

## **Speaker Biographies**

### ***Steven Benoit***

Senator Steven Benoit was elected under the platform "Alternative". He has been very vocal in criticizing the public institutions in Haiti and has led the process of increasing Haiti's minimum wage to 200 gourdes in 2009. Steven Benoit was a former depute and current Senate elect for the Western Department in Haiti.

### ***Moderator Marc Cohen***

Marc Cohen is a Senior Researcher at Oxfam America in Washington, DC. He has been carrying out research in Haiti on health, education, social policy, agriculture, food security, and aid effectiveness since 2007. He is the author of "Planting Now: Agricultural Challenges and Opportunities for Haiti's Reconstruction," October 2010, and "Haiti, the Slow Road to Reconstruction: Two Years after the Earthquake," January 2012, both published by Oxfam International. Cohen is also the principal investigator for Oxfam's research program on effectiveness, accountability, and equity in Haiti's reconstruction, supported by the Ford Foundation.

### ***Brian Concannon***

Brian Concannon co-managed the BAI in Haiti for eight years, from 1996–2004, and worked for the United Nations as a Human Rights Officer in 1995–1996. He founded IJDH, and has been the Director since 2004. He helped prepare the prosecution of the Raboteau Massacre trial in 2000, one of the most significant human rights cases anywhere in the Western Hemisphere. He has represented Haitian political prisoners before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

### ***Anne-Christine d'Adesky***

Anne-Christine d'Adesky is a journalist, author, nonprofit program director, and human rights activist. She has longtime family roots in Haiti. She is a co-founder and Program Director of PotoFanm+Fi, a post-earthquake Haiti-focused advocacy coalition formed in 2010 to promote women's and girls' leadership in Haiti's recovery. She cofounded the PotoFi Haiti Girls Initiative, a 2011 participatory research study of sexual violence in over 2000 adolescents. She is author, with PotoFanm+Fi, of a new cross-sector report, 'Beyond Shock,' that tracks post-quake progress in addressing sexual violence in Haiti.

### ***Doudou Pierre Festile***

Doudou Pierre Festile has over 25 years expertise in supporting Haitian food security and mobilizing peasant and grassroots movements. He has served as a Professor at the Toussaint L'Ouverture Institute, Executive Director of the Peasant movement of Acul du Nord, Northern Program Coordinator for the National Congress of Papaye Peasant movement (MPNKP) and more recently as Regional Coordinator of the National Haitian Network for Food Sovereignty and Food Security (RENHASSA). With certified expertise in technical planning, project management, monitoring and evaluation from UNDP and UNOPS and a degree in Diplomatic and Consular Service from the Academy of Sciences, International Relations and Labor in Cap-Haitien, he is well versed in international and multi-lateral development planning and evaluation structures. As a continued member of MPNKP, the International Coordinating Committee for Food Sovereignty, organized by Via Campesina, the Kaba Grangou Hunger Free Campaign and now the Je Nan Je Land and Housing Rights Platform, he is deeply committed to supporting Haitian peasant movements in their struggle

for food sovereignty and poverty eradication. Doudou and his organization are among the founding members of Je Nan Je (in Haitian Creole, “Eye to Eye”), a platform of 10 grassroots networks, social movements and women’s groups, representing over 800,000 Haitians who, with support from ActionAid, successfully advocated for the formation of a Haitian Parliament bi-cameral commission working to incorporate the Je Nan Je recommendations into viable pieces of legislation. Je Nan Je members have also testified before the US Congress on the inclusion of grassroots organization in Haiti’s reconstruction.

### ***Kelly Geohegan***

Kelly Geohegan works with the Environmental Justice Initiative for Haiti. She graduated from New York University School of Law, where she was a Thurgood Marshall scholar focusing on human rights, humanitarian law, and international criminal law. She worked on a study of gender-based violence in Haiti’s displacement camps for the NYU School of Law’s Global Justice Clinic. Kelly earned an LL.M. in Human Rights and Criminal Justice (Cross-Border) through a joint program with the Irish Centre for Human Rights in Galway, Ireland, and Queen’s University in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

### ***Ricot Jean-Pierre***

Ricot Jean Pierre is a social worker, with training in economic development management, land use planning, and informatics. He has been the Program Director of the Haitian Platform to Advocate Alternative Development (PAPDA) since 1997. He was director in Haiti of the Jubilee 2000 Debt Cancellation Campaign, which obtained 135,000 signatures on the Global Petition Against the Injustice of Foreign Debts. Currently, he is Director of the Advocacy Program for Economic Alternatives, which provides critical analysis of neo-liberal globalization that is expanding the gap between rich and poor countries. This program also uses a participatory method to devise viable alternatives, in order to influence national policy in Haiti and create solidarity links among people. He also works to organize people against the establishment of free-trade zones on farmland in Haiti, and coordinates PAPDA’s Créole newsletter, « Yon Lòt Ayiti Posib ! » (“Another Haiti is Possible”). His published articles include “Haiti: Why Pay Papa Doc’s Debts?” and “Haiti and the Independence Indemnity Claimed by France.”

### ***Claire Lauterbach***

Claire Lauterbach is a Programs Associate for Gender Action, the world’s only organization dedicated to promoting gender justice in all International Financial Institution investments. Claire is responsible for Gender Action’s work on Haiti and globally on sexual and reproductive health and rights and HIV/AIDS, gender-based violence and food security. She is the author of a forthcoming Gender Action study assessing the degree to which International Financial Institutions have integrated gender concerns into their post-earthquake response in Haiti. Claire comes to Gender Action from Human Rights Watch, for whom she served as a researcher based in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

### ***Colette Lespinasse***

Colette Lespinasse became Executive Director of Groupe d’Appui aux Rapatriés et aux Réfugiés (GARR) in 1999. GARR promotes and protects migrants’ rights through activities involving advocacy, humanitarian and legal assistance, and the reinsertion of returnees. Colette’s responsibilities include coordinating the organization’s activities, managing its public relations, and fundraising. A prominent journalist, Colette regularly publishes articles about migrants and refugees on the GARR website as well as in national and international reviews. Although her advocacy work is predominantly driven by the situation of migrants and refugees along the Haitian-Dominican border, she also hosts a program for women on the Haitian radio station, Radio Kiskeya. Colette received her Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration from Université Quisqueya in

1999 and has also followed coursework in human rights, journalism, and international law in Canada, Haiti, and Italy.

### ***Smith Maximé***

Smith Maximé is Haiti Coordinator for Free the Slaves. As Country Coordinator, he interfaces with the Haitian government, international agencies, and international and national NGO. He strengthens the capacity of Free the Slaves' partners to work better in the movement to eradicate child servitude in Haiti (known as *restavèk*). In his work against discrimination, he has worked with organizations of people living with HIV/AIDS, disabled people and individuals involved in the sex industry. Smith joined the office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Haiti in 2006, where he spent four years as the Gender and Rights Program Manager.

### ***Marie Yvette Michaud***

Marie Yvette Michaud is a social activist, laboring alongside Haitian social movements since 1990, to lift up the voices of Haitian peasant women groups to decision-makers in Port-au-Prince and outside of Haiti. Marie-Yvette is a member of the *Mouvman Nasyonal Kongrè Peyzan Papaye – MPNKP* (or National Congress of Papaye Peasant Movement), a founding member of *Koòdinasyon Nasyonal Famn Peyzan – KONAFAP* (or the National Coordination of Women Peasants) and a leader of the Kaba Grangou (Hunger Free Campaign). Through her social, legal and gender-focused interventions, Marie-Yvette has been a widely known and respected advocate, helping the Haitian government and the international community slowly acknowledge the basic rights and contributions of Haitian women peasants to the Haitian economy. Marie Yvette and her organization, MPNKP are among the founding members of Je Nan Je (in Haitian Creole, “Eye to Eye”), a platform of 10 grassroots networks, social movements and women’s groups, representing over 800,000 Haitians who, with support from ActionAid, successfully advocated for the formation of a Haitian Parliament bi-cameral commission working to incorporate the Je Nan Je recommendations into viable pieces of legislation. Je Nan Je members have also testified before the US Congress on the inclusion of grassroots organization in Haiti’s reconstruction.

### ***Eugene Philhower***

Eugene Philhower is a Foreign Service Officer with the US Department of Agriculture’s Foreign Agricultural Service with over 30 years of experience in international agricultural trade and development. For the past three years, he has worked on USDA’s institutional capacity building efforts in Haiti, Afghanistan and Pakistan. With USDA, he has served overseas at the U.S. Mission to the European Union in Brussels, at the U.S. Mission to the World Trade Organization in Geneva, Switzerland and most recently at the U.S. Embassy in Lima, Peru with regional responsibilities for Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia.

### ***Mr. Emmanuel Georges Werleigh***

Mr. Emmanuel Georges Werleigh specializes in rural agriculture and has worked with peasant movements for over 40 years. In 1976, he co-founded the Institut de Technologie et d’Animation (ITECA), which supports smallholder farmers and cooperatives in their struggle to access land, tools, infrastructure, training and agricultural reform. In 2010, ITECA launched a model housing project in Gressier. To date 500 houses have been constructed, with plans to complete 1,700 when the project is completed. The construction has been done with owners' input and participation, and using local materials and labor.

Since 1979, Mr. Werleigh has taught at the Faculty of Law and Economics of Haiti (UEH) and has held several positions in the Public Sector as Officer, National Expert, Project Manager, Consultant, Manager and Member of the Cabinet of Ministers (Finance, Planning, Social Affairs, Trade and Industry, Tourism, and the Prime Minister). He also undertakes research and conducts studies in economics, farming, marketing, food markets, emigration, the agrarian question, and the peasant movement for international organizations. Mr. Werleigh completed graduate studies in Economics

at the Faculty of Law and Economics at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland (1965-1973). He specialized in Rural Development at the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute (CIHEAM) in Montpellier, France (1971-1972), and completed his university degree in Agriculture Economics at the University Maryland USA (1983-1984).

***Moderator Elise Young***

Elise Young serves as Vice President of Policy and Government Affairs at Women Thrive, DC-based organization that advocates for change at the U.S. and global levels so that women and men can share equally in the enjoyment of opportunities, economic prosperity, voice, and freedom from fear and violence. She has worked in the international development and policy field for over 12 years and specializes in food security, fair trade, economic development, livelihood security, gender integration and general foreign aid reform. Before joining Women Thrive, she spent two years helping to coordinate ActionAid's Haiti land and housing rights campaign, partnering with Haitian grassroots leaders to advocate for a more inclusive, gender-focused and rights-based approach to Haiti's redevelopment.