

UNEP 2021 Synthesis Report: Biographies

1. Authors



Ivar Andreas Baste – Report Lead (Norway) is the co-Chair for the Future of GEO process Steering Committee and a senior advisor at the Norwegian Environment Agency. He has also served as a member of the IPBES Bureau, Director of the Environment Management Group, UNEP Chief of Scientific Assessments, and Deputy Director General in the Norwegian Ministry of Environment. Ivar has contributed to various assessments including for IPBES, UNEP GEO, Integrated Assessment of Black Carbon and Tropospheric Ozone, Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessments of the State of the Marine Environment, International Assessment of Agricultural Science & Technology for Development, Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), and Global Biodiversity



Sir Robert Watson – Report Lead (UK) is one of the most influential environmental scientists worldwide. In addition to Chairing or Co-Chairing numerous national and international assessments, he has served as a Senior Scientific Advisor in the Office of Science and Technology Policy in the White House, the World Bank, and UK Defra. He has received many awards for his contributions to science, including the Asahi Glass Blue Planet Prize and the UN Champion of the World for Science and Innovation. Some of his past Chair and co-Chair positions on assessments include the IPCC 3rd Assessment Report, IPCC WGII 2nd Assessment Report, IPBES, Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), International Assessment of Agricultural Science & Technology for Development, Global Biodiversity Assessment (GA), multiple International Scientific Assessments of Stratospheric Ozone, and the UK National Ecosystem Assessment.



Kate A Brauman – *Lead Author* (USA) is an interdisciplinary water scientist evaluating how water use affects the environment and our livability in it. She evaluates worldwide trends in water consumption, shortages, and green infrastructure for water management. Kate is a 2020 American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science Policy Fellow in Climate and Water Resilience. She currently serves as the Lead Scientist at the Global Water Initiative, Institute on the Environment at the University of Minnesota. She has also contributed her knowledge and expertise to the IPBES Global Assessment’s (GA) Chapter on Nature’s Contributions to People.



Kai Chan – *Lead Author* (Canada) is an interdisciplinary, problem solving-oriented sustainability scientist trained in ecology and policy. He is currently a Professor for the Institute of Resources, Environment and Sustainability at the University of British Columbia. He was a member of Canada’s Clean16 and Clean50, a Coordinating Lead Author for the IPBES Global Assessment (GA) and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), and a reviewer for UNEP GEO-6 for Business Brief. He is also a Lead Editor of the New British Ecological Society Journal titled *People and Nature*. You can find him on Twitter @KaiChanUBC.



Nebojsa Nakicenovic – *Lead Author* (Austria) is the Executive Director of The World In 2050 (TWI2050), a global research initiative supporting the UN 2030 Agenda. He was the Deputy Director General of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) and a tenured Professor of Energy Economics at Vienna Technology University. He holds his PhD in engineering from the Russian Academy of Sciences. He currently serves on Editorial Boards of ten peer-reviewed Journals, previously on another ten, and is on many Scientific Advisory Boards. He has worked on a number of scientific assessments including various IPCC reports, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), Global Energy Assessment, World Energy Assessment, UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2019, and the Austrian Panel on Climate Change Report 2014.



Paul L Lucas – *Lead Author* (the Netherlands) is a Senior Policy Researcher on environment and development at the PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency. His work includes integrated assessments of achieving long-term sustainability targets and translations of global environmental challenges and agreements to the national level with a specific focus on the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals. He has worked on the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO), UNEP GEO-5, and UNEP GEO-6.



Steve Polasky – *Lead Author* (USA) is a Professor of Ecological/Environmental Economics at the University of Minnesota. He is also one of the leaders of the Natural Capital Project’s environmental service mapping and valuation effort. He has vast experience in the field including leading numerous publications on ecosystem services, natural capital, and biodiversity conservation. He also helped integrate ecological and economic analysis in the IPBES Global Assessment’s Chapter on Nature’s Contributions to People and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA).



Robert John Scholes – *Lead Author* (South Africa) is a highly-cited Ecosystem Ecologist and a Distinguished Professor of Systems Ecology and the Director of the Global Change Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand. Bob has had four decades of experience in Africa and the world, especially on climate change, biodiversity, and earth observation. He has contributed to various assessments including the IPBES Special Report on Land Degradation, IPCC AR3, AR4, AR5, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), the South African Assessments on the Management of Elephants and Shale Gas Development in the Karoo.



Ricardo Barra – *Contributing Author* (Chile) is a Professor at the Faculty of Environmental Sciences and EULA–Chile Centre at the University of Concepción. His areas of specialization are environmental toxicology and chemistry of anthropogenic pollutants in the environment. He has contributed his experience and knowledge to UNEP GEO-5, UNEP GEO-6, and the Global Chemicals Outlook (GCO).



Eduardo Brondizio – *Contributing Author* (Brazil) directs the Center for the Analysis of Social-Ecological Landscapes (CASEL) and is a Distinguished Professor at Indiana University. His research combines field-based work with rural and urban populations in the Amazon and international collaborative research on global environmental and climate change. He is the Editor-in-Chief of *Global Environmental Change* and has also contributed to the IPBES Global Assessment (GA), UNEP GEO-4, and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA).



Shobhakar Dhakal – *Contributing Author* (Nepal) is a Professor of Energy, Environment and Climate Change at the Asian Institute of Technology. His areas of expertise include cities and climate change, energy and climate policy, and energy and GHG accounting and modeling. He has been involved with many assessments, serving as the Coordinating Lead Author to IPCC WGII's 5th and 6th Reports, UNEP GEO-5, the Second Assessment Report on Climate Change and Cities, and the Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment.



Rebecca M Garland – *Contributing Author* (South Africa) is a Principal Researcher in the Holistic Climate Change Impact Area at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in South Africa where she leads the air quality research. She works to improve the understanding of air quality, climate change, and their linkages and impacts, especially in Africa. She was also a Contributing Author for IPCC AR5, and also worked on the Integrated Assessment of Air Pollution and Climate Change in Africa.



Yacob Mulugetta – *Contributing Author* (Ethiopia/UK) is a Professor of Energy and Development Policy at the University College London. He specializes on the links between energy infrastructure provision, human welfare, and development. He is also a Fellow of the African Academy of Sciences (AAS). He has contributed his expertise to the IPCC WGIII AR5 Chapter on Energy Systems and IPCC WGIII AR6 Chapter on Demand, Services, and Social Aspects of Mitigation, along with the IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C.



Paul A Newman – *Contributing Author* (USA) is the Chief Scientist for Earth Science in the Earth Sciences Directorate of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. He is also a Co-Chair of the Scientific Assessment Panel to the Montreal Protocol and a fellow of the American Meteorological Society and the American Geophysical Union. Some of his assessment contributions include the Scientific Assessment of Ozone Depletion for the years of 1989, 1991, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, and 2018.



Belinda Reyers – *Contributing Author* (South Africa) is based in South Africa where she explores the contribution of theories, methods, and evidence from social-ecological systems research to the development challenges facing Africa. She also serves as a Senior Advisor at the Stockholm Resilience Centre. Her work focuses on exploring the role of social-ecological feedbacks, cross-scale dynamics, non-linearities, and resilience capacities in achieving sustainable and equitable futures. Belinda has contributed her expertise as a Coordinating Lead Author for IPBES.



Cristián Samper – *Contributing Author* (Colombia/USA) is the President and CEO of the Wildlife Conservation Society. Prior, he was the Director of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History and the founding Director of the Alexander von Humboldt Institute of Colombia. He was also Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the UN Convention of Biological Diversity, and one of the leaders of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA).



Sonia I Seneviratne – *Contributing Author* (Switzerland) is a Professor of Land-Climate Dynamics at ETH Zurich where she focuses on climate extremes and land-climate interactions. She investigates processes leading to droughts and heatwaves, the impacts of land processes and land cover changes on regional climate. She is a Fellow of the American Geophysical Union and was awarded the 2021 Hans Oeschger Medal of the European Geosciences Union. She has worked on the IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C as a Lead Author and on IPCC AR6 as a Coordinating Lead Author.



Detlef van Vuuren – *Contributing Author* (Netherlands) leads the IMAGE Integrated Assessment modelling team and is a Professor at PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency and Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development at Utrecht University. He is a Board member of the Integrated Assessment Modelling Consortium (IAMC), the Global Carbon Project, the Earth Commission, and a member of the Royal Academy of Sciences and the Arts. He has contributed to various assessments for IPCC, IPBES, UNEP GEO, and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA).



Chris Walzer – *Contributing Author* (Austria) is a board-certified Wildlife Veterinarian with internationally recognized and diverse health expertise from combined years of leadership and research on the human-livestock-wildlife interface in Europe, Asia, and Africa. He serves as the Executive Director of Health at the Wildlife Conservation Society and is also a Professor of Conservation Medicine at the University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna, Austria. Additionally, he has led several successful large-scale EU-funded ecological connectivity and biodiversity conservation projects in the Alps, and he also contributed his expertise to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA).



Rachel Warren – *Contributing Author* (UK) is a Professor of Global Change and Environmental Biology, Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research at the University of East Anglia. Her research focuses on the production of policy-relevant science related to climate change and sustainability. A recent focus of hers has been the quantification of the climate change impacts that can be avoided by timely mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, in particular in relation to risks to biodiversity. She has contributed her expertise to various IPCC reports including IPCC AR4, AR5, AR6, and IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C Warming.



Bianca Wernecke – *Contributing Author* (South Africa) works in the Environment and Health Research Unit at the South African Medical Research Council. Her expertise ranges from air pollution management in the energy sector to research on air pollution and human health interactions in low-income communities. She holds an MSc in Geography and Environmental Management, and her academic background also includes Biodiversity and Conservation Biology. She is pursuing her PhD in air pollution-related exposure studies. She has contributed to assessments including “Preventing the next pandemic” UNEP Report, and the first UNEP synthesis report, “Making Peace with Nature.”



Caradee Y Wright – *Contributing Author* (South Africa) is a Senior Specialist Scientist at the South African Medical Research Council where she leads the Climate and Health Research Programme. Her research focuses on environmental health in Africa, including heat-health assessment and interventions, personal solar ultraviolet radiation exposure and skin cancer prevention, and household air pollution-related exposure and prevention. She has contributed her knowledge to assessments including “Preventing the next pandemic” UNEP Report, IPCC AR6, and UNEP GEO.

2. *Scientific Advisory Group*



Hesiquio Benitez-Diaz (Mexico) is a Biologist who serves as the Director General of the International Cooperation and Implementation in CONABIO where he was also a part of the founding team since 1992. Additionally, he is the Head at CITES Scientific Authority of Mexico, a former Vice-Chair of CITES Plants Committee and of UICN Crocodile Specialist Group for Mexico's Region. He was awarded with the Scientific Merit Certificate by the CITES Secretary General. Some of his past contributions on assessments include Mexico's Study of Biodiversity, Biodiversity Strategy, and Plant Conservation.



Julia Carabias Lillo (Mexico) is an Ecologist and environmentalist dedicated to the conservation, management and restoration of tropical ecosystems and environmental policies. She was Secretary of the Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries for Mexico. She has held leadership roles for organizations such as WRI, WWF, among others. She was chair of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the Global Environment Fund and a member of the IPBES Multidisciplinary Panel of Experts. Among her international recognitions are the UNEP Cosmos and Champions of the Earth Awards. She is a researcher at the Faculty of Sciences, UNAM and a member of El Colegio Nacional.



John M. Christensen (Sweden) is the Director of UNEP DTU Partnership (UDP) where is also founded the organization in 1990. He has worked on energy, climate, and development issues at UNEP for the past 30 years and has been responsible for editing the annual UNEP Emissions Gap Report in the last years. He has a long standing involvement with the IPCC where he has been a Lead Author on five reports and has been in the Bureau which led to him jointly receive the Nobel Peace Prize with the IPCC author family in 2007.



David Cooper (UK) is the Deputy Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). He was the Secretary of the successful CBD COP 10 in 2010 which adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and coordinated work on national biodiversity strategies and action plans. He also led the Convention's Science Division from 2011-2015. He has also worked for the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the NGO GRAIN, and the UK Agricultural Research Council. He was a Lead Author for the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) on the Biodiversity Synthesis and Chapters on Food and Agricultural ecosystems, and for the 5th Global Biodiversity Assessment, and he acted as a resource person supporting the IPBES Global Assessment (GA).



Paul Ekins (UK) is the Chair of the IRP Scientific Advisor and Co-Chair of UNEP's GEO-for-Business and the Green Growth Knowledge Platform's Research Committee on Natural Capital. He has his Ph.D. in Economics and is Professor of Resources and Environmental Policy and a Director of the Institute for Sustainable Resources at University College London. He has been a Co-Director & Deputy Director of the UK Energy Research Centre. He was a Lead Author on the IRP's publications on resource efficiency and mineral resource governance. He has extensive experience consulting for business, government and international organisations. He also worked on the IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C Warming



David W Fahey (USA) is the Director of the NOAA Chemical Sciences Laboratory. As a Research Physicist, his interests include measurements of trace gases and aerosols in the troposphere and lower stratosphere using instruments on board research aircraft with an emphasis on stratospheric ozone depletion and the roles of black carbon, biological aerosol, and water vapor in the climate system. He has authored major scientific assessments on black carbon and global aviation to address their roles in the climate system. He is currently a Co-Chair of the Scientific Assessment Panel of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and has also worked on the IPCC AR4.



Joyeeta Gupta (the Netherlands) is a Professor of Environment and Development in the Global South at the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research of the University of Amsterdam and IHE Delft Institute for Water Education. She is a Faculty Professor on Sustainability (2019-2024) and has been named as Co-Chair of the Earth Commission (2019-2021) by Future Earth together with Johan Rockström and Dahe Qin. She is Editor-in-Chief of the International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics, and is on the Board of many other journals. She has contributed her expertise to UNEP GEO-6, IPCC WGIII AR4 and AR5, as well as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA).



Madhav Karki (Nepal) is the Executive Director and Founder of the Centre for Green Economy Development, Nepal (CGED-Nepal), and an Expert Member of the Government of Nepal's Environment Protection Council and an Adjunct Professor of Institute of Forestry, Nepal. His expertise is in Natural Resources Management and Sustainable Development. Additionally, he is the Deputy Chair of the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management. He has also Co-Chaired the IPBES Asia Pacific Regional Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and was a Former Member of Indigenous and Local Knowledge. Currently, he is a member of the Policy Support and Tools Task Force of IPBES.



Nicholas King (South Africa) is an environmental futurist and a Professor in the Environmental Science and Management Research Unit at North West University. His experience includes assessments of environment and development policy, laws and management in numerous countries, and participation on both governmental and non-governmental delegations to international MEA policy negotiations. Currently, he consults and teaches (post-graduate courses at four different universities) on global change, futures thinking, scenarios development, strategic planning, and leadership, and works with governments, business, NGOs, and local communities, and across planning sectors. Nick is a former CEO of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). He has contributed to various assessments including UNEP GEO-5, UNEP GEO-6, IPCC AR5, and IPBES Global Assessment (GA).



Thomas Lovejoy (USA) is an innovative conservation biologist and he coined the term “biological diversity” in 1980. He is the Founder and President of the non-profit Amazon Biodiversity Center and the renowned Biological Dynamics of Forest Fragments Project. In 2010, he was elected University Professor in the Department of Environmental Science and Policy at George Mason University. At the core of these many influential positions are seminal ideas, which have formed and strengthened the field of conservation biology. With three co-edited books (1992, 2005 and 2019), he is credited as a founder of the field of climate change biology. He also serves as a Senior Fellow in the United Nations Foundation.



Jock Martin (UK) is a member of GRID-Arendal's Board and Head of Integrated Environmental Assessments (IEA) at the European Environment Agency in Copenhagen. He is responsible for the strategic development of integrated environmental assessment methods and products. He has been involved in environmental statistics, indicators, and assessments since 1991, initially for six years at the Department for the Environment in the UK where he was an author of the first national indicator report on sustainable development.



Valérie Masson-Delmotte (France) is a climate scientist and the Research Director at the French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission, where she works in the Climate and Environment Sciences Laboratory (LSCE). She uses data to test models of climate change. She has contributed to several IPCC Reports. In October 2015, she was elected as Co-Chair of WGI of the IPCC. She was also a Coordinating Lead Author for the Paleoclimate Chapter in the IPCC AR5 cycle. She is currently leading IPCC's WGI's activities for the AR6 cycle.



Peter Messerli (Germany) is a Professor for Sustainable Development at the University of Bern. He is also the Director of the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE). As a land system Scientist, he is a Co-Chair for the Future Earth's Global Land Programme (GLP) and the UN Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR).



Shantanu Mukherjee (India) heads the Policy and Analysis Branch in the Sustainable Development Division within the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs. He is a micro-economist with interests in poverty, health, and sustainability. He focuses on enhancing the impact of science, technology, and innovation in advancing sustainable development. Prior, he led the research and writing unit of UNDP's Human Development Report through two report cycles, preceded by a stint as head of UNDP's Global Millennium Development Goals policy work. There, he worked with national planning, finance, and sector ministries in countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. He began his career with the Indian Government in development policy planning and implementation, and finance.



Endah Murniningtyas (Indonesia) is the Chair of the Indonesia Agriculture Economist Association (PERHEPI). She was also the Deputy Minister for Natural Resources and Environment at the Ministry of National Development Planning (2010-2016). Currently, she is the Co-Chair of the UN Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR).



Bruno Oberle (Switzerland) is a Professor at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Lausanne and the Vice President of the World Resources Forum Association. He was also a lecturer in the Department of Environmental Sciences at the ETH Zurich. From 1999-2005, Bruno served as Vice Director of the former Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL) responsible for technical environmental protection. From 2006-2015, he was the Director of the Federal Office for the Environment. He is also a member of the IRP and a.o. President of the World Resources Forum Association and Co-Chair of the Green Digital Finance Alliance.



Janez Potočnik (Slovenia) is the Co-Chair of the International Resources Panel (IRP) and a Partner at SYSTEMIQ. He is an Economist and former Politician from Slovenia. He worked in the Government of the Republic of Slovenia as the Head of the Negotiating Team for Accession of the Republic of Slovenia to the European Union and later as Minister without portfolio responsible for European Affairs. He was a member of the European Commission from 2004-2014, initially responsible for the Science and Research and later responsible for the Environment. In 2013, he received the United Nations Champions of the Earth Award. He contributed his expertise to the Global Resources Outlook 2019.



Debra Roberts (South Africa) is the Head of the Sustainable and Resilient City Initiatives Unit in eThekweni Municipality, Durban, South Africa. She established and managed the Environmental Planning and Climate Protection Department and was selected as the city's first Chief Resilience Officer. She was a member of the South African UNFCCC negotiating team and has sat on various international advisory bodies. She was a member of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network Thematic Group on Sustainable Cities that mobilised support for creating a city-focused SDG 11. She is also an Honorary Professor in the School of Life Sciences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. She is the Co-Chair of IPCC WGII and has worked on IPCC AR5 and AR6.



Johan Rockström (Sweden) is an internationally recognized scientist on global sustainability issues, currently serving as Director of the Postdam Institute for Climate Impact Research. He led the development of the Planetary Boundaries framework for human development. He is a leading scientist on global water resources, with over 25 years of experience in applied water research in tropical regions, and more than 150 research publications in fields ranging from applied land and water management to global sustainability. He is a member of European Commission Expert Group: Mission Board for adaptation to climate change including societal transformation, Chair of the Earth Commission and is an Elected Member of the German Academy of Sciences Leopoldina. He has worked on multiple assessments including UNEP GEO-6, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), and the International Energy Agency's (IEA) World Energy Outlook.



Sonali Senaratna Sellamuttu (Sri Lanka) has 20+ years of experience in natural resource management, with an emphasis on building livelihoods, resilience, and reducing poverty. She is a Senior Researcher and Country Representative, Southeast Asia and Myanmar, for the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) – a Research Center of CGIAR. She Co-Chaired the IPBES Asia-Pacific Regional Assessment (2015-2018) and was the IWMI Representative on the Ramsar Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) in addition to being the Lead for the STRP Working Group on Wetlands and Poverty Eradication (2013-2015). Prior to IWMI, Sonali worked for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).



Cyriaque (Cyrie) Sendashonga (Rwanda/Canada) has over 30+ years of experience on the science-policy interface with a special focus on natural resources management and nature conservation. Currently, she is the Global Director for Programme and Policy at IUCN. She was Regional Coordinator with the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Central Africa Regional Office. Cyrie was also Head of the Biosafety Programme in charge of matters related to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety with the Secretariat of the CBD. She also worked at UNEP, as Senior Programme Officer in charge of coordinating the development and implementation of biodiversity projects funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and was a Research Fellow at the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI). She has contributed her expertise to a wealth of biodiversity projects for UNEP.



Jim Skea (UK) is a Professor of Sustainable Energy at Imperial College London with research interests in energy, climate change, and technological innovation. He is Co-Chair of IPCC WGIII for the 6th Assessment cycle. He was Research Director of the UK Energy Research Centre (2004-2012) and Director of the Policy Studies Institute (1998-2004). He was a member of the UK Committee on Climate Change from its inception in 2008 until 2018. He is currently chairing Scotland's Just Transition Commission. Until June 2017, he was President of the UK Energy Institute.



Youba Sokona (Mali) is the Vice-Chair of IPCC and he was Co-Chair of IPCC WGIII on the mitigation of climate change for the Fifth Assessment Report and served as a Lead Author. He has vast experience in organisational leadership and management, serving as Coordinator of the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) and as Executive Secretary of the Sahara and the Sahel Observatory (OSS). He is affiliated with numerous boards and organisations, including as a Member of the Board for the Institute of Development Studies, Honorary Professor at the University College London (UCL), and as a Special Advisor to the African Energy Leaders Group.

3. *Fellows*



Akshay Jain (India) is the Co-Founder and CTO at Mesotope. An advocate of sustainability, he develops high performance material by recycling waste, and an eco-friendly and efficient way of manufacturing energy storage devices. His work includes securing grants and establishing facilities to carry out the production and commercialization. Akshay has been associated with UNEP for the last two and a half years and serves as a Lead and Coordinating Lead Author for the GEO-6 for Youth publication. He is passionate about integrating environmental consciousness in youth behaviours and actions. He holds his Ph.D. from National University of Singapore (NUS) in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering department and secured 2 patents, 15 peer-reviewed publications and 10 international conference presentations.



Jaee Sanjay Nikam (India) is a UNEP GEO for Youth Lead Author and a UNEP-Research Fellow who is passionate about encouraging citizens to engage in the climate change and environmental policy dialogue. For her full time job, she works as a Research Associate with Stockholm Environment Institute-Asia, focusing on urban, air pollution, and circular economy projects and is leveraging her research, writing skills as well as the ability to connect people from different sectors in order enhance the dialogue between the policymakers and scientists/researchers in the field of Environment to enhance their impact on the international platform.



Tooba Masood (Pakistan) is an author for UNEP GEO-6 for Youth and a UNEP Research Fellow. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. at the Asian Institute of Technology. Her diverse interests lead her to cross disciplinary boundaries, and her curiosity has inspired her to study the interlinkages of the energy industry, environmental implications, and sustainable development. While pursuing her career in the energy industry, she focuses on energy sector policies and their intricacies. To understand such complexities and to bring optimized solutions, she plays with energy models and researches the lessons from old and new energy policies. She works as an independent researcher with corporations, non-profit organizations, and entrepreneurs. Her broader interests involve supporting environmental and social causes. When not working on her research projects, she is engaged in helping businesses to be more efficient and environmentally friendly, and advocating individuals in adopting a sustainable and circular lifestyle.



Maria Jesus Iraola (Uruguay) has her MSc in Environment Politics and Society from University College London (UCL) and BSc in Environmental Geography from Uruguayan University (UdelaR). She specialized in land-use environmental conflicts and management. Currently, she is working as a consultant at Latin American consulting firm, AAE, in the implementation of national projects, such as REDD+, and working on the different Social and Environmental Safeguards used by development banks, conservation and funding institutions. She has been a Research Fellow for UNEP since 2017, contributing to UNEP GEO-6 for Youth as a Coordinating Lead Author. She is also a content producer at an audio-visual production company called Studios ROFF.



Amit Patel (USA) has a Master of Public Health with a concentration in Environmental Health. While in graduate school, Amit’s primary research aims centered on comparatively analyzing biofuel emissions and correlating their respiratory health effects. Currently, Amit is a Senior Public Health Analyst at the Cadmus Group in Washington D.C. with a focus on biosurveillance innovation and applied science. His current project portfolio entails consulting federal clients on global infectious disease monitoring and reporting. He has prior experience as an Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education Fellow with the Office of Research & Development at the United States Forest Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and with the National Institutes of Health by means of their Minority Health and Health Disparities International Research Training program. Amit is a native of London, England, and enjoys archery, racquetball, and fishing in his spare time.



Priti Patel (USA) is the Director of Business Development for NU Borders. She formerly worked as a government contractor for the NIH where she performed grant reviews and analysis of current standards and practices. She contributed to the Making Peace with Nature report as a Research Fellow and co-authored UNEP’s GEO-6 for Youth report. At NU Borders, Priti develops, coordinates, and implements plans to increase existing business and capture new opportunities across the federal government and intelligence community.



Dr. Semie Sama (Cameroon) is an Assistant Professor at Lakehead University, Canada as well as a post-doctoral fellow at McGill University and the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI), where she researches in the field of international climate change law. Her current research examines greenhouse gas emission reduction policy measures in both industrialized and non-industrialized nations. She has interest in decarbonization pathways to a clean growth economy—energy, industry, forestry and agriculture, transportation, and communities and built environment sectors. Dr. Sama has contributed as a Fellow to the GEO-6 report.



Samanta Villegas Espinosa (Ecuador) is an Environmental Economist aspiring to achieve a more equitable, efficient, and sustainable future. Since she was young, she has engaged in volunteering and professional experiences that have been related to the environment and sustainable development and have allowed her to learn from local communities, regional collaborations, and international institutions. She led the environmental accounting team in Ecuador's Ministry of Environment. She is a Lead Author for UNEP GEO-6 for Youth. Currently, she is working with Fundación Jocotoco, an Ecuadorian NGO, as their Development Coordinator. She has enabled cooperation between Jocotoco and international institutions like Rainforest Trust, American Bird Conservancy, WWF, and National Geographic. These partnerships have led to the implementation of significant conservation projects in Ecuador aimed at tackling climate change and protecting some of the world's most threatened ecosystems and endangered species.



Leila Zamani (Islamic Republic of Iran) is the Head of Sustainable Development Group in the Department of Environment of Iran where she focuses on policy analysis, formulating integrated programs, and facilitating stakeholder engagement in aligning with implementing sustainable development goals. She has worked as a UNEP Research Fellow and Author for GEO-6 and GEO for Youth. She holds an MSc in natural resource engineering and an MBA in international business. Her research interests are inter-disciplinary and include issues such as environmental governance, green economy, and sustainable consumption and production.



Emily Zhang (USA) is a MSc candidate in geography at George Washington University where she is also a Research Assistant on an interdisciplinary and international team working on urban sustainability in the Arctic. In her current thesis research, she is interested in unpacking the knowledge production process embedded in urban sustainability indicators, in both the creation and use of them. Her passion for environmental responsibility stems from working with the U.S. Green Building Council, supporting them on their local green schools programs in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. As a geographer-in-training, she is curious about how places shape people's lived experiences, and how they can be made to offer more socially equitable and livable futures for all.