Members of the Council of the University for Peace
Short Bios

**Mario Carazo**  
*President of the Council*  
*Ex-officio Member*  
Host Country Representative  
(Costa Rica – Member since March 2019)

A prominent Costa Rican lawyer with studies in Economic Development from the University of Manchester, England, Mario Carazo Zeledon is a university professor and public accountant. He was a member of the Costa Rican parliament and a member of organizations oriented towards the protection of the environment, transparency, and the promotion of culture. He has publications related to industrialization in economic integration in Central America, and has published articles in various political, environmental, and professional journals. He has been a professor at public universities and a visiting scholar at the School of Public Administration of Georgetown University.

**Fernando Blasco**  
*Vice President of the Council*  
Former Director, Executive Office of the Secretary-General, United Nations  
(Argentina – Member since 2015)

Fernando Blasco has 25 years of experience in the private sector working with international corporations in both corporate executive and private executive consultant positions. His specialisation in management and best practices spans the fields of human resources, administration, finance, and supply-chain management. Having been based in Argentina, the United States, and Spain he developed an international experience of implementing organizational change and improvement. In 2005, he shifted his focus to the non-for-profit sector, undertaking consultancies for the World Food Program (WFP) in its headquarters in Rome, Italy, where he focused on advising WFP’s Chief Operations Officer on the implementation of change management initiatives. In 2008, he was selected to lead the development and implementation of the Global Field Support Strategy (GFSS) for the then newly created United Nations Department of Field Support, a strategic project designed to optimise the deployment and maintenance of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Political Missions globally. In his current capacity as Director in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, Mr. Blasco is responsible for supporting the integrated implementation of the
Secretary-General’s strategic management initiatives. He is a graduate of Pace University.

**Enrique Baron Crespo**  
*Chancellor*  
*Ex-officio Member*  
Former President of the European Parliament  
(Spain – Member since June 2017)

Enrique Baron Crespo served as President of the European Parliament from 1989–1992. He is a member of the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party and sits with the Party of European Socialists group in the European Parliament. He graduated in law from the University of Madrid and in business at the ESSEC Business School in Paris. As a practising lawyer, he specialised in labour law. Baron is a member of the Board of Advisors of the Global Panel Foundation and the Advisory Board of think tank Gold Mercury International, London, UK. He is an active player in Gold Mercury’s Brand EU initiative to improve the management and promotion of the European Union brand and monitor its progress.

**Fatima Akilu**  
*Member*  
Executive Director of the Neem Foundation  
(Nigeria – Member since December 2017)

Dr. Fatima Akilu is the Executive Director of Neem Foundation, Nigeria. She is also a university educator and an advocate for marginalized groups working in psychology and health for more than two decades. Previously Head of Communication for the Senior Special Assistant to the President on the Millennium Development Goals, she was Chairman of the Editorial Board Leadership Newspapers. Until recently Dr. Akilu was the Director of the Behavioural Analysis and Strategic Communication Unit at the Office of the National Security Advisor, which has developed a multi-pronged approach to countering violent extremism (CVE) that consists of prison de-radicalization, counter radicalization geared at building community resilience, and a strategic communication effort including public diplomacy and messaging. Dr. Akilu is also a children’s writer and hosted a weekly radio show, Radio Psych, which discusses social and psychological issues. She holds a bachelor’s degree in English, a Master’s in Research Methods in Psychology, and a Ph.D. in Psychology from Reading University in Berkshire, U.K. Dr. Akilu has authored more than 17 children’s books and has published articles on homelessness and mental health.
Carlos Alvarado  
*Host Country Representative*  
*Ex-officio Member*  
President of the Republic of Costa Rica  
(Costa Rica – Member since December 2020)

He is a journalist, writer, musician and the 48th President of the Republic of Costa Rica. Carlos Alvarado took the reins of the country on 8 May 2018, with the commitment to modernise the country and lead it towards a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable development, with better security, health and education, and greater respect for human rights. He holds three university degrees, two from the University of Costa Rica, the most important state university in the country, one in Communication Sciences and the other in Political Science; and the third from the famed University of Sussex in the United Kingdom, where he graduated in Development Studies. Prior to taking office, he was a parliamentary advisor and the youngest member of former President Solís Rivera's cabinet. As executive president of the Instituto Mixto de Ayuda Social (IMAS), he was minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion, where he promoted the Puente al Desarrollo (Bridge to Development) strategy to combat extreme poverty, with very favourable results. Subsequently, he held the Ministry of Labour, where he also achieved very positive results, reflecting his capacity for dialogue and negotiation.

Jean Arnault  
*Member*  
Secretary-General's Personal Envoy on Afghanistan and Regional Issues  
(France – Member since February 2014)

Jean Arnault is a Visiting Senior Fellow at the New York University Centre on International Cooperation (New York, USA) and a Distinguished Professor of Practice at the Paris School of International Affairs (France), where he currently teaches International Mediation and the Settlement of Civil Wars. He previously served as United Nations Special Adviser to the group “Friends of Democratic Pakistan” from 2008 to 2009; Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Georgia and Head of the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) from 2006 to 2008; Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan; and Head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) from 2004 to 2006, where he was also Deputy in 2002 and 2003. Dr. Arnault studied Philosophy, Linguistics and Political Science at the University of Sorbonne-Paris (France). He also holds a postgraduate diploma in conference interpretation from the Polytechnic of Central London-University of Westminster (England). In 2001, he served as a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for International Studies at Princeton University (New York).
Jersey, USA), where he focused on lessons for mediators from the 1990s peace processes. He has been a member of the Board of Trustees of Conciliation Resources in London since 2013 and a member of the Advisory Board of the Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum and the Social Science Research Council in New York since 2008. In March of 2021, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres appointed Mr. Arnault as his Personal Envoy on Afghanistan and Regional Issues.

Lalla Ben Barka
Member
Former UNESCO Assistant Director General for Africa
(Mali – Member since December 2017)

A specialist in education, Mrs. Lalla Aicha Ben Barka has always defended and promoted this sector as a driving force for Africa's sustainable development, through the development of policies for the profound reform of education systems in Africa, the expansion and strengthening of educational structures, securing investment, access to technology, knowledge of traditions, and the education of women. Mrs. Ben Barka holds a PhD from the University of Southern California (USC, Los Angeles) and a Master’s in Education and Psychology from the Université Paris X-Nanterre. She worked at the Ministry of National Education, at the National Directorate of Functional Literacy and Applied Linguistics (DNAFLA), at the Section of Linguistic and Pedagogical Research, then was appointed Chief of the Women's Promotion Division in the same department. She worked as Regional Coordinator of the Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa (ERNWACA), funded by IDRC and USAID. Between 1996 and 1998, she ran the government team placed in charge of formulating the Ten-Year Education Development Programme (PRODEC) which emphasized the need for wide consultation with all segments of Malian society. In 1998, Mrs. Lalla Aicha Ben Barka was appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations as Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the first woman to hold such a position in 40 years. In late 2004, she took over the leadership of UNESCO's Regional Office for Education in Africa (BREDA). In July 2010, she joined UNESCO again in Paris, as Deputy Director General for Africa, where she prepared an operational strategy for UNESCO's Priority Africa. She left UNESCO in 2015 to set up a chair at the University of Mali: "Community Research on Development Levers: Emergence through Innovation." In recognition of her commitment and contribution to education, Mrs. Lalla Aisha Ben Barka received the UNESCO Prize for Literacy in 1993.
Ouided Bouchamaoui  
*Member*

President, Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA)  
Nobel Peace Prize Laureate (2015), Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet  
(Tunisia – Member since December 2017)

Mrs. Ouided Bouchamaoui holds a DESS (Master’s Degree) in International Business from Institut Superieur de Gestion de Tunis (ISG Business School) and a DESS in International Trade Law from the Faculty of Juridical and Political Sciences of Tunis. Shareholder and Administrator of Hedi Bouchamaoui Group (HBG Holding), she is also a founding member of "Connecting Group" and the Vice President of the Tunisian Foundation of Control and Governance. Since May 2011, Mrs. Guided Bouchamaoui has presided the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA), becoming the first woman elected to this position. In 2013, UTICA, in partnership with the UGTT, the Tunisian General Labour Union, the Tunisian Human Rights League (LTDH), and the Tunisian Order of Lawyers, created "The Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet", Peace Nobel Prize Laureate in 2015. In 2013, Mrs. Guided Bouchamaoui was elected "Best Businesswoman of the Arab World" under the auspices of the GS Deauville Partnerships, and was a "Business for Peace Award" Honouree in 2014. In January 2015, Tunisian President, Mr. Beji Caid Essebsi awarded her the title of Grand Officer of the Order of the Republic - First Class - and His Majesty the King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden decorated Mrs. Bouchamaoui of the Royal Order of the Polar Star in November 2015. In January 2016, Mrs. Bouchamaoui became a member of the Business for Peace Foundation, and that same year, she joined the Foundation Culture of Peace.

Oscar Fernandez-Taranco  
*UNSG Representative to the UPEACE Council*  
*Ex-officio Member*

Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support  
(Argentina – Member since September 2017)

With more than 30 years of experience in the United Nations System, Mr. Fernandez-Taranco worked both at Headquarters and in the field, managing development, political, peacebuilding, human rights and humanitarian operations in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific and Europe. Prior to his appointment, he was Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs in the Department of Political Affairs since July 2009. He also served as United Nations Resident Coordinator and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative in the United Republic of Tanzania. From 1994 to 1998, he served as Deputy Special Representative of the
Administrator in the West Bank and Gaza Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People. He was also the Deputy Assistant Administrator and Deputy Regional Director in the Regional Bureau for Arab States, UNDP, from 2001 to 2006, and Resident Representative, United Nations Resident Coordinator and Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Haiti from 1998 to 2001. Mr. Fernandez-Taranco was educated at Cornell University, where he studied economics, and at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, studying urban regional economic planning.

**Meenakshi Gopinath**  
*Member*  
Director, Women in Security Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP)  
(India – Member since December 2017)

Meenakshi Gopinath is currently Founder and Director of WISCOMP (Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace), an initiative that seeks to promote the leadership of South Asian women in the areas of peace, security, and regional cooperation. She is also Principal Emerita of Lady Shri Ram College; New Delhi and she has served the college as Principal for 26 years from 1988-2014. She was the first woman to serve as member of the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) of India. She has served as a member of the University Grants Commission (UGC), India. Dr. Gopinath is a member of multi-track peace initiatives in Kashmir and between India and Pakistan including the Neemrana Peace Initiative, the Pakistan India Peoples’ Forum for Peace and Democracy and the Chaophraya Dialogue. Her interests include issues of human rights and gender, conflict transformation and Buddhist and Gandhian philosophy. In recognition of her contribution to the field of women’s education and empowerment, she has received several awards, including: the Rajiv Gandhi Award for Excellence in Education and an Honorary Doctorate Degree for significant contribution to the education of women and the commitment to fostering global peace through Conflict Resolution, La Trobe University, Australia.

Dr. Gopinath serves on the Governing Boards of research institutes, NGOs, educational institutions, and corporate bodies. She also is a member of the Nonviolent Peaceforce - International, Asian University for Women, Centre for Policy Research, Shri Ram Foundation, Track Two initiatives in the South Asian region, Welham Girls School, Shri Ram School, Shiv Nadar School, and others. She has been a Fulbright scholar and has received several fellowships including the Australian International Education Foundation Fellowship (1996-97) and the University Grants Commission Indo-Israel Exchange Fellowship (1994-1996), among others.
Hal Klepak  
*Member*  
Professor Emeritus of History and Strategy, Royal Military College of Canada  
Member  
(Canada – Member since February 2014)

Hal Klepak is currently Professor Emeritus of History and Strategy at the Royal Military College of Canada; Special Adviser to the Commander of the Canadian Army for Inter-American Affairs; and a Consultant for the Inter-American Defence and Security Issues. Other current appointments include: Member, Organisation of American States International Border Commission, Colombia-Ecuador Border; Special Adviser to the Bolivian Ministry of Defence for the IX Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas; Special Adviser on Inter-American Security Issues, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade; Special Adviser on Latin American Security Affairs, Department of National Defence; Adjunct Professor, Dominican Republic Higher Centre for Strategic Studies; Fellow, Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean, York University; Member, Comité Scientifique, Cahiers des Amériques latines (Paris); Member, Academic Advisory Board, Inter-American Defence College (Washington); Member, Academic Advisory Board, Centre for Defence Education and Information, Seguridad y Defensa (CEID) (Havana); Member, Academic Board of Directors, Latin American Security and Democracy Network (RESDAL) (Buenos Aires); Member, National Defence HQ Working Group on Latin America and the Caribbean; Member, Ibero-American Defence Research Association (Madrid); Member, International Editorial Board, Defence and Security (Washington); Member, British Forum for Research on Cuba (University of Nottingham); Member, International Academic Board, Seguridad y Fuerzas Armadas (Santiago de Chile); Member, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Caribbean Regional Security Working Group.

David Malone  
*Ex-officio Member*  
Rector, United Nations University  
(Canada – Member since March 2013)

David Malone was appointed as President of IDRC on 1 July 2008 for a term of five years. Prior to that, Mr. Malone served as Canada’s High Commissioner to India and non-resident Ambassador to Bhutan and Nepal. Other positions he has held include: Assistant Deputy Minister (Global Issues) in Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade; President, International Peace Academy, New York; and as a Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations in New York. Dr. Malone has published extensively on peace and security issues, in book
form and in journals. He has taught at Columbia University and the University of Toronto. He currently serves as Adjunct Professor at the New York University School of Law and is a Senior Fellow of Massey College in the University of Toronto. In early 2008, he published “The Law and Practice of the United Nations” (2008). His most recent monograph, a book addressing contemporary Indian foreign policy, “Does the Elephant Dance?” Contemporary Indian Foreign Policy was released by Oxford University Press in 2011. Since then, he co-edited a collective work, “Nepal in Transition: From People’s War to Fragile Peace”, published by Cambridge University Press in 2012. The United Nations Secretary-General appointed Dr. Malone as the new Rector of the United Nations University (Tokyo) as of 1 March 2013, replacing Dr. Konrad Osterwalder.

**Gabriela Ramos**  
*UNESCO Director-General Representative to the UPEACE Council*  
Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO  
(Mexico – Member since December 2020)

Gabriela Ramos is the Assistant Director-General for the Social and Human Sciences of UNESCO, where she oversees the contributions of the institution to build inclusive and peaceful societies. Her agenda includes the achievement of social inclusion and gender equality, advancing youth development; promotion of values through sports; anti-racism and anti-discriminatory agenda and ethics of artificial intelligence. Her appointment at UNESCO allows her to continue supporting an agenda of inclusive growth, and the respect of human rights and human dignity. Prior to this position, Ms. Ramos served as the Chief of Staff and Sherpa to the G20/G7/APEC in the OECD, contributing to the global agenda as well as leading the OECD's New Approaches to Economic Challenges, Inclusive Growth Initiative, Gender Strategy and the work on well-being and children. In 2013, she was decorated with the Ordre du Merit by the President of France. Her work to promote gender equality earned her the 2017 and 2018 Forbes Excellence award as well as being included as part of Apolitical’s 100 Most Influential People in Gender Policy in both 2018 and 2019. A Fulbright and Ford McArthur fellow, she is member of the board of the Paris Peace Forum, UNICEF Advisory Board, Steering Group of the International Gender Champions Paris Hub, Multi-Stakeholder Council to the Global Solutions Initiative, Lancet Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Maltreatment of Young People, and Lancet Commission on COVID-19.
Francisco Rojas  
*Ex-officio Member*  
Rector, University for Peace  
(Chile – Member since 1 July 2013)

Francisco Rojas has a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Utrecht (Netherlands) and an MS in Political Science from the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO). He specializes in international relations, human security, integration, Latin American political systems, negotiations - theory and practice - and international security and defence and has served as the Secretary-General of FLACSO (2004-2012) and Director of FLACSO Chile (1996-2004). He was also professor at the School of International Relations of the National University (UNA) of Costa Rica (1980-1990); a Fulbright Professor at the Latin American and Caribbean Centre (LACC) at Florida International University (Miami, FL). He is currently a board member of the Spanish edition of Foreign Affairs Magazine (Mexico); an Advisory Member of Pensamiento Iberoamericano Magazine (Spain); and is also a member of the Editorial Committee of Political Science Magazine (National University of Colombia). Dr. Rojas has also conducted advisory and consulting work for various international agencies and governments in the region.

Xiaoyu Zhang  
*Member*  
Executive Vice President, China International Council for the Promotion of Multinational Corporations  
(China – Member since December 2017)

Mr. Zhang is the Executive Vice President, China International Council for the Promotion of Multinational Corporations, a non-governmental organization approved by the State Council, registered with the Ministry of Civil Affairs, and directly supervised by the Ministry of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China, is specially engaged in the work of multinational corporations in China. It is well-known all over the world for successfully organizing the World Economic Development Declaration Conference and issuing the globally unique World Economic Development Declaration. In July 2006, it was granted the Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Before that, he was Executive Chairman and Chief Director of the International Roundtable of Multinational Corporations’ Leaders, as well as President of GIW Co. Ltd. He holds a master’s degree in Global Economics and Law and has vast experience in local governments, State Council, NGOs, and private companies. He has been Editor-in-Chief of several publications, including The Road to Reform and Development of Large and Medium Enterprises in China; Guidelines to Market
Economy, and author of works such as the Manual on the Management of International Corporations and On Peaceful Development.