

World Council of Churches



Fourth Annual
United Nations Advocacy Week
17 - 21 November 2008

Presenter Biographies

Lic. Elias Crisostomo Abramides

Lic. Elias Crisostomo Abramides was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and he represents the Ecumenical Patriarchate. He obtained his Degree as Licentiate in Chemical Sciences (Master in Science) from the University of Buenos Aires with expertise in Environmental Studies. Since 1963, he has been a member of the Argentine Chemical Association. He worked in Buenos Aires in several organizations, and as an Environmental Consultant. In addition, he is Ecumenical Officer of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Buenos Aires and South America, Secretary of the Argentine Commission of Christian Churches in Argentina, and Founding Member of the World Council of Churches Working Group on Climate Change (1992). Since 1995, Abramides has also been member or head of the WCC Delegations to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. He is a frequent participant in UNEP meetings and other international symposia and seminars as lecturer. Such engagements include: International Seminar on Environment, Religion and Culture (Tehran, I. R. of Iran, 2001); Symposium IV: The Adriatic Sea (Ecumenical Patriarchate, 2002); Study Seminar on Climate Change and Development (Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, Rome, 2007); Creation and Human Responsibility (Pontifical University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil), among others.

Ms. Hellen Grace Akwii-Wangusa

Since January, 2007, Ms. Hellen Grace Akwii-Wangusa has served as the Anglican Observer and Personal Representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury at the United Nations. Born in Uganda to an Anglican Priest and a Mothers' Union Worker, Hellen received a Bachelors Degree in Literature and a concurrent Diploma in Education from Makerere University, Uganda. In 1984 she won a Fulbright Scholarship to study for a Masters Degree in Oklahoma, USA. Hellen was the Provincial Women's Worker for the Church of Uganda, coordinated the African Women's Economic Policy Network based in Uganda, then UNDP as the Africa Coordinator for the Millennium Development Goals. She is the Vice President of the All Africa Conference of Churches and the chairperson of the International South Group Network. She sits on a number of regional and international boards. Hellen is the mother of four children, ages 19 to 25.

Rev. Asora Amosa

Rev. Asora Amosa is a 56 year old Samoan-born New Zealander. Asora is married with 5 grown sons and, now lives in Auckland Aotearoa New Zealand together with his wife, Henga Amosa (nee Fahitua), a Tuvaluan Chinese Samoan-born New Zealander. Trained and ordained as Minister of Word and Sacrament by the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand in 1990, Asora Amosa has served in three congregations to date and is currently in charge of the Pacific Island Congregation of the Avondale Union Parish which is made up of 60 or more families. Educated in Samoa and New Zealand, and

graduated with a Diploma in Ministry from Knox Theological College, a Bachelor of Theology (1988) and a Post Graduate Diploma in Theology (1989) from the University of Otago, in Dunedin New Zealand, Rev. Amosa also received a Post Graduate Diploma in Applied Theology from Oxford University, England in 2001. He has served on various church, school and community boards is current Chairperson of the Samoa Auckland City Community Fono, Clerk of the Pacific Islands Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, and Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) representative to the WCC Global Ecumenical Network on Migration (GEM).

Rev. Keith Briant

Rev. Keith Briant, an Australian, has been married for 12 years to his beautiful and supportive wife, Sharon, and has two wonderful children, Joshua (6yrs) and Hannah (3yrs). In 2000 he started and directed the Asylum Seeker Assistance Project (till 2006) in response to the urgent and high levels of needs amongst the migrant and refugee communities arriving in Melbourne. The response includes accommodation, healthcare, material aid, community education, advocacy, and other support services assisting in cultural adjustments and pastoral care. People are always at the centre of his heart and activity; according to Keith, his faith both compels and resources his work for justice, peace and belonging to community. He currently is pastor to a local congregation part time and continues to be deeply involved and committed to ecumenical and interfaith justice and peace initiatives.

Mr. Aisake Casimira

Mr. Aisake Casimira is currently an Ecumenical Animator with the Pacific Conference of Churches. In this capacity, he is responsible for the programmes on Ecumenism, Good Governance and Climate Change under the Environment programme. Mr. Casimira previously worked as the Director of a local Fiji organisation called the Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy. His background is in sociology and theology, particularly in ethics. He is married and has two children.

Rev. Jorge Domingues

A native of Brazil, Rev. Jorge Domingues is the Interim Deputy General Secretary for Evangelization and Church Growth for the United Methodist Board Global Ministries. Prior to his current assignment, Rev. Domingues has served as Interim Deputy General Secretary for Mission Contexts and Relationships, and Mission Education, Assistant General Secretary for global networks and ecumenical relations and as Executive Secretary for youth and young adults at the mission agency. He is active in the World Student Christian Federation, where he serves as a Trustee. He was a member of the policy-making Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, and a youth adviser to the ecumenical organization. Rev. Domingues is a clergy member of the Methodist Church in Brazil. He taught sociology at Bennett Methodist College in Brazil in the early 1990s and was associated with the Institute for Studies on Religion during that same time period. He also serves on Church World Service's Mission Relationship and Witness Committee.

Rev. Christopher Ferguson

Rev. Chris Ferguson is an ordained minister of the United Church of Canada. He is currently serving as the Representative of the World Council of Churches to the United Nations in New York, on a secondment from the United Church of Canada. From 2004 to 2006, he served as the WCC Representative in Jerusalem and as the Associate Executive Secretary of the Jerusalem Ecumenical Center. His theological studies were at the Vancouver School of Theology and the Faculty of Theology at the University of Montreal. His whole ministry has been devoted to human rights, peace, justice and

interfaith cooperation. In the context of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Peace for Life movement, he has been contributing to the ongoing ecumenical theological debate about global economic injustice and Empire.

Mr. Dennis W. Frado

Mr. Dennis W. Frado is the Director of the Lutheran Office for World Community, an office of the Church in Society program unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), and is responsible for the public policy advocacy of the church to international organizations on issues relating to world community such as human rights, world order and economic justice. He also serves as Main Representative of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) at United Nations Headquarters. He has been a member of the NGO Working Group on the Security Council (at the UN) since its founding in 1997 and of its Steering Group between 2000 and 2002. He has been a member of several Ecumenical Teams at the United Nations coordinated by the World Council of Churches. These include those on Sustainable Development, Social Development and Financing for Development. A graduate of American University in Washington, DC, Mr. Frado is married to Linda Wagschal Frado.

Rev. Elenora Giddings Ivory

Rev. Elenora Giddings Ivory currently serves as the Director for the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches in Geneva and the Public Witness Programme. She came to this position in 2007 from serving as the Director of the Washington Office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), where she was from 1989. Reverend Ivory's responsibilities include, among others, human and civil rights; religious liberties; women and family issues. She has served as Vice President of the National Council of Churches of Christ and Chair of the Council's National Ministry's Unit. Reverend Ivory was member of the Council's Committee on Religious Liberty. As an undergraduate at Douglas College of Rutgers University (NJ) she majored in political science and American history. She is a graduate of Harvard Divinity School.

Mr. William Gois

Mr. Ashley William Gois is currently the Regional Coordinator of the Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA). MFA is a regional network of migrants' organizations, NGOs, advocates, grassroots organizations and trade unions working to promote the rights and well being of migrant workers and members of their families. Mr. Gois acts as the representative and spokesperson of MFA and represents the network to various regional and international platforms of advocacy such as the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), International Labor Conference (ILC), Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), The Hague Process, and World Social Forum on Migration among others. Mr. Gois was a member of the Task Force for the Interactive Informal Hearings as established by the UN General Assembly for the UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development held in September 2006 in New York. In 2007, he was a member of the Steering Committee who worked closely with the King Baudoin Foundation in the preparations for the Civil Society Forum, the civil society component of the Global Forum on Migration and Development which took place in July 2007 in Brussels, Belgium. In 2008, Mr. Gois was a member of the International Advisory Committee who was in charge of the Civil Society Days of the 2nd Global Forum on Migration and Development in October 2008 in Manila, Philippines.

Rev. Henrik Grape

Henrik Grape is an ordained minister in the Lutheran Church of Sweden. He is also an Officer on Sustainable Development at the Church of Sweden's central office. Rev. Grape has been a member of

the Enabling Team of the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) since 2005. He is also engaged with the preparatory group for the Uppsala Interfaith Climate Summit, and was a member of the WCC ecumenical team at the two latest COP/MOPs held in Nairobi and Bali.

Ms. Seta Margossian-Hadeshian

Ms. Seta Margossian-Hadeshian is currently working at the Middle East Council of Churches as the Director of the Unit on Diakonia and Social Justice, alias Life and Service. She has been Chairperson of the Commemoration Committee of the Armenian Genocide in Lebanon since 2005 to the present. She has also been a Member of the All Armenia Fund Committee in Lebanon since 1992. She graduated from the Lebanese American University in Sociology in 1971, and studied Armenian studies at Yervant Hussissian Institute from 1968-1970.

Rev. Dr. Robin Hoover

Rev. Dr. Robin Hoover is the pastor of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Tucson, Arizona. He is also the founder and president emeritus of Humane Borders, Inc., an Arizona nonprofit social welfare corporation dedicated to migrant safety. Rev. Dr. Hoover has worked in immigration and migration related areas since 1986. His program work has focused both on humanitarian assistance and advocacy. Humane Borders operates approximately 95 water stations in Arizona for migrants who are risking their lives crossing the US-Mexico border. President Felipe Calderon of Mexico bestowed recognition from Mexico's National Human Rights Award in a special ceremony in 2006. Humane Borders' advocacy and assistance for migrants has been reported in every major media market in the world. He is also an academic, lecturing frequently at US and Mexican universities. The working title of his forthcoming book is *Humane Borders: the moral argument for reform*.

Mr. Stephen Humphreys

Mr. Stephen Humphreys is Research Director at the International Council on Human Rights Policy in Geneva, where he leads research into climate change and human rights (a first report is available on the Council's website, www.ichrp.org). He has edited a volume entitled "Human Rights and Climate Change" to be published by Cambridge University Press in 2009. Prior to joining the International Council, Stephen was Senior Publications Officer, at the Open Society Justice Initiative, an operational human rights program of the Open Society Institute (OSI) in New York. He led research on minority rights for OSI's EUMAP program in Budapest, Hungary, from 2000-2002, and before that, between 1997 and 1999, he researched and published on climate change and development with ENDA Tiers Monde's Programme Energie, in Dakar, Senegal. He has published widely on international law and human rights.

Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon

Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon, a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) clergyman and a long-time educator and ecumenical leader, is the ninth General Secretary of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. He was General Secretary of the Consultation on Church Union, which became Churches Uniting in Christ, from 1999 to 2002. He was executive secretary of the WCC's Commission on Faith and Order from 1980 to 1983 and had a major role in drafting the World Council of Churches' major planning document, "Toward a Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC." He has been the Allen and Dottie Miller Professor of Mission, Peace and Ecumenical Studies at Eden Theological Seminary since 2000. Before becoming NCC General Secretary on January 1, 2008, Kinnamon was a member of the Council's Governing Board and chair of the Council's Justice and Advocacy

Commission. He has overseen the commission's development of resolutions and statements on a wide range of justice and peace issues and was the primary drafter of the NCC's Strategic Plan drafting committee over the past three years. Kinnamon earned a Ph.D. degree from the University of Chicago Divinity School in 1980, in the field of religion and literature. He studied at Tel Aviv University from 1969 to 1970. He is married to the Rev. Katherine Kinnamon, and the couple has two daughters, Anna and Leah.

Rev. Baranite 'Bate' Kirata

Reverend Baranite 'Bate' Kirata completed his theological studies at the Pacific Theological College in Fiji, as well as at both Yale and Boston University in the United States. He is currently Director of the Kiribati Protestant Church Justice and Development Department. He is a member of the Kiribati Protestant Church (KPC) where he serves as both office-bearer and Secretary to the Church and Society Programme. He is assisted in his work by his lovely wife Eberon with whom he has had two sons. Sadly, the elder son passed away in 2005 at the tragically young age of 25. A sad loss to the family, they nonetheless feel blessed at the recent arrival of their beautiful grand daughter through their younger son. Bate Kirata enjoys making friends and meeting people, as well as fishing and cooking. He finds cooking relaxing and is most appreciated at home for his expertise. When time and the occasion provide, he appreciates a quiet time of reflection in the presence of the Other.

Dr. David Little

Dr. David Little is the T.J. Dermot Dunphy Professor of the Practice in Religion, Ethnicity, and International Conflict; Director of Initiatives in Religion and Public Life, and Faculty Associate at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard Divinity School. Dr. David Little has been on the faculty at Harvard since 1999. Before that, he was senior scholar in religion, ethics, and human rights at the United States Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C. From 1996 to 1998, he was a member of the U.S. State Department Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad. He taught previously at Yale Divinity School, Virginia, Brown, and several other colleges and universities. He has written in the areas of moral philosophy, moral theology, history of ethics, and the sociology of religion, with a special interest in comparative ethics, human rights, religious liberty, and ethics and international affairs. He is working on a study tentatively entitled "Rights and Emergencies: Protecting Human Rights in the Midst of Conflict."

Dr. Maake Masango

Dr. Maake Masango is currently a Professor at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. Since the 1970s, he has worked with a variety of Presbyterian Churches in South Africa. He received his Diploma in theology from Fedsem Fort Hare, and Masters degrees in Theology at Columbia University, USA, and Christian Education at the Presbyterian School, USA. He received a Ph.D in Counseling, Theology and Psychology from Columbia University. Masango is a past Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in South Africa, and was a member of the World Alliance of Reform Churches until 2000. He was an Executive and central Committee member of the World Council of Churches until 2006. Masango has been Urban Rural Missions (URM) President for Africa since 2001, and Vice President of the Society for Practical Theology since 2004. In addition, he has been a member of the Societas Homiletica since 2004. He is currently an Executive member of the all Africa Conference of Churches.

Mr. John Nduna

Mr. John Nduna is Director of Geneva based ACT International, Action by Churches Together, a Global alliance of churches and related agencies of the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World

federation working in humanitarian response to emergencies and disasters worldwide. He is also the current Vice Chair of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR), a network that brings together 9 of some of the largest humanitarian Non-Governmental Organizations which include, Oxfam, CARE, ICRC, International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Save the Children, CARITAS and the World Vision International. He previously headed the ecumenical organization, Church Ecumenical Action in Sudan (CEAS), which operates out of Nairobi. He graduated from the University of Zambia with a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in economics. A desire to “make a difference” saw him take up several appointments within the field of humanitarian assistance and development, with a focus on refugees in Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania.

Dr. Robert C. Orr

Dr. Robert C. Orr was appointed Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Planning and Policy Coordination in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General in August 2004. His responsibilities include advising the Secretary-General on a full range of strategic issues, running the Secretary-General’s Policy Committee, and leading the Secretariat’s efforts to complete the UN reform agenda agreed to by world leaders at the 2005 World Summit. Dr. Orr serves as the principal policy advisor to the Secretary-General on climate change and chairs the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, which coordinates 24 UN entities involved in counter-terrorism activities. Dr. Orr joined the United Nations from Harvard University where he served as the Executive Director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Kennedy School of Government. Prior to this, he served as Director of the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington, D.C. From 1996 to 2001, Dr. Orr served in senior posts in the Government of the United States, including Deputy to the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations and Director of the USUN Washington office, where he was instrumental in securing an agreement to have the United States pay its arrears to the United Nations. He also served as Director of Global and Multilateral Affairs at the National Security Council, where he was responsible for peacekeeping and humanitarian affairs. Prior to this government service, Dr. Orr worked for the International Peace Academy in New York, and with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Nairobi, Kenya.

Dr. Niki Papageorgiou

Dr. Niki Papageorgiou is Assistant Professor in Sociology of Religion at the School of Theology at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. Her fields of research include Sociology of Religion and Christianity, Ethics, Religious Identity in the Modern World, Migration and Religion, and Human Rights and Peace Studies in Modernity. She received her PhD in Theology from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, and an MA in Sociology of Religion from the Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium.

Dr. Theodor Rathgeber

Dr. Theodor Rathgeber has been Lecturer at the University of Kassel in the Department of Social Science since 1987. He has been a consultant on policy making, human rights, development issues, and intercultural management since 1990. Since 2003, Rathgeber has attended the sessions of the UN Commission on Human Rights, and afterwards of the Human Rights Council. Since 1991, he has attended the sessions of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations research and consultancy in Colombia, Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, and the Russian Federation.

Ms. Anke Strauss

Ms. Anke Strauss is currently Liaison Officer for the Office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Permanent Observer to the United Nations. Ms. Strauss has been working as Liaison

Officer since June 2005. She joined IOM in 2001 as Senior Legal Officer/Team Leader for Property Loss within the German Forced Labour Compensation Programme at IOM in Geneva. Before joining IOM, Ms. Strauss was the Director of the Legal Department at the Commission for Real Property Claims of Displaced Person and Refugees, established by the Dayton Peace Agreement, in Sarajevo (1999-2001) and Legal Officer at the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany in Berlin (1996-1998). Ms. Strauss is a German national and holds a law degree from the University of Passau.

Ms. Maria Cleofé Sumire de Conde

Ms. Maria Sumire, born in an indigenous community in Canchis Province, Peru, is currently a Congresswoman representing the Cusco Region. Dr. Sumire is an experienced lawyer from Cusco, who has provided legal advice for the Farmer Federation of Cuzco in its struggle for land and women's organizations. She is a member of the Evangelical Methodist Church, a leader of the Association of Andean Women (AMA), and was one of the 1,000 women candidates for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize. She was elected to the Peruvian Congress in 2006, and for over 30 years of internal politics and violence, Maria Sumire has worked with the Quechua communities of Cuzco, advocating for human rights. She has fought for and affirmed the Quechua identity inside the church. For 30 years, alongside her husband, she helped educate the pastors in the city on the indigenous practice of loving and expressing solidarity with the neighbor as fulfilling the mandates of the Bible -- to practice faith and love.

Dr. Fe'iloakitau (Fei) Kaho Tevi

Dr. Fei Tevi, of Tongan and Fijian descent, is currently General Secretary for the Pacific Conference of Churches. Mr. Tevi has been General Secretary since April 2008. Before joining the PCC, Fei as he is commonly known, was the Executive Secretary of the World Council of Churches Office in the Pacific (WCCOP). Tevi has graduate degrees and qualifications in political science, international relations, development and diplomacy. He has been vocal on issues such as self-determination in French Polynesia, climate change, HIV/AIDS and the World Trade Organization. He is committed to ensuring that the churches have a voice in regional issues, including those being addressed by the Pacific Islands Forum. He is married with four children which include two boys and twin girls.

Ms. Rajyashri Waghray

Ms. Rajyashri Waghray is Church World Service's Director for the Program on Education and Advocacy for International Justice and Human Rights. She serves as their Representative to the United Nations, where she addresses issues that advance CWS's mission of peace with justice. Ms. Waghray graduated from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs and has a M.Phil. Her thesis was, "Paradigms of Development: Third World Development and Under-Development." She has extensive experience in both the areas of sustainable development and public policy advocacy. Most recently she has been: Project Director at the Harvard University's International Council of Women World Leaders; Director, Sustainable Development, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO); Member, Technical Advisors Group, IMF; and Consultant to NGOs engaged in environment protection and conservation in India and abroad. Ms. Waghray also has a Masters in Political Economy and Environment Management from India.