energy innovation with a portfolio of more than 380 start-ups supported. EIT InnoEnergy is recognized by the Commission as a key business enabler for the energy transition.

In 2017, it was mandated by the European Commission to steer the European Battery Alliance. In 2019, the European battery value chain has attracted around €60bn of investments (compared to around €17bn in China).

Diego Pavia graduated as an electrical engineer, specialising in electronics and automation from the Polytechnical University of Madrid. His first professional experience, in 1988, was as co-founder and CEO of a start-up, Knowledge Engineering, dealing with industrial controls systems using artificial intelligence and neural networks. Three years later he joined Sema Group, and started a long career with private companies. In SchlumbergerSema, Diego headed multicultural working groups all over the world in the field of energy, with revenues of 650M\$. Between 2002 and 2010, Diego was the CEO of Atos Origin, a leading international IT service provider, where he was responsible for Spain and South America, about 9.000 employees, and an annual turnover of EUR 450 million.

Since 2010, Diego has been CEO of InnoEnergy. Diego, as a serial entrepreneur, has created 7 companies in his lifetime.

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**Dr. MARIA NEIRA, Director of Department of Environment, Climate Change and Health, World Health Organisation**

Dr Maria P. Neira has been directing *the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Health* at the World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland since September 2005. Throughout her tenure and up until now she has led and advised on policy and management in key areas of environmental health.

Prior to that she served as Under-Secretary of Health and President of the Spanish Food Safety Agency. From 1993-1998 she was Coordinator of the Global Task Force on Cholera Control. Dr Neira began her career as a medical coordinator working with refugees in El Salvador and Honduras for Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders). She then spent several years working in different African countries during armed conflicts. Born in the city of Oviedo, Asturias, Dr Neira is a Spanish national, a medical doctor by training and specialized in Endocrinology and Metabolic Diseases; and Public Health. Among many distinctions, she has been awarded the Médaille de l'Ordre national du Mérite by the Government of France and received an “Extraordinary Woman” award by HM Queen Letizia of Spain. In early 2019, she was nominated among the top 100 policy influencers in health and climate change.

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**H.E. Dr. NAWAL AL-HOSANY, Permanent Representative of the UAE to IRENA, Government of the United Arab Emirates**

Her Excellency Dr. Nawal Al-Hosany is the Permanent Representative of the UAE to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) since April 2018. Prior to this, she was the Executive Director of Sustainability at Masdar, Abu Dhabi's renewable energy company, and the Director of the Zayed Future Energy Prize, the UAE's annual global awards for renewable energy and sustainability. She also served as the Deputy Director General of the Emirates Diplomatic Academy (EDA) between 2017-2018. Apart from her current position and as part of her professional career, Dr. Al-Hosany assumes many positions in various business sectors, government entities and academic institutions in the UAE and internationally. She is also a member of several boards and committees, including the advisory council of National Geographic magazine, in addition to her board membership in many local, regional and international initiatives and organizations, such as the advisory board of the Payne Institute in Colorado School of Mines, the advisory Panel for the Momentum for Change initiative of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and her previous membership in the Board of Trustees of the Khalifa University of Science and Technology (February 2017 –April 2020). Dr. Al-Hosany is also part of Sustainable Energy for All's (SEforALL) Leadership Council, a newly-formed group of globally influential leaders with a shared mission to accelerate action on Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7) and the Paris Climate Agreement. Her professional achievements have been widely acknowledged through prestigious awards. In July 2018, Dr. Al-Hosany was presented the “Doctor of letters Honoris Causa” from Keele University in the UK in recognition for her achievements in the field of sustainability. Dr Al-Hosany also received the “Arab Woman Award” and the “Emirates Business Women Award”. She graduated from the Faculty of Engineering at the UAE University in 1992 and obtained her PhD from Newcastle

University in the UK in 2002. Dr.Al-Hosany is also credited as one of the first two Emirati women to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest free-standing mountain in the world at 5,895 metres above sea-level.

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**FEDERICO BARBIERI, President, European Youth Energy Network**

Federico is the President of the European Youth Energy Network, a non-profit youth-led Federation of European energy-focused youth organisations. He holds a Double Master's degree in Sustainable Energy Systems powered by the European Institute of Technology (EIT). After developing a solid engineering background during his academic career, he is now expanding his expertise in the fields of energy markets and youth engagement in the energy transition.

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**GAUTAM NARASIMHAN, Global Lead – Climate, Energy, and Environment, UNICEF**

Gautam works with a talented team to shape and advance UNICEF's global agenda on climate change, sustainable energy and the environment. This involves the development of programmes and policies, providing guidance to country and regional offices, developing strategic partnerships, and representing UNICEF. Gautam's previous roles include environmental engineering, management, and financial due diligence in the United States and India, managing a global portfolio of climate change products for an energy company whilst based in London, and supporting governments in Afghanistan and the Republic of Georgia on energy policy. His academic background includes chemical and environmental engineering, public policy, and business administration.

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**ISHITA YADAV, Regional Focal Point for South Asia, SDG 7 Youth Constituency and National Youth Council of India**

Ishita Yadav is a passionate youth advocate for energy equity and a social-justice activist. She serves as South Asia's Regional Focal Point at the SDG7 Youth Constituency and coordinates YOUNGO's Cities Working Group. Ishita has been actively involved in the climate advocacy and environmental journalism sphere for several years. Currently Ishita is a One Earth fellow specializing in clean energy where she highlights the efforts of individuals from vulnerable communities in achieving a just energy transition.



**JOSHUA AMPONSEM, Founder, Green Africa Youth Organisation**

Joshua Amponsem is a Ghanaian climate activist and entrepreneur. He currently serves as the Climate Programme Specialist to the Office of the UN Secretary General’s Envoy on Youth. Joshua focuses on the role of youth in Climate Change Adaptation, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Resilience Building. He is the lead author of the first-ever background paper on youth and climate change adaptation which provides a pathway for youth engagement in global adaptation efforts. He is the founder of Green Africa Youth Organization (GAYO), Board of Advisor at Gamma Energie and has been an Adaptation Fellow at the Global Center on Adaptation (GCA) in 2020. He served as Business Development Manager to Challenges Group and provided business growth services to SMEs in the green sector – waste management, renewable energy and agriculture. He initiated locally-led projects like the Water for Adaptation and Sustainable Communities Project across sub-Saharan Africa and is championing the establishment of Youth Climate Councils across the Global South.

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**JOYCE MENDEZ, Focal Point, Latin American Sustainable Energy Summit**



Technoxamanist, TEDx lecturer, and social entrepreneur working on transboundary cooperation in the water-energy-food nexus with emphasis on energy justice. Graduate Student in Sustainability and Adaptation Planning by the Centre of Alternative Technologies. Youth Advisory Panel of the Global Center on Adaptation. Latin American and Caribbean Regional Focal Point of the SDG7 Youth Constituency.

Co-Founder of the following organizations and initiatives: The Latin American Observatory of Geopolitics of Energy, Foz do Iguaçu Environmental Observatory, Paraguayan Youth Network for Water, and the Latin American Sustainable Energy Summit. Member of the World Youth Parliament for Water-WYPW, Student Energy, and the Climate Reality Project.

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**KRISTINA SKIERKA, CEO, Power for All**

Kristina Skierka is the CEO of Power for All, a global campaign to accelerate the end of energy poverty. She manages an international team that has built a coalition of more than 300 partners and launched initiatives to accelerate the adoption of decentralized renewable energy (DRE) in numerous countries including Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, India, Ethiopia and Uganda. Kristina has over 20 years of experience in the energy sector. With a global reputation for her work to advance clean technologies, Kristina is regularly cited as an expert on distributed energy, renewables and sustainability, and has been featured in The New York Times, Greentech Media, Forbes, and The Huffington Post. Kristina was named Energy Foundation's Senior Fellow in 2009, a finalist for both the 2015 Clean Energy Ministerial's C3E Award and the 2016 Climate Solutions Accelerator. She has been named one of the African Power and Energy Elites for 2020 by ESI Africa, and is based in San Francisco, California.

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**MEREDITH ADLER, Executive Director, Student Energy**

Meredith is the Executive Director of Student Energy, a global organization empowering the next generation of leaders who are accelerating the transition to a sustainable, equitable energy future. We work with a network of 50,000 young people from over 120 countries. Meredith works effectively with the energy industry, governments, and organizations to create space for young people and to support effective intergenerational collaboration. The focus of much of her work is on bridging the gap between the motivation of young people and the components they need to be able to work with other players in the energy system to make effective change happen.

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**NISREEN ELSAIM, Chair, UN Secretary General's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change**

Nisreen Elsaïm is an environmental and climate activist, started activism in 2012, with a Bachelor's degree in physics from the University of Khartoum, Sudan. She pursued her master's degree in renewable energy from the same University.

General coordinator for Youth and Environment - Sudan (YES) platform to give all environment working youth the networking they need. Also, Ms. Elsaïm is the Chair of Sudan Youth Organization on Climate Change (SYOCC) which youth-led organization. As part of many regional and international platforms Nisreen Led and mentored large number of young people with in YOUNGO,

PACJA, Abu Dhabi youth Voices, and others Nisreen is also a junior negotiator with the African Group of Negotiators in technology transfer. focusing on the policies of countries regarding climate change and renewable energies. Wrote several policy papers in climate change, renewable energy, gender and youth empowerment. Was recently chosen to chair the UN Secretary General youth adviser on climate change along with 6 other young climate activists.

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**ROBERTO VIGOTTI, Secretary General, RES4Africa Foundation**

Roberto Vigotti is the Secretary General of RES4Africa Foundation, a European think tank gathering 34 stakeholders from the clean energy value chain to accelerate Africa's RE transition, supporting wider participation of private players in delivering investments.

With a Master's Degree in 1971 in Electrical Engineering, Roberto Vigotti spent 35 years in Enel power company R&D Division. Dealing with the most relevant international bodies in the renewable energy sector, during his career he was delegate in the Renewable Working Party of IEA since 1989, where he was Chair for 12 years and started the PV TCP, and member of the Coalition for Action of IRENA.

In 2012, he embarked on the RES4Africa adventure, to support a wider participation of private players in delivering investments in Africa. At RES4Africa, he coordinates a number of activities aimed at transforming Africa's energy sector through public-private dialogue, market-driven analysis, training and capacity building activities, and n-field projects.

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**SHEILA OPARAOCHA, Director, Energia Network**

Sheila Oparaocha holds a master's degree in Gender and Development Planning and has over twenty one years of experience working at the intersectionality of gender equality, women empowerment and energy access. The 2021 recipient of the Carnot Prize, Sheila is a renowned leader in the gender and sustainable energy sector, as the Director of the ENERGIA International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy since 1999. She initiated, developed, and led numerous programs on the institutionalizing of gender transformative approaches in the energy sector in developing countries, specifically in the areas of women entrepreneurship development, gender mainstreaming in energy access projects and (sub) national energy policies, international policy advocacy, research and evidence development, network building and knowledge management. Sheila is a strong project manager who is primarily responsible for the quality control and delivery of ENERGIA's multi-partner/donor project portfolio, who provides technical support and leadership to her team together with ample experience in annual planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation and donor relationship management. Sheila is the co-chair of the Technical Advisory Group for the Sustainable Development Goal 7 convened by UNDESA;

and member of the Steering Committee of the Health and Energy Platform for Action and the High-Level Coalition on Energy and Health that operates under the auspices of WHO.

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**ZAGY BERIAN, Founder, Society of Renewable Energy**

Zagy is a youth researcher working independently that research about technology, innovation, utilization, resource assessment, and public policy in energy sector.

He has experience in youth development, he focused to provide capacity building for youth in energy sector through Society of Renewable Energy and him as founder, with extensive experience working with global network.

Currently, SRE is spreading to 37 universities across Indonesia and one of the biggest youth organization with impact driven and inclusive collaboration. He usually spent the free time with volunteering activities to support youth program.

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