

Asia-Pacific LDCs' graduation, trade and pandemic

Webinar 27 January 2021, 15.00-17.00 (GMT+7)

Speakers bio sketches

Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu is a Tongan diplomat and the Under-Secretary-General and the United Nations High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. Prior to her appointment on 12 April 2017 by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, she was Chief Executive Officer of Tonga's Ministry of Tourism. 'Utoikamanu is a graduate of the University of Auckland. She received her Bachelor of Commerce in Economics degree in 1980 and her Master of Commerce in Economics in 1983. Prior to her appointment to the United Nations in 2005, she served in Tonga's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as Deputy Secretary of Foreign Affairs from 1991 to 2002, then as Secretary of Foreign Affairs from 2002 to 2005.[3] She subsequently served as her country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, where she also represented the Pacific Islands Forum, from February 15, 2005 to late April 2009. Her concomitant ambassadorial rank was that of Tonga's ambassador to the United States, Venezuela and Cuba, and High Commissioner to Canada, from May 26, 2005. In April 2009, she stepped down from her ambassadorial duties, both in the United Nations and the four countries above, and was appointed Deputy Director General of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, a macroeconomist and public policy analyst, is a Distinguished Fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) – a globally reputed think-tank in Bangladesh – where he had been earlier its first Executive Director. He is a member of United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) and also the Chair of two global initiatives, viz. *LDC Monitor* and *Southern Voice*. He was the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the WTO, UN Office, and other international organisations in Geneva and Vienna. He was the Special Adviser on LDCs to the Secretary General, UNCTAD. Earlier, he had been a Senior Research Fellow at Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS). Dr Debapriya is engaged in high-level policy designing and advising for the national government and various bilateral and international development agencies at home and in a number of developing countries. He serves in the boards and working groups of a number of national, regional, and international development organisations and networks (e.g. Monitoring Advisory Group of the Global Partnership on Effective Development Cooperation, UNDP/OECD), and in the editorial board of reputed journals (e.g. *Oxford Development Studies*). He has published extensively on pro-poor macroeconomics; post-2015 international development agenda; trade, investment and finance related issues of the LDCs. He holds a PhD in Economics from Plekhanov National Planning Institute, Moscow and had been a Post-Doctoral Fellow at Queen Elizabeth

House, Oxford. He held a number of visiting positions including Senior Fulbright Fellow at the Centre for Global Development (CGD), Washington DC.

Mr Taufiqur Rahman is the Head of the LDC Unit of the Development Division of the World Trade Organization (WTO). He is responsible for overseeing the systemic issues of interest of the LDCs in the WTO as well as supporting the senior management of the organization on LDC work. He regularly takes part in WTO's technical assistance and capacity-building activities. Mr. Rahman is the WTO representative to the governing body of the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) Prior to his appointment in the WTO in 2004, he served in the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh in Geneva from 2001. While in the Mission, his responsibilities included WTO and UNCTAD matters. Mr Rahman was a member of the Bangladesh Delegation to several WTO and UNCTAD Ministerial Meetings. Mr Rahman began his career with the Foreign Service of the Government of Bangladesh in 1999. While in the Ministry, he looked after the Multilateral Economic Affairs Desk. He was a research assistant in the World Bank's Country Office (Dhaka, Bangladesh) before joining the Government. Mr Rahman obtained a Bachelor degree in Economics from Delhi University (1994) and holds an M.Sc. (1996) from the Delhi School of Economics. He has published numerous articles on trade and development issues in international journals, including the Oxford Handbook.

Ms Mere Falemaka assumed the position of Permanent Representative of the Pacific Islands Forum to the WTO and the United Nations in Geneva in September 2013. Formerly, Ms. Falemaka was Director of Trade and Investment of the Melanesian Spearhead Group Secretariat in Vanuatu, Trade Policy Adviser at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat in Fiji and former Chief Economist in the Fiji Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade. She has a BA in Economics & Geography from the University for the South Pacific, Fiji and Master of Economics Studies from the University of Queensland, Australia.

Dr. Paras Kharel, an economist engaged in research, capacity building and policy advocacy in international trade and development. Research Director at South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), a think-tank in Nepal. Has published extensively on trade and development issues at national, regional and international levels. Has conducted research for and provided policy inputs to the Government of Nepal, including in the areas of agricultural trade policy, logistics policy, and WTO issues. A member of the Export Promotion Committee of Nepal's private sector umbrella body, the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Teaches international economic relations at the Department of Conflict, Peace and Development Studies, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu. Holds a PhD (Economics) from the University of Melbourne with specialization in international trade and applied microeconometrics.

Professor Selim Raihan is Professor at the Department of Economics, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh and the Executive Director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM). He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Manchester, UK. He is the Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Manchester, UK. He is the alumni of the Harvard University's program on "Cutting Edge of Development Thinking". He possesses

vast expertise in empirical research on international trade, economic growth, poverty, labour market, macroeconomic policies, political economy, and climate change issues. He has worked quite extensively on applied economics, especially assessing impacts of trade and economic policies, using country-specific and global Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) models, and micro and macro-econometric modelling and estimation techniques. He has a long experience in teaching international trade, economic modelling, quantitative economics, econometrics, development economics, and poverty dynamics. He has more than 15 years of experience in conducting international and national training programmes on economic modelling in various countries, including Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Mongolia, Senegal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. He has published several journal articles, books, book chapters and working papers. He is the editor of Thinking Aloud - a monthly digest from SANEM. He regularly writes columns in leading English and Bengali dailies in Bangladesh. Professor Raihan contributed extensively to the preparation of the Sixth and Seventh Five-year National Plans of Bangladesh. He led a research team to prepare the "SDG Financing Strategy: Bangladesh Perspective" - a flagship publication of the Planning Commission of Bangladesh. He has worked for several national and international organizations including the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, UNDP, UNESCAP, UNCTAD, IFPRI, the Commonwealth Secretariat, FAO, European Commission, ILO, IDRC, DFID, etc. He has led and has also been a member of a number of regional and international research projects on trade and regional integration issues. Also, he has been working on the political economy analysis of economic issues. The most recent ones are the studies on Bangladesh Institutional Diagnostic, which are prepared under his leadership and supervision, for the DFID, UK.

Ms. Christine Bowers is a development practitioner with more than 15 years of experience advising governments worldwide on investment climate and economic competitiveness issues to help them attract quality private sector investment. She is Head of Project for the ARISE Regional Integration Support – Cambodia Trade Related Assistance program (ARISE Plus Cambodia), with €9.35 million in funds from the European Union and the German government (BMZ) and implemented by GIZ. Prior to relocating to Phnom Penh in May 2019, Christine lived in London where she led Oxford Policy Management's consulting work on business enabling environment reform. Previously, Christine also spent 10 years as a staff member of the World Bank/IFC Trade & Competitiveness global practice, implementing donor-funded advisory projects for economic ministries and revenue administrations in the Caucasus, Central Asia, Central America, the Pacific Islands and Southeast Asia, including an investment policy project in Cambodia. Christine's first career was in business consulting, working for The Coca-Cola Company and for Arthur Andersen Business Consulting. She holds a master's degree in International Development and Economics, from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS).

Dr. Mia Mikic is Director, Trade, Investment and innovation Division in United Nations ESCAP. She also coordinates the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT), an open network of research and academic institutions and think-tanks in the Asia-Pacific region and covering all key means of implementation of the Sustainable development Goals (more details on artnet.unescap.org). Previously, she was Professor of International Economics at the University of Zagreb, and Senior Lecturer at the University of Auckland. She is the author of International Trade (Macmillan, 1998), co-author of Trade

Statistics in Policymaking – A handbook of commonly used trade indices and indicators (United Nations, 2009), a number of journal and technical papers, and has edited or co-edited several volumes, including with Bruno Jetin, ASEAN Economic Community- A model for Asia-wide regional integration? (Palgrave, 2016). She led a development of the Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Agreements Database of ESCAP which monitors trade performance of the trade agreements for the regional economies. She oversees preparation of Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report, a flagship publication of ESCAP in area of trade and investment. Her current work focuses on the impacts of COVID-19 on trade, investment, GVCs, preferential and multilateral trade liberalization, services trade liberalization, non-tariff protection, frontier technologies use for inclusive future of work, women and trade, and evidence-based policymaking in trade, investment and innovation. She has Masters in International Business from the St. Mary's College of California and a Doctorate in Economics from the University of Zagreb.

Ms. Su Thet Hninn, Assistant Director, has joined the Ministry of Commerce in 2009. She is performing as the co-secretariat of the Aid-for-Trade Coordination Unit of Myanmar driving the implementation of AFTs in line with the national development plans. Together with the initiatives arisen from the e-Trade Readiness Assessment, she has also been leading the Digital Trade Unit since late 2017 especially handling the Public – Private Dialogue and cooperation with the development partners. Recently, she is involved in the formulation of E-Commerce Strategy, and leading the formulation of E-Commerce Guidelines and other important initiatives of Myanmar E-Commerce ecosystem development. Additionally, she has been taking care of other areas as the Head of WTO Transparency Unit and WTO TFA Implementation Coordination Unit. She holds the master's degree of International Cooperation Studies from the University of Hiroshima, Japan.