



GFDRR Partnership Days 2024

Speakers and Presenters (In Order of Appearance)



Cristina Otano, Senior Operations Officer, GFDRR. She leads the Operations and Country Programs team, working to ensure all investments in resilience are designed taking into account disaster and climate risks, as well as future climate change and variability. Cristina also coordinates the gender program, which promotes a more gender-responsive approach of disaster risk management practices. Cristina has more than 15 years of experience with the World Bank. Prior to that, she worked for the Spanish Institute of Foreign Trade (ICEX) in Bolivia. Cristina holds a master's degree in international public policy from the University of London, a master's degree in International Trade from the University Carlos III Madrid, and a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from University of Navarre, Spain.



Victoria Hugelshofer, Senior Policy Officer, Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). She brings experience from previous roles at Wider Sense GmbH and Über den Tellerrand. She holds a degree from the University of Oxford.



Niels Holm-Nielsen, Practice Manager, GFDRR. Niels Holm-Nielsen is Practice Manager of GFDRR. A Danish national, he joined the Bank in 2006 as a Junior Professional Officer in the Middle East and North Africa Region. He has since held several positions in Disaster Risk Management in the Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa Regions, including most recently as Lead Disaster Risk Management Specialist and Global Lead for Resilience and Disaster Risk Management. He holds a M.Sc. in Political Science from the University of Aarhus.



Zoe Trohanis, Lead Disaster Risk Management Specialist, GFDRR. Prior to her current role, Ms. Trohanis worked in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region of the World Bank Group as a Senior Urban Specialist. She has more than 15 years of experience at the Bank in disaster risk management and urban development programs, in both Latin America and the Caribbean and East Asia and the Pacific. Previously, she worked in the Hazard Management Unit at GFDRR. Prior to working at the Bank, she worked in both academia and in the private sector. Zoe has a Bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a Master's degree from American University's School of International Service.



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Raed Arafat, State Secretary, Ministry of Internal Affairs of Romania. He heads the Department for Emergency Situations, providing and coordinating the human, material, financial and other resources necessary to cope with emergencies, including qualified first aid, emergency medical care and aerial rescue services, emergency medical assistance within emergency units, as well as Mountain Rescuers public services.



Carolina Diaz Giraldo, Director of Environment and Development, Department of National Planning, Colombia. Previously, she served as Deputy Director of Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change in the same department, where she led the incorporation of risk and climate criteria into the public investment cycle and development planning.



Mafua-'i-Vai'utukakau Maka, Director of the National Disaster Risk Management Office, Tonga. In this role, he has coordinated the national emergency response on behalf of the Tongan government, notably in response to Severe Tropical Cyclone Gita in 2018, Severe Tropical Cyclone Harold in 2021, and most recently the 2022 Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha’apai eruption and tsunami. Under his leadership, Tonga is moving to a more comprehensive approach to disaster risk management.



Renato U. Solidum, Jr., Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) of the Philippines. He has worked with DOST for the past 38 years. He started his professional career at the DOST – Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) in 1984 after graduating with a BS in Geology from the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman in the same year. He served at PHIVOLCS in varying capacities, starting as Science Research Specialist I and became its Director in 2003. He pursued his graduate studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago, USA, earning a MS degree in Geological Sciences at the University of Illinois, Chicago, USA and the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California San Diego (UCSD), obtaining a PhD degree in Earth Sciences.



Karima Ben Bih, Senior DRM Specialist, GFDRR and global lead on the GFDRR Disaster-FCV Thematic Area. She has experience in DRM, Urban reconstruction and recovery, and post-conflict support. She has managed complex operations on DRM and post-disaster/post-conflict reconstruction, including in Lebanon, Morocco, Iraq, Tunisia, Ukraine, and across MENA, with a specific focus on inter-sectoral dimensions of DRM and resilient recovery. Prior to joining the World Bank, she worked for over 10 years in the private sector and with international NGOs and international organizations on housing policy, urban planning, and urban disaster risk management.



Brenden Jongman, Senior Disaster Risk Management Specialist, GFDRR. Mr. Jongman leads the World Bank's global work on Nature-based Solutions. A Dutch national, he holds a PhD in Water and Climate Risk Management from the Institute for Environmental Studies in Amsterdam and has published over 40 peer-reviewed articles on resilience and climate change.



Mersedeh Tariverdi, Senior Data Scientist, World Bank. Ms. Tariverdi works at the World Bank's health, nutrition, and population global engagement team working at the intersection of resilient health systems and climate change. Majority of her work is on evidenced-based and data driven decision making in health and nutrition taking the data and future uncertainties into account. She focuses on helping World Bank teams and clients to employ Artificial Intelligence methods in analytical works to inform preparation of projects and implementation strategies as well as data informed intervention progress monitoring. Prior to joining the World Bank, she was principal data scientist in private sector working on big data and trend analysis. Mersedeh holds a Ph.D. in applied mathematics and statistics, specializing in health and infrastructure system resiliency and capacity enhancement strategies.



Takahiro Tsuda, GFDRR Co-Chair and Director, Multilateral Development Banks Division, Japan's Ministry of Finance. He was previously, World Bank Group Alternate Executive Director representing Japan. Prior to the World Bank, he headed the Office of Planning and Coordination for International Affairs at the Japanese Ministry of Finance, responsible for developing the strategic direction of the International Bureau. His leadership includes the First Deputy Budget Examiner for Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery (July 2017 - July 2018), Deputy Head of Fiscal Research Division (June 2016 – July 2017), and leading a unit for the global economic outlook, IMF, and G7/G20 issue (2016). Previously he also worked as a financial sector expert in the Monetary and Capital Markets Department at the IMF. He holds a Bachelor of Laws from Tokyo University, LL.M. from the University of Cambridge, MA in Applied Economics from Johns Hopkins University, and MSc in Finance from London Business School.



Guangzhe Chen, Vice President for Infrastructure, World Bank. In this position he leads the Bank's global efforts to build sustainable infrastructure in developing and emerging economies and supports the World Bank Group's strategic priorities such as the climate change action plan and the private capital mobilization and enabling efforts. He oversees the Bank's work across energy and transport sectors, digital development, and efforts to provide access to renewable energy, low-carbon transportation, digital connectivity, and quality infrastructure services to communities through public-private partnerships. Infrastructure represents around \$72 billion of the Bank's portfolio.