

SPEAKERS BIOS



H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser
High Representative, United Nations Alliance of Civilizations
@UNAOC

Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser assumed the leadership of the Alliance in March 2013. As a veteran diplomat and the 66th President of the United Nations General Assembly, he has devoted his time and work to peace building and promoting the culture of peace, tolerance and reconciliation. Mr. Al- Nasser, who is now ranked as a Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Qatar, has served as his country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, from 1998 to 2011. The highlight of his career was when he was elected as the President of the Sixty-Sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly from September 2011 to 2012. In December 2006, he was President of the UN Security Council, representing the State of Qatar in the Council during the two-year period when Qatar was a non-permanent member. During this time, the Council took action on several issues, including international cooperation to combat terrorism and the protection of journalists in armed conflict. As a veteran diplomat, he played several leading roles including President of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation. As chair of the Group of 77 and China, he guided action that led to the establishment of the South Fund for Development and Humanitarian Affairs, a financing mechanism that helps countries of the South address issues such as poverty, hunger and natural disasters. Mr. Al-Nasser is the recipient of numerous awards and honorary doctorates from various governments.



Dr. Moustafa Bayoumi @BayoumiMoustafa
Professor of English, Brooklyn College

Moustafa Bayoumi is the author of the critically acclaimed “How Does It Feel To Be a Problem?: Being Young and Arab in America” (Penguin), which won an American Book Award and the Arab American Book Award for Non-Fiction. The book has also been translated into Arabic by Arab Scientific Publishers and it has been chosen as the common reading for incoming freshmen at universities across the country. His next book, “This Muslim American Life: Dispatches from the War on Terror, was recently published by NYU Press. His writing has appeared in *The New York Times Magazine*, *New York Magazine*, *The Guardian*, *The National*, CNN.com, *The London Review of Books*, *The Nation*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *The Progressive*, and many others. His essay “Disco Inferno” was included in the collection Best Music Writing of 2006 (Da Capo). Bayoumi is also the co-editor of *The Edward Said Reader* (Vintage) and editor of *Midnight on the Mavi Marmara: the Attack on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla and How It Changed the Course of the Israel/Palestine Conflict* (O/R Books & Haymarket Books). With Lizzy Ratner, he also co-edited a special issue of *The Nation* magazine on Islamophobia (July

2-9, 2012). He has been featured in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Chicago Sun-Times*, and on CNN, FOX News, Book TV, National Public Radio, and many other media outlets from around the world.



Dr. Agnès Callamard @AgnesCallamard
Director, Global Freedom of Expression & Information; Special Adviser to the President, Columbia University @globalFoEandI

Dr. Agnès Callamard is the Director of Columbia University Global Freedom of Expression & Information, an initiative seeking to advance understanding on freedom of expression global norms. She spent nine years as the Executive Director of ARTICLE 19, the international human rights organization promoting and defending freedom of expression and access to information globally. She founded and led HAP International (the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership), which is the first self-regulatory body for humanitarian agencies at the international level. Prior to this, Dr. Callamard was Chef de Cabinet for the Secretary General of Amnesty International (AI) and AI’s Research-Policy Coordinator, leading AI’s policy work and research on women’s human rights. She has advised senior levels of multilateral organizations and governments around the world and has led human rights investigations in more than 30 countries. She has published broadly in the field of human rights, women’s rights, refugee movements and accountability and holds a PhD in Political Science from the New School for Social Research in New York.



Ashraf El Nour
Permanent Observer for the International Organization for Migration to the United Nations @IOMatUN

Mr. El Nour began his career in 1988 at CARE International, serving as an Assistant Programme Coordinator for the next three years. In 1991, he went on to join IOM, first as Coordinator for Northern Iraq until 1993 and then as their Coordinator of Operations in Mozambique until 1995. Moving to the agency’s headquarters in Geneva, he worked as Programmes Coordinator for Migration for Development and Technical Cooperation until 1998, when he became Regional Adviser for Africa and the Middle East until 2001. After working as Senior Recovery Adviser at the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) Geneva-based Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, Mr. El Nour returned to IOM as Special Assistant with the Office of the Director General from 2006 to 2007. He then served in Kenya as Regional Representative for East and Central Africa, from 2007 to 2012, and as Regional Director for East and Horn of Africa from 2013 until his current appointment. Born in Khartoum in 1963, Mr. El Nour holds a master’s degree in political science from Aligarh Muslim University in India.



Cristina Gallach [@cristinagallach](#)

UN Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information

Before joining the UN, Ms. Gallach served as Head of the Public Relations Unit in the Council of the European Union, Directorate General for Information and Communication, Brussels. In that role she was responsible for designing and implementing the EU Council's communication strategies and for its public relations and outreach to key partners, including opinion-makers, civil society and academia. Prior to that, Ms. Gallach was Spokesperson of the Spanish Government for the European Union rotating Presidency (2010); Spokesperson and Chief Media Advisor of the European Union High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (1999-2009); and Deputy Spokesperson of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Chief Media Adviser for the Secretary-General (1996-1999). Ms. Gallach spent more than 15 years as a journalist, during which time she held the positions of senior correspondent for EFE, the Spanish news agency, in Brussels (1993-1996) and in Moscow (1990-1992). She was also a correspondent with El Periodico newspaper in Barcelona (1986-1990), a United States correspondent for Avui newspaper (1984-1986) and a reporter with TVE Barcelona (1983-1984).



David Gura [@davidgura](#)

Reporter, Bloomberg Television

Before joining Bloomberg Television, David Gura was a senior reporter for, and the principal back-up host of, Marketplace, the public radio business and economics program. He has traveled widely, reporting on the U.S. economy. Much of his recent coverage has centered on the recession and recovery, and the implementation of healthcare and financial reform. He has reported on countless budget battles, showdowns and shutdowns. Ahead of the 2014 election, he focused on campaign finance. After the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School, in Newtown, Conn., he spent several months reporting a series called "Guns and Dollars," about the U.S. firearms industry. He began his career at NPR, first as an editor and a producer, then as a reporter for The Two-Way, the network's breaking news blog. He regularly contributed radio pieces to NPR's flagship news magazines, All Things Considered, Morning Edition, and Weekend Edition. His writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Columbia Journalism Review*, and the *Virginia Quarterly Review*.



Sydette Harry [@Blackamazon](#)

Community Lead, The Coral Project [@coralproject](#)

Sydette Harry is the Community Lead of The Coral Project, an initiative that helps communities work better together online. The Coral Project collects, supports, and shares practices, tools, and studies to improve communities on the web. It was created by Mozilla, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, and it receives funding from the John S. and James L. Knight

Foundation. Sydette Harry is an avid Internet commenter. She has worked in cultural arts, tech and project curation, and her writing has been featured in Salon.com, ModelViewCulture and Pitchfork. She has been online in one form or another as Blackamazon, a black technological feminist social commentator. She believes in asking troublesome questions, finding uncomfortable answers and centering the black female experience. Since 2007 Sydette has been invested in creating community, cultural commentary, and the joys of the Internet.



Widad Kefi (France) [@widadk](#)
Journalist, Bondy Blog [@BondyBlogActu](#)

Widad Kefi is a French-Algerian journalist and blogger. Since 2007, she has written for the Bondy Blog, a website created during the riots in the French *banlieues* that spread through the country in 2005. The Bondy Blog gives a voice to groups who are underrepresented in French mainstream media. In 2011, after studying journalism in Paris, she started to work for Canal+ group (canal +/- itélé/ D8) and M6 where she is still working as a freelance journalist. Throughout her career, she has worked to help change the way young people from the *banlieues* are portrayed in mainstream media. She writes about the *banlieues*, discrimination, education, and racism. She also spent some time in Tunisia during the revolution, and in Gaza in 2014 to report for the Bondy Blog.



Jean-Paul Laborde
Executive Director, Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate
[@UN_CTED](#)

Jean-Paul Laborde of France was appointed Executive Director of CTED and Assistant Secretary-General in June 2013. Mr. Laborde served for 22 years in the French criminal justice system and Government as Judge, Assistant Prosecutor-General, Chief Prosecutor, and Head of the National Service for the Inspection of Penitentiary Services. From December 2010 until his appointment at CTED, Mr. Laborde served as a judge in the Criminal Chamber of France's Supreme Judicial Court (Cour de Cassation). Mr. Laborde had previously served with the United Nations for 18 years, holding senior positions in counter-terrorism and criminal justice with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Vienna (1993-2008), the Department of Political Affairs, and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (2009-2010). Author of a scholarly book and numerous articles, Mr. Laborde has written extensively on issues such as international criminal law, terrorism and the United Nations. He has also lectured at universities in France and the United States.



Wilson Liévano [@wlievano](#)
Journalist/Editor, News animator, The Wall Street Journal Americas
Wilson Liévano is a journalist, editor and animator born in Bogotá Colombia. For the past five years he has coordinated the production of the editorial content of the online edition of The Wall Street Journal

Americas, the Spanish-language edition of WSJ. Independently, Mr. Liévano leads Animated Press, an animation studio focused on creating short animations that explain complex topics, including the Syrian Conflict, the plight of migrants across Mexico and the Greek Crisis among others. Mr. Liévano has also collaborated with Migrahack, an initiative that organizes hackatons focused on immigration for students, activists and journalists. He has a degree in communications from Universidad Externado de Colombia, a graduate degree in print journalism from Boston University and was selected as a John S. Knight Fellow in 2012.



Michelle Mittelstadt @MittelWorld
Director of Communications and Public Affairs, Migration Policy Institute; Director of Communications, Migration Policy Institute Europe @MigrationPolicy

Michelle Mittelstadt is responsible for developing and implementing the Migration Policy Institute (MPI)'s strategic communications, coordinating public and media outreach and events, managing the editing and publishing process, and overseeing the Institute's websites, social media platforms, and publication of its online journal, the Migration Information Source. A veteran journalist, she joined MPI after covering immigration policy, Congress, and border-related issues in the Washington bureaus of The Associated Press, *The Dallas Morning News*, and the *Houston Chronicle*. She has written hundreds of articles examining U.S. immigration policy, border and interior enforcement, and the post-9/11 legislative and executive branch changes that have altered the immigration landscape. She also covered the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security. Prior to coming to Washington, Ms. Mittelstadt was an editor with The Associated Press in Dallas and managing editor of *The Courier Herald* in Dublin, Ga.



Eric Newton @EricNewton1
Innovation Chief, Professor of Practice, The Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication

As the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Eric Newton drives change and experimentation at Cronkite News, the news division for Arizona PBS. He also serves Knight Foundation as a consultant, working on special projects and endowment grants. In his nearly 15 years at the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, he expanded the foundation's journalism and media innovation program, overseeing the development of more than \$300 million in grants, \$160 million of which went to universities for pioneering projects in journalism education. Newton developed grants for groundbreaking initiatives such as Poynter Institute's News University, the largest online journalism-training portal in the world, and Sunshine Week, an annual national observance of the importance of open government. His work was central to the creation of the Carnegie-Knight Initiative on the Future of Journalism Education, a high-visibility consortium of leading journalism schools dedicated to transforming journalism education at the university level. At Knight Foundation in 2007, Newton's team launched the nationally recognized Knight News

Challenge, a media innovation competition that funds breakthrough ideas in journalism. Before joining Knight Foundation, Newton was founding managing editor of the Newseum in Arlington, Va. (now in Washington, D.C.). As managing editor of the *Oakland Tribune*, he helped guide the paper to numerous awards, including a Pulitzer Prize. He is the author of books and publications, including “Searchlights and Sunglasses: Field Notes From the Digital Age of Journalism.” He shared a Peabody Award for Link TV’s nightly news program, “Mosaic: World News From the Middle East.”



Dr. Andre Oboler (Australia) @oboler
CEO, Online Hate Prevention Institute @OnlineHate

Dr. Andre Oboler is CEO of the Online Hate Prevention Institute (OHPI), an Australian charity combating all forms of online hate. He serves as Co-Chair of the Working Group on anti-Semitism in the Media and on the Internet of the Global Forum to Combat anti-Semitism, an expert member of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, and a Distinguished Visitor for the IEEE Computer Society. He has served as an expert member of the Inter-Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Anti-Semitism, has testified before the Italian Parliament, and is featured regularly in the media. Dr. Oboler founded the Online Hate Prevention Institute in 2012 in order to take the lessons learned at the leading edge of combating online anti-Semitism and to apply them for the benefit of all sections of society. OHPI has produced world-leading work tackling online issues of anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim hate, racism against Indigenous Australians, misogyny, homophobia and more. OHPI’s flagship project, FightAgainstHate.com, is a unique online reporting system that provides data on online hate and transparency on the effectiveness of social media companies in responding to it. Led by Dr. Oboler, OHPI provides monitoring of online hate, technical recommendations to improving social media platforms, policy recommendations and law reform recommendations. Dr. Oboler holds a PhD in Computer Science from Lancaster University (UK) and a Juris Doctor from Monash University (Australia).



Mirta Ojito @MirtaOjito
Director, News Standards, Telemundo network

Mirta Ojito was born in Havana, Cuba, and came to the United States in 1980 in the Mariel boatlift. She has received the American Society of Newspaper Editors’ Award for best foreign reporting, and she shared the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for national reporting, for her contribution to the series “How Race Is Lived in America.” Her work has appeared in several anthologies, including *Written into History: Pulitzer Prize Reporting of the Twentieth Century* from The New York Times, edited by Anthony Lewis. Ojito has taught journalism at New York University, Columbia University, and the University of Miami. She writes for *The New York Times* from Miami.



Michael Oreskes @MichaelOreskes

Senior Vice President for News, Editorial Director, NPR

Michael Oreskes is Senior Vice President for News, and Editorial Director at National Public Radio (NPR). Prior to that, he was Vice President and Senior Managing Editor at the Associated Press. There, he supervised the daily all-format and global report. He came to the Associate Press from the *International Herald Tribune* in Paris, France where he was Executive Editor. He spent 27 years with The New York Times Co. He began in 1981 as reporter, covering local, state and national politics; he was later appointed Metro editor, Washington bureau chief and deputy managing editor. Before coming to The *Times*, he worked for the *New York Daily News*, where he was a general assignment reporter, City Hall bureau chief, and also covered education, Albany and the labor beat. He is the co-author of *The Genius of America: How The Constitution Saved our Country and Why it Can Again* (Bloomsbury).



Nihal Saad @UNAOC

Chief of Cabinet & Spokesperson for the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

Nihal Saad is Chief of Cabinet and Spokesperson for the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. Prior to that, she was the Spokesperson for the 66th President of the United Nations General Assembly. With more than twenty-two years of experience in Journalism, Ms. Saad was the Head of the Press & Information Bureau at the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the UN. Before moving to NY, she was Senior Political Correspondent and TV host for Egypt's TV. She holds a Masters degree in TV Journalism from the American University in Cairo and a Diploma in Linguistics from Ain Shams University in Cairo. She has appeared on several TV shows as a commentator on International affairs, with Larry King (CNN), Al Arabyia TV, France 24 and Egypt's TV.



Jane Sasseen @janesasseen

Executive Director, McGraw Center, CUNY Graduate School of Journalism

A visiting professor in the Global Business Journalism program at Tsinghua University in Beijing in the fall of 2013, Jane Sasseen became the Founding Executive Director of the McGraw Center for Business Journalism at the City University of New York in January 2014. She spent 15 years at *BusinessWeek* magazine, where she was senior editor for news, Washington bureau chief, and a national correspondent. She was also editor-in-chief of the politics and opinion channels of Yahoo News, the largest digital news site in the United States. Earlier in her career, she worked for nine years in Europe, writing for *Newsweek*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *International Herald Tribune* and others before joining London-based *International Management* magazine as Paris bureau chief. More recently, she has written for *The New York Times*, The Economist Group, and others, in addition

to doing extensive work on digital media and the future of journalism for the The Pew Research Center's annual State of the News Media report. She is the author of *The Video Revolution*, an analysis of how citizen-shot video is changing global news coverage, for the Center for International Media Assistance, as well as *A Clash of Cultures: Hate Speech, Taboos, Blasphemy, and the Role of the News Media*. She is a recipient of the Gerald Loeb Award, the top prize for financial journalism in America. She is a member of the advisory board of the International Center for Journalists and a delegate to the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission on the Media.



Rosario Soraide
Project Officer, Division of Freedom of Expression and Media Development, Communication and Information Sector, UNESCO
@UNESCO

Rosario joined UNESCO's Division of Freedom of Expression and Media Development in 2009, and has since been involved in projects promoting freedom of expression, freedom of information and media development in different regions. These have included initiatives focused on ethical and professional standards in journalism, safety of journalists, Internet privacy and freedom of expression, among others. She is currently in charge of coordinating the media axis of the NET-MED Youth project, funded by the European Union and implemented by UNESCO in Southern Mediterranean countries. In this framework, she has managed dialogue, capacity-building and media production efforts that promote youth's self-expression, their role in intercultural dialogue and peace-building; aiming, among other objectives, to counter hate-speech. Prior to joining UNESCO, Rosario worked for the World Bank, in the fields of access to information and citizen participation. She also conducted research for the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression within the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and for the Center for Studies on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information (CELE, Palermo University's School of Law, Buenos Aires). She holds an MPhil in Development Studies from Oxford University, where she also worked for the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism; and an undergraduate degree in Political Science/International Relations from the Argentine Catholic University (Buenos Aires).

Kai Wright @kai_wright
Features Editor, The Nation



Kai Wright's reporting and writing has focused on economic inequity, healthcare, racial justice, and sexuality. He is the former editorial director of Colorlines, a longtime fellow of the Investigative Fund at the Nation Institute and a regular analyst on National Public Radio and in other broadcast media.



John Yearwood [@john_yearwood](#)

World Editor, *The Miami Herald*; Chairman, International Press Institute

Under Yearwood's leadership, the World Desk of *The Miami Herald* has won numerous awards, including the Arthur Ross Award for best coverage of Latin America and it was named a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Breaking News for the Haiti earthquake coverage. It has also won recognition from Columbia University, the Overseas Press Club, the American Academy of Diplomacy and the King of Spain. Yearwood's legacy at the *Herald* includes conceiving and directing the landmark "A Rising Voice" series that reported on the empowerment and civil rights struggle occurring among Afro-Latin Americans. Yearwood is a regular guest on National Public Radio, and local and national television programs, including the Tavis Smiley Show. During the course of his career, he has met with countless world leaders ranging from Nelson Mandela and Margaret Thatcher to President Obama and Jordan's King Abdullah. Prior to joining the *Miami Herald*, Yearwood was National/International Editor at the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* in Texas. Before that, he spent two years in Trinidad as founding publisher/editor of IBIS, a general lifestyle magazine. He also spent 10 years at *The Dallas Morning News*, where he reported from Europe, Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.