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## The Commonwealth NDC Webinar Series

### Accelerating Inclusive Gender-Responsive Climate Finance for Effective NDCs: The Role of National Climate Funds

5<sup>th</sup> March 2024, 14:00 - 15:30 (GMT)

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#### Introduction

Climate finance that is inclusive and gender-responsive tends to be more effective. The integration of women, men, young people and all key stakeholders in the design and delivery of projects accessing climate finance improves the overall achievement of project outcomes. Discounting the most vulnerable, including women and young people, as crucially relevant stakeholder groups when deploying climate finance can lead to suboptimal results and undermine the sustainability of funded interventions. By emphasizing inclusivity and gender responsiveness, Governments can ensure that climate finance not only addresses environmental challenges but also promotes social equity and empowers marginalised communities and vulnerable people.

The Commonwealth Secretariat through its Commonwealth NDC Programme and in collaboration with the NDC Partnership provides technical support to its member countries to fast track the implementation of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). This is part of the broader Commonwealth Climate Change Programme which focuses on strengthening the resilience of Commonwealth countries to the negative impacts of climate change along with supporting their mitigation efforts. The Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH) is one of the main vehicles of this support and the Hub helps countries to increase their access to available climate finance through the development of grant proposals and project pipelines; building human and institutional capacity; providing technical advisory services; and facilitating cross-Commonwealth cooperation including sharing of experiences and expertise. Gender and youth considerations are integrated across all levels of operation.

The CCFAH is supporting Commonwealth member countries in establishing and strengthening financing institutions and related initiatives including national climate change funds, insurance mechanisms as well as project development and climate finance units. In Antigua and Barbuda, support is being provided to determine the feasibility of a gender-responsive blended finance micro-equity window for the Sustainable Island Resource Framework (SIRF) Fund. The SIRF Fund, established by law, is the main funding mechanism for climate and environment projects. It receives contributions from various sources, including the Global Environment Facility, Adaptation Fund, Green Climate Fund, and a concessional loan from the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development and provides grants to civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, and low-cost loans to individuals, particularly under its Adaptation Window.

In Maldives and Tonga, the CCFAH is also providing similar support. The Climate Emergency Fund of Maldives is designed as a comprehensive and overarching investment fund that deploys various types of capital, including equity, debt, technical assistance, and project development grants to support climate and environmental projects. In Tonga, the CCFAH is assisting in the preparation of an Investment Policy for the Tonga Climate Change Fund (TCCF), serving as the primary channel for environmental and climate mitigation and adaptation funding from international and domestic sources.

The experiences and lessons drawn from the design and implementation of these initiatives demonstrate the need for a holistic and collaborative approach to climate financing, one that integrates gender and youth considerations, prioritises financial planning, and leverages international cooperation. The webinar will therefore serve as a knowledge-sharing platform, fostering a deeper understanding of the collaborative efforts between international organizations, such as the Commonwealth Secretariat and the NDC-Partnership, and individual countries to enhance the inclusivity and gender-responsiveness of national climate funds. The webinar is aligned with the International Women's Day (IWD) theme for 2024 'Count Her In: Invest in Women. Accelerate Progress'.

## Context and Objectives

The Commonwealth NDC Webinar series delivers on the CCFAH Knowledge Management Strategy to spur the accumulation and transfer of critical knowledge across countries and regions for the replication and scaling up of innovative and successful climate action projects and initiatives across the Commonwealth. A set of four webinars have been delivered thus far capturing CCFAH experiences and lessons learned across its NDC related work. The dates held and topics for these include:

- 17th February 2022 - Climate Finance: From Landscape to Strategy Implementation;
- 8th March 2022 - Integrating Gender Equality into NDC implementation;
- 12th April 2022 - Developing of Climate Financing Frameworks for Improving the Alignment of Public and Private Sector Investments
- 31st May 2023 - Resource Mobilisation for NDC Implementation: Experiences and Lessons from Commonwealth Countries.

## Objectives:

The main objectives of the webinar are as follows:

- To share experiences and lessons learned from various countries and stakeholders on making national climate funds more inclusive and gender-responsive towards the attainment of effective and fair NDC implementation.
- Explore diverse strategies of national climate change funds for promoting inclusive and gender-responsive climate financing for achieving NDC targets and wider climate goals.
- Spotlight Antigua and Barbuda's Gender-Responsive In-Kind Micro Equity Blended Financing Window under the SIRF Fund as a practical case study, identifying key elements and transferable insights.

## Desired Outcomes

- Increased awareness and understanding among participants regarding the importance of inclusive and gender-responsive climate finance in achieving effective NDCs.
- Building partnerships and fostering collaboration amongst participants to enhance the collective efforts toward implementing inclusive and gender-responsiveness into their climate finance policies and practices at the national level.

- Highlighting successful case studies and best practices from member countries that have effectively integrated inclusivity and gender-responsiveness into their national climate funds.
- Empowered individuals and organizations to actively contribute to the development and implementation of inclusive and gender-responsive climate finance mechanisms and strategies within their respective contexts.

## Agenda

TIME	ITEM
<b>Event Moderator: Ms. Uzoamaka Nwamarah, Adviser, Climate Change, Commonwealth Secretariat</b>	
<b>OPENING SESSION</b>	
<b>14:00 - 14:15</b>	<b>Welcome and Context Setting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ms. Uzoamaka Nwamarah</b>, Adviser, Climate Change, Commonwealth Secretariat</li> </ul>
	<b>Opening Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dr Ruth Kattumuri</b>, Senior Director, Economic, Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate, Commonwealth Secretariat</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Amanda McKee</b>, Director, Knowledge and Learning, NDC Partnership Support Unit</li> </ul>
<b>TECHICAL SESSION</b>	
<b>14:15 - 14:40</b>	<b>Presentations</b>
	<p><b>Lessons Learned in the Development of a Gender-responsive Blended Finance Window under the Sustainable Island Resource Framework (SIRF) Fund</b></p> <p><b>Country Perspectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mr. Garth Simon</b>, Project Technical Officer and Monitoring &amp; Evaluation Associate, Department of Environment of Antigua and Barbuda</li> </ul> <p><b>Design Level Perspectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ms. Catherine Allinson</b>, Director, Future Earth Ltd</li> </ul>
<b>14:40 - 15:20</b>	<p><b>Moderated Panel Discussion with Q&amp;A</b></p> <p><b>Key Considerations for Designing Inclusive and Gender-Responsive National Climate Funds for Effective NDC Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ms. Sandrine Kamikazi</b>, Programme Manager Intego Facility, Rwanda Green Fund</li> <li>• <b>Mr. Thibyan Ibrahim</b>, Assistant Director, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology, Republic of Maldives</li> <li>• <b>Dr. Olufunso Somorin</b>, Regional Principal Officer-Climate Change and Green Growth Program East Africa, African Development Bank</li> <li>• <b>Dr Anatasia Aladysheva</b>, Impact Evaluation Specialist, IEU LORTA Programme, Green Climate Fund (GCF)</li> </ul>

15:20 - 15:28	<b>Reflections and Main Takeaways</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ms. Nithya Srinivasan</b>, Executive Committee Member, Commonwealth Youth Gender, and Equality Network (CYGEN)</li> <li>• <b>Dr. Oldman Koboto</b>, Adviser and Manager, Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH)</li> </ul>
<b>CLOSING SESSION</b>	
15:28 - 15:30	<b>Closing Remarks and Way Forward</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mr. Unnikrishnan Nair</b>, Head of Climate Change, Commonwealth Secretariat</li> </ul>

## Speaker's Bio



### Uzoamaka Nwamarah

**Adviser-Climate Change, Economic, Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate, The Commonwealth Secretariat**

Uzoamaka Nwamarah is a dynamic Climate Change Adviser at the Commonwealth Secretariat. In her role, she provides strategic leadership and technical expertise to drive the implementation of the Commonwealth Climate Change Programme. She leads the Commonwealth NDC Programme which supports member countries to expedite the attainment of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) with on-the-ground technical assistance. Uzoamaka also champions the Secretariat's Gender and Youth Climate Action Programmes, ensuring that climate initiatives are inclusive and effective for men, women, and young people, recognizing them as catalysts for positive change, particularly in the operational delivery of the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH) and Commonwealth Living Lands Charter (CALL).

Before joining the Commonwealth Secretariat, Uzoamaka excelled as a Principal Climate Finance Consultant with Atkins Realis UK, a Senior Climate Change Specialist with the African Development Bank in Tunisia and Ivory Coast, an Energy Policy Consultant with Camco UK and Sustainable Energy Officer with the East Midlands Regional Assembly UK. Her extensive experience spans collaboration with national governments, regional bodies, and international financial institutions. She is adept at advising and guiding them in designing and implementing low-carbon and climate-resilient policies, strategies, programmes, and projects, together with climate finance resource mobilisation and capacity building.

Uzoamaka Nwamarah has a Masters degree in Environmental Science and Technology - Energy Policy, from Imperial College London, United Kingdom, and a first degree in Geology from the Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. She is also a Certified Expert in Climate Adaptation Finance from the Frankfurt School of Finance and Management, Germany. Uzoamaka is a vetted Climate Resilience Expert for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and an Associate Member of the Energy Institute. Recognised for her outstanding contributions in her field, Uzoamaka was named a finalist in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths) Senior Leader category of the Black British Business Awards (BBBAwards). She proudly serves as a member of the Court of Imperial College London and enjoys a fulfilling family life with her husband and three children.



### **Prof Ruth Kattumuri**

#### **Senior Director, Economic, Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate, The Commonwealth Secretariat**

Prof Ruth Kattumuri is Senior Director of the Economic, Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate at the Commonwealth Secretariat; and provides vision, technical and thought leadership across economic development, debt management, climate change, and development of small states, including mainstreaming youth and gender.

Prof Kattumuri is an expert on international development including climate change engaged in enabling resilient development and strongly committed to protecting people and planet. She led the design and development of the Commonwealth universal vulnerability index (UVI) in 2021, which is a precursor to and has integrally informed the proposed UN- Multidimensional Vulnerability Index.

Prof Kattumuri has been involved in high-level policy engagement and influence across several countries toward enabling achievement of a range of their Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the development and achievement of their Nationally Determined (Climate) Contributions (NDCs). She has been involved at the early stages of the New Development Bank and collaborates closely across Multinational Development Banks (MDBs). She has been engaged throughout her career in building bridges between the global South and North and is committed to South - South co-operation.

Prof Kattumuri has formerly been Director of Asia Research Centre, as well as Founder of the IG Patel Chair and India Observatory at the London School of Economics. She is Fellow of Academy of Social Sciences, is a Cambridge Commonwealth Fellow and has her PhD from the London School of Economics. She received the Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Samman Award for her work on sustainable and inclusive development, and her commitment to education, training, mentoring and empowering scores of young people.



### **Amanda McKee**

#### **Director, Knowledge and Learning, NDC Partnership**

Amanda McKee is the Director for Knowledge and Learning with the NDC Partnership Support Unit. She oversees the development of knowledge products and learning activities to support NDC implementation and ambition-raising efforts across the Partnership members and beyond. Previously, Amanda managed the Partnership's Climate Action Enhancement Package (CAEP), supporting 67 developing countries to

enhance their NDCs as part of the 2020 update process. This included disbursement of the Partnership's \$30 million Technical Assistance Fund. Amanda has spent much of her career fostering collaboration to promote learning across sectors and disciplines to tackle policy challenges in the fields of climate change, green growth, and sustainable development.

Before joining the NDC Partnership, Amanda led knowledge management efforts for the Green Growth Knowledge Platform (GGKP), helping to shape global research efforts to support policy action on green growth, and encourage collaboration across multilateral organizations and research institutes. Prior to this, Amanda worked on trade and environment



issues with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the UN's International Trade Centre. This included contributions to the WTO/UN Environment report on Trade and Climate Change, development of training materials and delivery of training courses to government officials and small- to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). She is a Canadian citizen and holds a Master's degree in International Economics from the Graduate Institute for International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland.



**Garth Simon**  
**Project Technical Officer and Monitoring & Evaluation Associate,**  
**Department of Environment, Antigua and Barbuda**

Garth Simon currently serves as a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Associate and Project Technical Officer at the Antigua and Barbuda Department of Environment (DOE) and Sustainable Island Resource Framework Fund. In this role, he has key responsibilities, including the monitoring and evaluation of projects, capturing valuable lessons learned, tracking climate finance, and providing support for project development and implementation.

Garth plays a pivotal role in supporting the implementation of Antigua and Barbuda's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). His expertise extends to collaborating with Climate Analytics in contributing to the development of an NDC Financing Strategy, Action Plan, and Investment Roadmap for Antigua and Barbuda. Additionally, he is actively involved in the development of a blended finance window under the Sustainable Island Resource Framework (SIRF) Fund, with support from the Commonwealth Secretariat and Future Earth Ltd.



**Catherine Allinson**  
**Director, Future Earth Ltd**

Catherine Allinson is Director of Future Earth Ltd., a climate change systems innovation consultancy supporting NDC implementation in developing countries. Catherine advises national governments on inclusive strategies for gender just NDC transitions. For over a decade she has worked across the globe for UN agencies and the NDC Partnership, developing and leading catalytic innovation projects, and securing blended finance to help governments thrive and businesses scale. She is also a seasoned industry event speaker and moderator.



**Sandrine Kamikazi**  
**Programme Manager Intego Facility, Rwanda Green Fund**

Sandrine Kamikazi was recently seconded as the Programme Manager of Intego Facility at the Rwanda Green Fund. Intego Facility is a new climate focused funding facility for the public sector. With a keen focus on supporting Rwanda's National Determined Contributions (NDC) climate action plan, Intego aims to facilitate public institutions at both the central and local level to access funding for climate change adaptation and mitigation projects across various priority sectors. Sandrine has over seven years of experience in Environmental Management and program management, she brings valuable expertise to this endeavor.

Previously, she served as the Environmental Technical Advisor to the CEO at Rwanda Green Fund for four years, playing a pivotal role in strategic decision-making and providing analysis on organizational priorities.

Prior to her tenure at Rwanda Green Fund, Sandrine worked at the Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA) and was also an Environmental consultant on various projects within Rwanda. Her academic credentials include a Master's Degree in Environmental Management from Massey University in New Zealand and a Bachelor's Degree in Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness from the National University of Rwanda.



**Thibyan Ibrahim**  
**Assistant Director, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology, The Republic of the Maldives**

Thibyan currently works as an Assistant Director of the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology of the Republic of Maldives. In his current role he is involved with climate finance and resource mobilisation, while also overseeing and developing adaptation and mitigation projects. He undertakes climate finance and adaptation negotiations in the UNFCCC process as a coordinator for the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). He has previously worked on the implementation of the Montreal Protocol in the Maldives.

Mr. Ibrahim holds an undergraduate degree in Environmental Management from the University of Manchester, United Kingdom.



**Dr. Olufunso Somorin**  
**Regional Principal Officer-Climate Change and Green Growth Program East Africa, African Development Bank**

Dr. Olufunso Somorin is a Regional Principal Officer at the African Development Bank. He leads the Bank's work on climate change and green growth in the 13 countries of the Bank's East African region. This includes supporting countries' access to climate finance for implementing their climate actions, and mainstreaming climate change in all Bank policies and programs.

He holds a PhD in International Environmental Policy from Wageningen University, the Netherlands, as well as two Masters' degrees from Finland and Netherlands on Agriculture and Forest Policy. He gives guest-lectures at King's College London, African Leadership University (Rwanda) and Strathmore University (Kenya). Somorin is an Eisenhower Fellow.



**Dr Anastasia Aladysheva**  
**Impact Evaluation Specialist IEU, Green Climate Fund (GCF)**

Dr. Anastasia Aladysheva is Impact Evaluation Specialist a.i. at the IEU LORTA programme. Before joining the IEU, she worked in the field of impact evaluations of development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding programmes for over 10 years. She worked at the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, and the World Bank. Anastasia holds a PhD in Development Economics

from the Graduate Institute in Geneva.



**Nithya Srinivasan,**  
**Executive Committee Member, Commonwealth Youth Gender, and Equality Network (CYGEN)**

Nithya Srinivasan is a development economist by training and currently works with the World Bank on issues of gender, labour, growth and disaster risk financing in developing countries. She has experience working on research and program operations in several countries in South Asia and Eastern and Southern Africa and currently supports a large-scale lending operation on helping MSMEs cope with climate shocks in Lesotho.

She is passionate about incorporating gender considerations in climate change discussions and has done empirical research on gender and climate change adaptation issues in India. She is an executive committee member on CYGEN (where she leads the team on Youth Transitions) and holds a Masters in International Development Economics from Yale University.





### **Dr Oldman Oduetse Koboto**

**Adviser and Manager Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub, Climate Section, Economic, Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate, The Commonwealth Secretariat**

Dr Oldman Oduetse Koboto originates from Botswana. He joins the CCFAH as The Manager and Adviser based in Mauritius. He Joins the Commonwealth from the Government of Botswana where he served as the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resource Conservation and Tourism which is also responsible for climate change coordination Botswana. Before joining the government, he was the Head of Unit and Environment and Climate Change Specialist at UNDP in Botswana for over four years. During his tenure at UNDP, Dr Koboto undertook Detailed Assignments in Liberia in 2016 and 2018 where he led and participated in the development of Green Climate Fund projects amongst others. Part of his leadership experience besides being a PS and UNDP Head of Unit also stems from his previous role as the Director for Department of Wildlife and National Parks which is a paramilitary organisation within the government of Botswana where he served for over two years before joining UNDP.

Dr Koboto got engaged in Climate Change work during his tenure as the Legal advisor in the Ministry of Environment in 2009 and he participated in the pre-session and COP meetings since then to date. He also served as a Lead Consultant for the development of Climate Change Response Policy for the Republic of Botswana. Dr Koboto holds Doctor of Public International Law from China University of Political Science and Law (2013), Master of International Environmental Law (2009) and Bachelor of Law from University of Western Cape (2007) from the Republic of South Africa. Amongst other trainings, Dr Koboto has completed short term academic credited courses in Environmental Audits from ICISA in India, Sustainable Climate Finance from SOAS in London and International Business Transaction from Harvard Law School Summer School.

Dr Koboto is also a staunch sportsman who has been doing karate for 30 years and now holds a 4th degree blackbelt. He is married with 2 boys.



**Unnikrishnan Divakaran Nair**

**Head of Climate Change, The Commonwealth Secretariat**

Mr. Unnikrishnan Divakaran Nair, is the head of Climate Change at the Commonwealth Secretariat, leading the climate change programme of the Secretariat focussing on the flagship initiatives like the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub, Commonsensing and the Commonwealth Living Lands Charter focussing on 56 small and other vulnerable Commonwealth Countries. Mr Nair has played a key role in the development of the negotiated text of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2022, Kigali Communiqué. Before Commonwealth he was serving the UN climate change secretariat (UNFCCC) at Bonn as officer responsible for the Climate Finance and National Adaptation Plans (NAP) process for the Small Island States and Least Developed Countries. Unnikrishnan also had a long stint at GIZ India, as Senior Adviser, managing the climate finance and natural resource management vertical under Indo-German bilateral cooperation. Mr. Nair has a long history of involvement in the climate action space, with over 21 years of technical project management, policy formulation, climate negotiations and resource mobilization experience in the areas of climate change adaptation, mitigation and loss and damage. Mr. Nair is an expert in the field of climate finance and capacity building for low carbon and climate resilient development in the context of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and other vulnerable developing countries. He also worked with a range of organizations from the civil society to community-based organizations to private sector, bilateral and multilateral agencies across multiple countries.