

## Biography of Panellists

### Promoting Career Prospects for young people in the Sciences including the Water Sector to ensure sustainable island living

September 2<sup>nd</sup>

11:00-12:30

Faleata Sports Complex

CM 5

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#### Ben Anthoy Bacar MOUSSA, Comoros

- Researcher and teacher in plant taxonomy at National Herbarium of Comoros University
- Executive Director and Co-founder of SYCom (Sids Youth Comoros)
- Vice President of the regional youth association SYAH (Sids Youth Aims)



Mr Moussa completed his Master's Degree in Biodiversity, Environment and Tropical Plants at the University of "Pierre et Marie-Curie" in Paris, France, in 2011. He is involved in a number of professional and research activities which respond to the needs of his country, Comoros. He teaches life and earth sciences at the prestigious Henri Matisse French School in Comoros. His work with the University of Comoros, Ben Anthoy Bacar Moussa involves conducting research and tutorials in the field of plant biodiversity. Mr Moussa is the National Focal Point of Comoros to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

He is an active youth advocate for issues concerning sustainable development in SIDS particularly, Comoros. Recently, he was elected Vice President in the Regional Youth Association. He is the Executive Director and co-founder of SYCom. He participated in the development of a number of strategic documents which outline the agenda of young people in SIDS which were initiated by Governments of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) with the support of UN agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and UNFPA.

Mr Moussa assisted with the implementation of the UNESCO Sandwatch project in schools in Comoros. The project is designed to help young people, students and their community to better understand the impact of climate change on beaches and coastal areas and consequently, identify mitigation and adaptation solutions.

### **Professor, Rolph Payet, Seychelles- Chairperson**

- Minister for Environment and Energy in the Seychelles
- International policy expert and researcher on environment and island issues



Professor Payet previously served as Special Advisor to the President of the Seychelles on numerous environmental matters including sustainable development, biodiversity, climate change, energy, and international environment policy. He is also the Pro-Chancellor of the University of Seychelles and Associate Professor at the Linnaeus University in Sweden. He currently also serves as Blue Ribbon Panel Member of the World Bank Global Partnership on Oceans. He was previously Lead Author of the Intergovernmental Panel On Climate Change and Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum.

Rolph Payet is founding member/trustee of the Global Island Partnership, the Sea Level Rise Foundation, the Seychelles University Foundation, the Seychelles Centre for Marine Research and Technology, the Island Conservation Society and the Silhouette Foundation.

Rolph has been instrumental in increasing the visibility and impact of numerous regional and international organisations such as the International Coral Reef Initiative (co-chair from 2003-2005) and the Nairobi Convention Regional Seas Programme (coordinator 1998-2008)

Recently, Rolph has been invited to sit on numerous international conference committees and panels, and as moderator/speaker on climate change, biodiversity and island issues. He currently sits on the Blue Ribbon Panel of the World Bank Global Ocean Partnership. Recently invited by H.E. Ban Ki Moon, Secretary General of the UN, he acted as lead discussant on a panel on the Millennium Development Goals at the UN General Assembly.

Professor Payet was recently appointed by the Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon as the Executive Secretary of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. He will take up the new post in October 2014 in Geneva.



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### Alexandra Vanessa D. PIERRE

- Outreach Coordinator of Reef Check (RC) in Haiti
- Regional Commitment Coordinator of the World Youth Parliament for Water (WYPW)
- National Coordinator of the Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN) in Haiti



Ms Alexandra Vanessa D. PIERRE is the Outreach Coordinator of Reef Check in Haiti. Reef Check is an international organization which focuses on marine conservation and is dedicated to the protection and the rehabilitation of the reefs. She is pursuing a Master's Degree in Education for sustainable development at Blaise Pascale University in France and has a minor in architectural engineering from the Faculté des Sciences at the Haiti State University. As a young leader deeply involved in the water sector and the Haitian representative of the WYPW, Alexandra received two prizes in recognition of her youth work: a blue passport from the International Secretariat for Water and a nomination as the Most Outstanding Young Person of Haiti for the environment category, from the Junior Chamber International of Haiti.

Alexandra is an active youth advocate and has participated in number of youth events organized by the Haiti Youth Ministry, OAS, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNEP, 350, Wings for Water and the America's Francophony Center. Currently, she is implementing a GREEN HOUSE project, funded by the organization 350. The purpose of this project is to educate inhabitants of coastal communities of Haiti, specially the youths, about climate change.

### Bhama Ramkhelawon, Ph.D, Mauritius

- Post Doctoral Fellow, New York University medical center, USA (Jan 2011-present)
- L'OREAL/UNESCO women in science award (March 2014)
- PhD, Université Paris 7, Paris, France (Feb 2010)



Bhama's continuous eagerness to learn biological sciences brought her from Mauritius to France, where she obtained her PhD in cardiovascular diseases. She then moved to New York to gain expertise in the field of cardio-metabolic pathologies more specifically on inflammation associated with obesity and diabetes. Her goal is to gain experience and set the groundwork for her future independent career as a successful scientist woman.



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Bhama has lived and studied in different geographical regions of the planet and has put into practice the benefits of her acquired knowledge and experience thoroughly in her current research work. She is extremely motivated and dynamic. Bhama is from a small island and likes to share and help other with the same background. She is particularly devoted to the state of equal opportunity for women in the sciences and aspires to see more women at high responsibility positions.

Bhama obtained her PhD in cardiovascular diseases from Université Paris 7, Paris and is currently perusing her postdoctoral training at New York medical center in New York. Bhama is fascinated by what drives chronic inflammation in cardio metabolic diseases such as obesity and diabetes. She has made break through findings of neuronal factors that can orchestrate inflammation and promote resistance to insulin assimilation and increased blood glucose levels, which are associated with complications from these metabolic disorders. Please talk to her about any questions related to obesity and diabetes and cardiovascular complications.

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#### **Katenia Rasch, Samoa**

- Engineering officer, Samoa Water Authority



Ms Rasch is an Engineering Officer at the Samoa Water Authority, the major service provider for safe and good quality water and wastewater services for Samoa. Prior to that, she spent five years in the Waste Management Sector for the Samoan Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources where she gained a wide range of skills and knowledge on pollution mitigation and environmental management under Solid and Hazardous Waste umbrellas not only in Samoa but also in a Pacific Regional scale. She graduated with a Bachelors in Environmental Science with a Chemistry Emphasis from the University of the South Pacific in 2007 and used her knowledge to test for water quality at the Landfill leachate which adopts the Fukuoka Method from Japan. It was there that she was introduced to water related projects such as the Water Sector Support Programme (WaSSP) funded by the European Union which later became a local budget support Water Sector Project in the Samoan government.

Currently Ms Rasch is involved in the Grant Aid Project from the Japan International Cooperation Agency which includes rehabilitating Untreated Water Supply schemes for the urban part of the main island of Upolu in Samoa. This multimillion dollar project is currently the major Project with the Samoa Water Authority and involves a number of young professionals



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like Ms Rasch to experience large scale projects that supports and provides career developments both from local experts as well as overseas technical assistance.

She holds a Masters in Environmental Management from the University of Kitakyushu in Japan. Ms Rasch was fortunate to be a recipient of a Regional Waste Management Project Scholarship to study in Fukuoka for two years which was a project she was heavily involved with and is still passionate about.

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## Biography of Discussants

### Janice da Graça, Mindelo, Cape Verde

- Founder of University Volunteer Corps (Cape Verde)
- Focal point for Sustainable Development for the AIMS SIDS region at the Major Group for Children & Youth (UNMGCY); SIDS Youth AIMS Hub (SYAH) board member and islander representative at TUNZAFRIKA



Ms Da Graça has a Bachelor's of Humanities and Social Science in Social Policy from the Technical University of Lisbon in Portugal (awarded as the best student on her degree), and a Post-Graduate Degree in Art Education from the Open University of Lisbon in Portugal. She also has more than ten years of experience in the nonprofit sector.

She has worked as a facilitator on the Sustainable Development and discussions concerning the Post 2015 Agenda in Cape Verde. Under the UN-funded My SIDS My World program, she promoted youth participation, facilitated two international youth workshops, acted as the Focal Point for the Sustainable Development for the AIMS (Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea) SIDS region at the UNMGCY, and participated in the establishment of SIDS Youth AIMS Hub (SYAH). The SYAH is a youth organization which aims to improve the involvement of young women and men in issues concerning sustainable development. Previously, Ms Da Graça worked as a Social Service Coordinator at the University of Cape Verde and while there worked on projects that promoted better conditions for health, nutrition, housing for young people. Her work also involved art education projects, research and publications.

Ms. Da Graça has volunteered as a peer mobilizer and educator for a number of groups in Cape Verde and internationally. She founded and coordinated for two years a volunteer corps of university students who worked on social, economic and environmental development in Cape Verde. She has also published an article relating to education.



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### **Rosajilda Velez Dominican Republic**

- General Director, Unit for Caribbean Economic and Social Policy Studies, Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development, (Dominica Republic)



Mrs. Velez coordinates the Unit of Caribbean Studies at the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development of the Dominican Republic, an area which prepares prospective studies to foster integration, commerce and cooperation among the island nations of the Caribbean region.

She led the technical cooperation offered by the Dominican Republic to Haiti, post January 12, 2010 earthquake, and coordinated the technical team that prepared the proposal that was approved by international donors to finance the reconstruction of Haiti.

Mrs Velez has served as a Public Official in the design and formulation of development policies and has occupied executive positions such as Director General and Deputy Minister. She has been an International Consultant in social development programs and poverty reduction projects for various international agencies (IDB, World Bank, UNDP, USAID and German Cooperation); in Latin America and the Caribbean (Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Peru, Haiti and the Dominican Republic).

She holds a Doctorate and a Master's Degree in Economics from the National Autonomous University of Mexico and a BA in Sociology at the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo. She has taught in the area of economic development in universities in Mexico, Costa Rica, Peru and the Dominican Republic