
Breaking Barriers, Shaping Futures: Women's Leadership in Multilateral Diplomacy

Monday, September 8, 2025

6:15–7:30 p.m. (ET)

Location: 777 United Nations Plaza, 8th FL, New York, NY

On the road to the election of the next United Nations Secretary-General, this high-level panel will convene women diplomats, policymakers, and experts to explore the transformative role of women's leadership in shaping multilateral diplomacy.

Empowering women to lead in diplomacy for a more inclusive and effective United Nations.

Speakers

- H.E. Ms. Egriselda Lopez, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations
- H.E. Ms. Lise Gregoire Van Haaren, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations
- Ms. Blanca Montejo, Deputy Chef de Cabinet, Office of 79th President of the UN General Assembly
- Ms. Benedicta Kristanti, Political Coordinator, Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the United Nations
- Ms. Sylvia Paola Mendoza Elguea, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations
- Dr. Karen E. Smith, Professor of International Relations, London School of Economics and Political Science
- Mr. Fernando Marani, Program Director, Justice, Inclusion and Equality, NYU Center on International Cooperation
- Ms. Betty N. Wainaina, Program Director, NYU Center on International Cooperation
- Ms. Marta Kozielska, Project Manager, Women in Diplomacy, LSE IDEAS
- *Moderation:* Ms. Natalie Briggs, Program Officer, NYU Center on International Cooperation

Background

Despite progress, women remain significantly underrepresented in global decision-making, holding just over 23 percent of ambassadorial posts worldwide. The panel will highlight how women's leadership enhances diplomacy by fostering collaboration, advancing inclusive policy outcomes, and strengthening the legitimacy and effectiveness of multilateral institutions at a time when the international system faces deep divisions and complex global crises. This discussion builds on findings from the London School of Economics (LSE) IDEAS Women in Diplomacy 2024 report, "[Strengthening the Representation of Women in Diplomacy: Challenges and Policy Solutions](#)," which underscores both persistent barriers and proven pathways to progress. These include overcoming structural discrimination, "glass ceilings" and "glass cliffs," unequal access to leadership roles, and systemic biases that limit opportunities for women and underrepresented groups. At the same time, the research highlights enabling factors such as mentorship, supportive networks, institutional reforms, and policy innovations that have helped accelerate women's advancement in diplomacy.

Co-hosted by the LSE IDEAS Women in Diplomacy project and the NYU Center on International Cooperation (CIC), the event reflects a shared commitment to advancing gender equality and inclusion in global governance in a context of growing challenges for the multilateral system. By connecting research insights with practitioner experience, the panel will spotlight actionable strategies to make multilateral institutions more representative and effective.

As the UN prepares for a leadership transition in 2026, this discussion will explore how increasing women's representation at senior levels of diplomacy is not only a matter of equity but also essential to rebuilding trust in the multilateral system and strengthening the United Nations' capacity to deliver peace, justice, and sustainable development for all.

About the Organizers

The [LSE IDEAS Women in Diplomacy](#) project was launched in 2022 with the mission to improve women's representation and leadership in diplomacy, foreign policy, and policy-making by identifying barriers and enablers to women's advancement in national ministries, diplomatic services and international organisations. In 2024, the team published a report on Strengthening Women's Representation in Diplomacy in 2024 and is currently working on a revised edition.

The [Center on International Cooperation](#) (CIC) at New York University (NYU) is a think tank and research center that, for over two decades, has been a leader in applied policy, connecting politics, security, justice, development, and humanitarian issues. Our mission is to inform and strengthen collaborative approaches and/or collaboration among national governments, international organizations, and the wider policy community to build trust, prevent and respond to crises—and advance peace, justice, and inclusion at all levels.

This event is cosponsored by the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations.