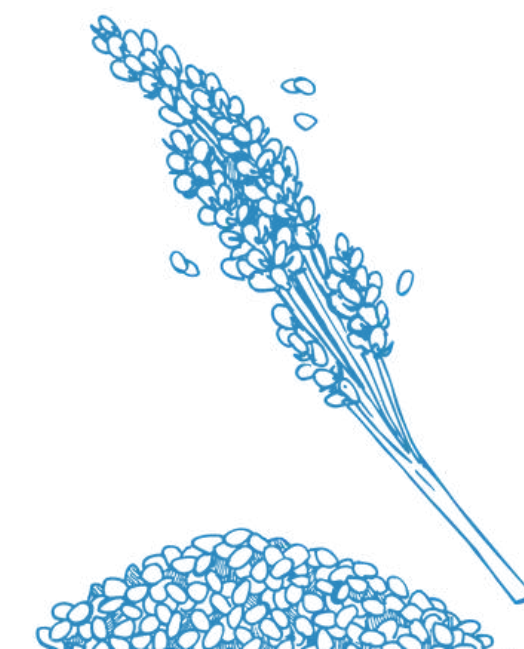




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A GUIDE TO:

**FRONTLINE FOOD LEADERS  
AVAILABLE FOR **SPEAKING**  
OPPORTUNITIES AT **COP29****



## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

In so many parts of the world, food is on the frontline of the climate crisis. It only takes one climate disaster—a drought, flood, or heatwave—for entire villages to spiral into debt, poverty, and hunger—unraveling regional food systems and economies.

In November at COP29, the UN Climate Conference in Azerbaijan, the long-term climate finance goal will be at the forefront of negotiations.

A new report by the Global Alliance for the Future of Food shows that while overall public climate finance has increased in the past years, funding towards sustainable food systems is not keeping pace.



A transformation of food systems requires an ambitious scaling up of funding. To highlight the crucial intersection of food systems and the climate crisis, we are privileged to have seventeen frontline food leaders from around the world to highlight these perspectives at COP29.

Each of them bring powerful testimonies and a strong record of championing food sovereignty and climate justice. They represent communities faced with the hard realities of adapting to a changing climate while also forging ahead with solutions based on agroecological approaches.

To connect with the speakers, please contact  
**Natalia Reyes Tejada at [natalia@futureoffood.org](mailto:natalia@futureoffood.org)**

For enquiries at COP29, please contact:  
**Teresa Gerner at [teresa@futureoffood.org](mailto:teresa@futureoffood.org)**

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## **SPEAKERS BY REGION**

### **AFRICA**

- Elujulo Opeyemi — Nigeria
- Diane Sibanda — Botswana
- Gertrude Kabusimbi Kenyangi — Uganda
- Josephine Okojie — Nigeria
- Ledama Masidza — Kenya
- Proscovier Vikman — Uganda
- Richard Kachungu — Zambia
- Rosinah Mbenya — Kenya
- Sena Alouka — Togo

### **ASIA**

- Dr Dipayan Dey — India
- Dr Edmond Fernandes — India
- (Esther) Ma Estrella Penunia Banzuela — Philippines
- Pavel Partha — Bangladesh
- Thilak Kariyawasam — Sri Lanka

### **LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

- Maurício Fernandes de Alcântara — Brazil
- Ruth Viola Spencer — Antigua and Barbuda

### **OCEANIA**

- Jocelyn King — Australia



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**AFRICA**

Manon Koningstein / CIAT



# ELUJULO OPEYEMI

 **NIGERIA**

**YOUTH IN AGROECOLOGY AND RESTORATION NETWORK (YARN)**

Elujulo Opeyemi founded the Youth in Agroecology and Restoration Network (YARN), a movement of African youth leveraging awareness on agroecology and capacity-building for agrifood systems transformation.

He is a Ban Ki-moon Youth Agri-Champion and the SDG2 Global Focal Point at the UN Major Group for Children and Youth (UNMGCY) where he ensures youth perspectives are captured into food-related entities within the UN system and its partner agencies.

He holds a Master's degree in environmental management and a postgraduate diploma in soil management and land-use planning.

## LANGUAGES SPOKEN

English

## ATTENDING COP29

10 - 22 November 2024

## AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Agroecology
- Youth
- Just Transition
- Soil health
- Climate change





# DIANE SIBANDA

 **BOTSWANA**

**BOTSWANA FARMERS ASSOCIATION**

Diane, President and Founder of the Botswana Farmers Association, is dedicated to advocating for smallholder farmers to have a seat at the table. With experience serving on boards, she believes empowerment begins with sharing knowledge.

Diane is passionate about ensuring smallholder farmers lead conversations on climate change and its devastating impact on food security in rural communities.

## LANGUAGES SPOKEN

English

## ATTENDING COP29

10 - 23 November 2024

## AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Climate Change
- Agroecology

# GERTRUDE KABUSIMBI KENYANGI



 **UGANDA**

**SUPPORT FOR WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

Gertrude, Executive Director and Founder of Support for Women in Agriculture and Environment, holds a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture from Makerere University and a Master's in Integrated Rural Development Planning. She has represented East African civil society at the UNFAO's Committee on Food Security and served as an observer for the Climate Investment Fund.

A recipient of the 2015 Wangari Maathai Prize and ONE Prize, Gertrude is a dedicated advocate for sustainable livelihoods and food security.

## LANGUAGES SPOKEN

English

## ATTENDING COP29

10 - 23 November 2024

## AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Agroecology
- Gender
- Forest Ecosystem Restoration
- Article 6 (Market Based Mechanisms)
- Disaster Risk Reduction
- Loss and Damage



# JOSEPHINE OKOJIE

 **NIGERIA**

FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL WRITERS  
ORGANISATION OF NIGERIA

Josephine is a journalist with over five years of experience reporting on agriculture, food safety, climate change, wildlife, and environmental issues. She is dedicated to covering stories that highlight the intersection of these topics and their impact on communities and ecosystems.

## LANGUAGES SPOKEN

English

## ATTENDING COP29

10 - 23 November 2024

## AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Climate Change
- Food and Nutrition
- Security
- Agroecology
- Youth and Gender





## LEDAMA MASIDZA

 **KENYA**

AFRICAN FOOD FELLOWSHIP, OCEANS  
ALIVE, LIFT NETWORK, CNN ACADEMY

Ledama is a young Kenyan leader focused on food systems, conservation, and community empowerment. Passionate about the ocean, forests, and sustainability, he leads initiatives that empower Indigenous food systems and promote community-led conservation.

His work has gained global recognition, featured on platforms like BBC, CNN, and Al Jazeera, highlighting his impact on communities and ecosystems.

### LANGUAGES SPOKEN

Swahili

English

### ATTENDING COP29

10 - 23 November 2024

### AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Local Community and Indigenous Food Systems,
- Fisheries
- Agroecology
- Youth
- Marine Ecosystem Restoration



## PROSCOVIER VIKMAN

**UGANDA**

CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK UGANDA,  
CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION EAST AFRICA

Proscovier is the Founder of Afrolinks International Frontiers and Co-Director of Climate Change Action East Africa (CCAEA). A passionate advocate for climate change adaptation, agroecology, and social justice, she is also a smallholder farmer in Uganda's Kasanda District.

Proscovier works to promote food security and sovereignty by sharing knowledge with schools, universities, and rural communities. Her pilot projects have successfully regenerated traditional crops like climbing yams and local banana species, key staples in the region.

### LANGUAGES SPOKEN

English

### ATTENDING COP29

10 - 23 November 2024

### AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Agroecology
- Climate Change
- Gender
- Food Security
- Sovereignty and Systems
- Climate Finance



# RICHARD KACHUNGU

 ZAMBIA

YOUNG EMERGING FARMERS INITIATIVE (YEFI)

Richard is a visionary youth advocate, entrepreneur, and co-founder of the Young Emerging Farmers Initiative, where he serves as Executive Director. Richard has trained over 10,000 youths in agriculture, business, and leadership, mentoring more than 2,000 in business development. With a vast outreach of 500,000 people, he has facilitated 20+ youth-led agro-enterprises.

Richard holds several global leadership titles, including Obama Leader and Climate Reality Leader, and has received various awards for contributions to youth empowerment and climate action.

## LANGUAGES SPOKEN

Bemba

English

Nyanja

## ATTENDING COP29

10 - 23 November 2024

## AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Youth
- Agroecology
- Indigenous Community
- Regeneration
- Agrobusiness



## ROSINAH MBENYA

 **KENYA**

**PARTICIPATORY ECOLOGICAL LAND USE  
MANAGEMENT (PELUM) KENYA**

Rosinah is the Country Coordinator at PELUM Kenya, a membership network that promotes agroecological principles among smallholder farmers and pastoralists. An environmentalist by profession, Rosinah has over 14 years of experience in development projects focused on agroecology, climate change, and networking.

With extensive knowledge and practical experience in issues affecting small-scale farmers and communities, Rosinah is passionate about transforming rural livelihoods and advocates for eco-friendly agricultural practices to improve community well-being.

### LANGUAGES SPOKEN

Swahili

English

### ATTENDING COP29

11 - 22 November 2024

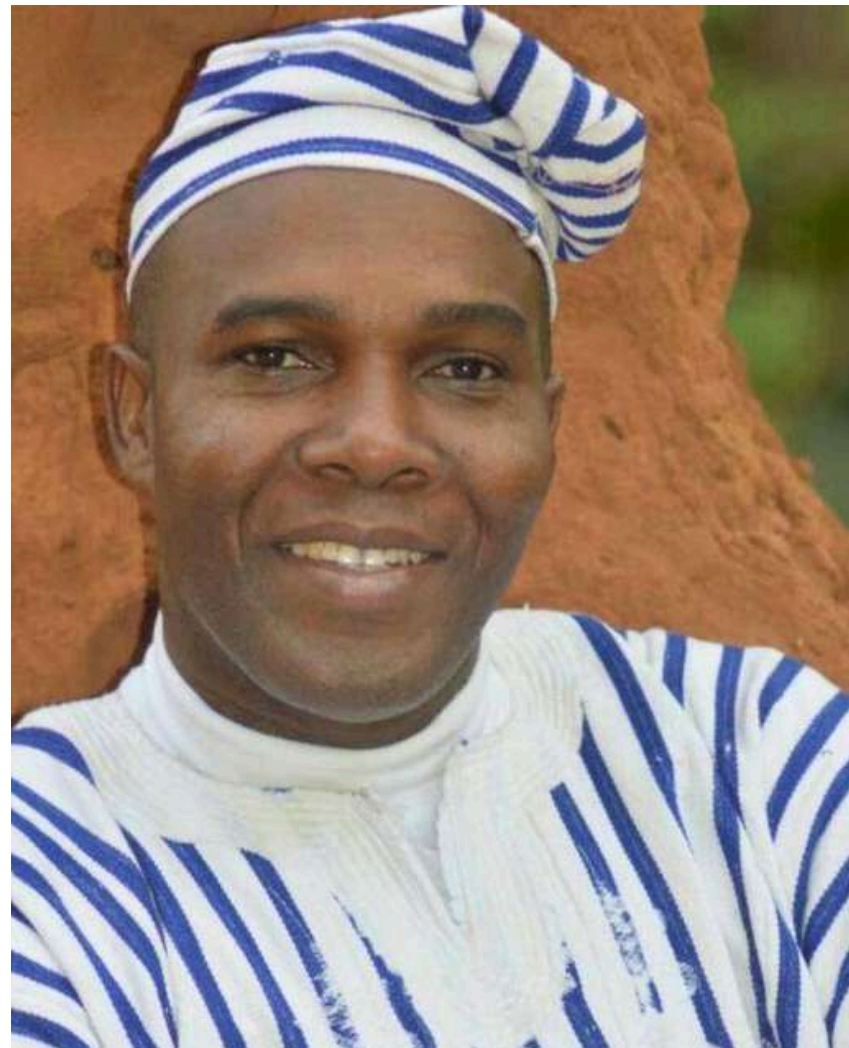
### AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Agroecology
- Small-scale Farmers and Pastoralists
- Climate Financing for Agriculture
- Youth and Women
- Networking

# SENA ALOUKA

 **TOGO**

**FOUNDER: JEUNES VOLONTAIRES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT**



Sena has been a leader in global environmental justice since 1999, following his graduation in African Literary and Social Sciences from Togo University and a Sustainable Development course at Rennes University in France.

An activist and journalist, he founded several organizations, including Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement (Young Volunteers for the Environment), the African Youth Initiative on Climate Change (AYIC), and the African Network of CSOs on Water and Sanitation (ANEW).

After attending 15 successive UNFCCC COPs, Sena has been appointed official negotiator on agriculture for his country, even with his civil society background.

## LANGUAGES SPOKEN

French

English

German

## ATTENDING COP29

9 - 24 November 2024

## AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Agroecology
- Youth Agroecology Enterprises
- Ecosystem Restoration
- Youth empowerment
- Environmental Communication
- Social Entrepreneurship

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**ASIA**



# DIPAYAN DEY

 **INDIA**

**SOUTH ASIAN FORUM FOR ENVIRONMENT**

Dr. Dipayan Dey is an environmental biotechnologist with 30 years of experience in sustainable climate initiatives in South Asia. He has collaborated with the UN, World Bank, and USAID on conservation and resource management.

Currently, he serves as Chair of the South Asian Forum for Environment (SAFE) and is a Senior Scientific Consultant at IIT Madras, focusing on climate-resilient agro-technology. Dr. Dey has over 50 publications and numerous international awards to his name.

## LANGUAGES SPOKEN

English

## ATTENDING COP29

9 - 19 November 2024

## AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Regenerative Agriculture
- Climate Finance
- Biodiversity Credit
- Ecosystem-based Adaptation
- Nature-based Solutions



# EDMOND FERNANDES

**INDIA**

CHD GROUP - HOLDING UN ECOSOC SPECIAL CONSULTATIVE STATUS & UNFCCC OBSERVERSHIP STATUS

Dr. Edmond Fernandes is an Indian physician, researcher, and Founder of CHD Group, a leading public health organization with UNECOSOC Special Consultative Status.

He focuses on climate action, food security, and public health, supporting risk-informed policies for governments worldwide. His work has positively impacted over 4 million lives.

## LANGUAGES SPOKEN

- Hindi
- English
- Kannada
- Konkani
- Marathi

## ATTENDING COP29

9 - 22 November 2024

## AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Global Health & Nutrition
- Disaster Risk Reduction
- Food Security
- Gender Inclusion
- Youth
- Integrated Climate Finance for Human Sustainability



# MA ESTRELLA PENUNIA BANZUELA

 **PHILIPPINES**

ASIAN FARMERS' ASSOCIATION FOR  
SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Estrella “Esther” Penunia is secretary general of the Asian Farmers’ Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA).

AFA is a regional alliance of national farmers organizations with 22 national farmers organizations in 16 countries, representing around 13 million small-scale family farmers, engaged in crops, livestock, fisheries, forestry, herding, and pastoralism. AFA promotes sustainable, climate-resilient, and agroecological approaches in farms, fisheries and forests. It aims to strengthen farmer cooperatives and their enterprises, empower women, and attract youth to agriculture.

## LANGUAGES SPOKEN

Filipino

English

## ATTENDING COP29

11 - 22 November 2024

## AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Agroecology
- Agro biodiversity
- Direct climate financing for small-scale women, men and young family farmers
- Land rights
- Cooperatives



# PAVEL PARTHA

 **BANGLADESH**

**BANGLADESH RESOURCE CENTRE FOR  
INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE (BARCIK)**

Pavel Partha is a researcher and writer on ecology and biodiversity conservation. He has a Master's degree in botany from Jahangirnagar University and has led pioneering ethnobotanical research in Bangladesh. He researches and writes on diversity, environment pluralism, climate resilience, and ecological justice. He has critiqued the influence and neo-liberal authoritarian control of multilateral banks and corporations over forests, wetlands, genetic resources, and agroecological zones.

He is the Director of the Bangladesh Resource Centre for Indigenous Knowledge (BARCIK). He works to uphold Indigenous knowledge, strengthen community-led biodiversity conservation and agroecology, and ensure food sovereignty.



## LANGUAGES SPOKEN

English

## ATTENDING COP29

10 - 22 November 2024

## AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Agroecology
- Biological diversity
- Community-led conservation
- Climate adaptation
- Ecological justice



# THILAK KARIYAWASAM

 **SRI LANKA**

FIAN / LOAM SRI LANKA

Thilak holds a Diploma in Organic Agriculture and an Advanced Certificate in Organic Agriculture Development from Grolink, Sweden, as well as a Higher Diploma in Eco Sanitation from the University of Life Sciences in Norway. Since 2009, he has served as President of the Lanka Organic Agriculture Movement (LOAM) and works as a certification specialist in organic agriculture quality.

Thilak focuses on plant genetic resource conservation and geographical indications while advocating for the right to food and promoting smallholder-centered soil carbon solutions and agroecological practices.

## LANGUAGES SPOKEN

Sinhala

English

Tamil

## ATTENDING COP29

10 - 23 November 2024

## AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Agroecology
- Climate Change
- Agroforestry
- Right to Food and Nutrition
- Fossil Fuel Phase Out

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# **LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**



# MAURÍCIO FERNANDES DE ALCÂNTARA

**BRAZIL**

INSTITUTOS REGENERA, COMIDA DO  
AMANHÃ, FRONTEIRAS DO  
DESENVOLVIMENTO, FOME ZERO E ASSOPIO

Maurício holds a master's degree in Social Anthropology from the University of São Paulo, focusing on urban consumption. He is a co-founder and director of Instituto Regenera, promoting sustainable food systems through transparent, democratic distribution of agroecological foods.

As COP30 approaches in Belém, Maurício leads a coalition of Brazilian civil society organizations to ensure that agroecological and socio-biodiverse foods are supplied at the event, advocating for change in food systems.

### LANGUAGES SPOKEN

Spanish

English

French

Portuguese

### ATTENDING COP29

10 - 21 November 2024

### AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Agroecology
- Climate Justice
- Amazonian Food Systems
- Nutritional Sovereignty
- Family Farming



## RUTH VIOLA SPENCER

**ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**

MARINE ECOSYSTEMS

PROTECTED AREAS TRUST

Ruth has led several capacity-building projects with local communities and grassroots groups. In 2019, she was selected by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda for the inaugural Energy, Climate Change and the Environment Award.

In 2015, Ruth was awarded the National Energy Globe Award for Antigua and Barbuda under the patronage of UNESCO and UNEP.

Ruth has a Master's degree in international development economics from Yale University and a postgraduate in project appraisal also from Yale.

### LANGUAGES SPOKEN

English

### ATTENDING COP16

11 - 22 November 2024

### AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- UN CBD Women's Caucus, International Indigenous Forum for Biodiversity
- Local alternative solutions for soil building and animal feed
- Circular economy processes

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**OCEANIA**





## JOCELYN KING

 **AUSTRALIA**

FIRST AUSTRALIANS CAPITAL LTD AND  
DJANABA FARM

Jocelyn is a results-driven executive with over 25 years of experience in government, not-for-profit, and Indigenous business sectors. As the founding Director and CEO of First Australians Capital, she guided innovation and investment in Indigenous economic development. Bundjalung by descent and Gadigal by birth, Jocelyn's culture shapes her personal and professional skills.

She holds a Master's in Applied Science in Social Ecology from Western Sydney University and is currently Chair of First Australians Capital Ltd and founder of Djanaba Farm.

### LANGUAGES SPOKEN

English

### ATTENDING COP29

10 - 23 November 2024

### AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- First Nations Justice
- Climate Justice
- First Nations Food and Ecosystem Management



To connect with the speakers, please contact  
**Natalia Reyes Tejada** at [natalia@futureoffood.org](mailto:natalia@futureoffood.org)

For enquiries at COP29, please contact:  
**Teresa Gerner** at [teresa@futureoffood.org](mailto:teresa@futureoffood.org)

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## GLOBAL ALLIANCE SECRETARIAT AT COP29

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- **Ruchi Tripathi, Climate and Nature Director** | [ruchi@futureoffood.org](mailto:ruchi@futureoffood.org)
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