

## Panel I – High-level policy panel

### Ms. Joni Laura

#### **Senior Director, Government Affairs, Qualcomm, San Diego, United States of America**

Ms. Joni Laura is an attorney in the Government Affairs Department at Qualcomm Incorporated. At Qualcomm, Joni is responsible for driving IP advocacy initiatives including IP protection, and diversity and equity in the patent system. She began her career in the U.S. Government at the Treasury Department. Joni spent a year in Brussels working at the European Commission. She thereafter practiced law in private law firms and for the past two decades has been in house counsel at biotech, electronics and technology companies. Joni has a JD and an LL.M, Masters of Law in International Law specializing in trade and banking.



### Mr. Basil Jones

#### **Gender and CSO Program and Policy Coordinator, Gender, Women and Civil Society Department (AHGC), African Development Bank, Abidjan**

Mr. Basil Jones is the Gender and CSO Program and Policy Coordinator in the African Development Bank's Gender, Women, and Civil Society Department (AHGC). Prior to this, he was the Advisor to the Special Envoy on Gender and Vice President of the African Development Bank from November 2015 to December 2016. Other positions he has held in the Bank are Assistant to the Chief Economist and Vice President of the Economics Complex from June 2012 to September 2015 and Principal Capacity Development Specialist in the Bank's Fragile States Unit from June 2009 to May 2012. Before joining the Bank, he worked for 8 years as a Senior Program Specialist with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Senegal and Kenya. He holds a PhD in economics from the University of Hull in the United Kingdom.



### Ms. Esther Kunda

#### **Director General, Innovation and Emerging Technologies, Ministry of Information Communication Technology and Innovation (MINICT), Kigali**

Ms. Esther Kunda is the Director General in charge of Innovation and Emerging Technologies at the ministry of ict and innovation where she drives policy initiatives and interventions to support the Rwandan innovation ecosystem and development of new emerging technologies in the country. Before joining the Ministry of ICT and Innovation, Esther Kunda was the Policy, Innovation and Community of Scientists Manager at the Next Einstein Forum. She managed the development of NEF policy initiatives and worked closely with the NEF Community of Scientists on science engagement activities such as the NEF Africa Science Week across Africa. Before joining NEF, she was at Intel as Education Support Manager and as product development for Tigo Rwanda. She has experience in product development, business strategy, policy and innovation. She holds a Masters in Science in Information Technology from Carnegie Mellon University and Bachelor , aience in Computer Engineering from Kigali Institute of Science and Technology.



## **Ms. Lulwa Abdulrahman AIMannai**

### **Founder, LAM Brand, Manama**

Ms. Lulwa Abdulrahman Almannai is the founder and designer of LAM BRAND, a distinguished label specializing in the production of high-quality handmade leather goods since 2018. Lulwa is a marketing bachelor's degree holder, was honored with the prestigious Bahraini Female Entrepreneur Honor Seal bestowed upon her by Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka, President of the Supreme Council for Women. Lulwa holds a certificate in fashion trend forecasting from Polimoda, Italy, and has pursued further education in entrepreneurship and innovation through a program at Muhlenberg University in USA. Her diverse professional experience spans over 7 years, encompassing various roles across different industries. She began her career in the sales department of a bank. Subsequently, she excelled as a senior human resources specialist in a government ministry and serving as the CEO of a private publishing house in the UAE. Also, she is acting as a consultant for a private sports company based in Bahrain.



## **Ms. Maya Morsy**

### **President, Egypt's National Council for Women, Cairo**

H.E. Dr. Maya Morsy took office as President of Egypt's National Council for Women (NCW) on February 1, 2016 elected as the third and the youngest President of the NCW since it was established in 2000. She is also elected to be Member of the UN CEDAW committee 2023/2026. She previously worked as UNDP Gender Regional Advisor, Head of the Egypt Country Office United Nations Fund for Women from 2011 to 2013. She has more than 26 years of experience in the national, regional and international organizations. Dr. Morsy managed and led more than 50 programs and authored more than 45 training manuals, books, articles, research and policy papers in areas of Public Policy, development, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Peace and Security, Human Security, Finance for Development. Dr. Morsy was awarded "The woman of the decade in public life and empowerment" during the Women economic forum conveyed in India in 2018, the national award of one of the 100 most influential women in Egypt in the year 2016 and the Women Pioneer from the United Arab Emirates in 2019..



## **Ms. Nabila Aguele**

### **Former Special Adviser to Nigeria's Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Abuja**

Ms. Nabila Aguele is a lawyer, public policy professional, and gender equality advocate. Most recently, she was a Special Adviser to Nigeria's Minister of Finance, Budget, and National Planning, where she focused on international development cooperation and performance management. Nabila's work involved development of Nigeria's Integrated Financing Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals, advancing gender-responsive fiscal policies, and supporting regional stabilization and climate finance initiatives. She serves on the Boards of Directors for INSEAD Business School and Girl Rising. Nabila is also a member of the INSEAD "Force for Good" Campaign Board, INSEAD's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Taskforce, and the Advisory Board of Talentx Africa. With a background in law, she practiced in the United States, taught at American University Washington College of Law, and holds degrees from the University of Toronto, American University Washington College of Law, and INSEAD.



## Panel II – IP Economists panel

### Ms. Irene Ochem

#### **Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Africa Women Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum, Cape Town**

Listed as one of Nigeria's 100 Most Inspiring Women, Ms. Irene Ochem is the Founder and CEO of the Africa Women Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum (AWIEF), an organization dedicated to promoting women's economic inclusion and empowerment through entrepreneurship support. With an MBA and 25+ years in international development and enterprise development, Ochem focuses on gender economic equity and social inclusion. AWIEF, which has Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, works to bridge the gender gaps in entrepreneurship in Africa. Under Ochem's leadership, AWIEF has provided direct support to over 3,500 startups across African countries through various enterprise development and entrepreneurial training programs. She has also contributed to regional trade agreements on women's economic empowerment and serves as a Non-Executive Director on various boards. Ochem's work has garnered international recognition and she has been featured in prestigious media platforms such as CNN and BBC.



### Ms. Ghati Nyehita

#### **Research Coordinator, Democratic Governance and Rights Unit (DGRU), Cape Town**

Ms. Ghati Nyehita is an advocate of the High Court of Kenya and a doctoral candidate at the University of Cape Town. She was an Open AIR Queen Elisabeth Scholars – Advanced Scholars Fellow, exploring the extent to which copyright law either restricts or expands the possibility that the maker movement in South Africa will contribute to growth of informal sector innovation. Particularly, she examined how South Africa can leverage copyright law as a tool for inclusion of women, girls, and marginalized groups into the innovation paradigm. She works as a research coordinator at the Democratic Rights and Governance Unit in South Africa. She also supports initiatives that facilitate free and open access to legal resources, working as the Managing Editor at the African Legal Information Institute. Her career goal is to reinstate creative and cultural industries as significant contributors to sustainable development in Africa.



## **Ms. Melissa Langworthy**

**Consultant, Senior Gender Expert, European Commission  
"EU-GCC Political Dialogue, Cooperation and Outreach"  
Initiative, Equinoccio, Abqaiq**

Dr. Melissa Langworthy is a feminist economist specializing in inclusive and sustainable growth, entrepreneurship, and gender equality. She has more than 15 years of experience working on economic justice, labor rights, and social protection; and gender mainstreaming and capacity building for government, NGO, and private sector actors, including Facebook, UN Women, Oxfam, and the European Union. Her regional expertise is in MENA and Asia and the Pacific, with a focus on evolving entrepreneurial economic ecosystems in the Gulf states. Dr. Langworthy has provided technical leadership for academic institutions, community-based organizations, and the private sector to design and implement successful initiatives, to prioritize gender in policy and advocacy efforts, and to advocate for evidence-based policymaking. Through her academic publications, policy papers, and a forthcoming book, she continues to critically define and argue the terms and supports needed to drive promotion of high quality, sustainable, and innovative women's enterprise.



## **Ms. Rana Dajani**

**Visiting Professor, MIT Refugee Action Hub (ReACT),  
Cambridge, United States of America**

Ms. Rana Dajani is a molecular biologist, social entrepreneur, and global thought leader. She is the founder of We Love Reading, an initiative that fosters a love of reading in underserved communities through grassroots efforts. This initiative has established over 4,000 locally-run libraries in 60 countries, earning Dajani the UNESCO International Literacy Prize. She has been recognized as a Fulbright fellow, Eisenhower fellow, and Ashoka fellow, and has received accolades such as the Jacobs Social Entrepreneur Award, Nansen UNHCR Refugee Award, and the Schwab Social Entrepreneur Award. As a professor of molecular biology at the Hashemite University in Jordan, Dajani specializes in epigenetics and biomarkers of trauma among refugees. She has introduced stem cell laws at national and regional levels and has held leadership positions in scientific boards and United Nations councils. Dajani is also dedicated to building research capabilities in the developing world and supporting women scholars in STEM. Her book "Five Scarves: Doing the Impossible" challenges global policymakers and proposes a new paradigm for measuring success.

