

Biographical Information

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Webinar 1 on “Changing Mindsets for Innovation and Digital Government”



Dr. Lois Parkes, Leadership Development and Institutional Strengthening Specialist, with the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD)

Lois is currently the Leadership Development and Institutional Strengthening Specialist with the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD) since August 2019. Prior to that, she was engaged as the Regional Project Manager for the very successful Caribbean Leadership Project for three (3) years. She has served for over twenty (20) years in the Public Service in Jamaica, in varying capacities, including as Chief Personnel, where she had overall responsibility for Providing leadership to the Office of the Services Commissions to ensure the provision of quality policy advice to the Police, Public, Judicial, Municipal and Parish Councils Services Commissions in relation to appointments, training, discipline and retirement of employees in the Public Service, the Jamaica Constabulary Force, the local authorities and the Judiciary.

She is a graduate of the University of the West Indies, where she earned the M.Sc. in Human Resource Development with Distinction, and of the first cohort of the Caribbean Leadership Project. In 2007, she was awarded the Commonwealth Scholarship tenable in New Zealand, where she completed her doctoral studies in Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations at the Victoria University of Wellington. She is also a published researcher and an Executive Coach.



Hon. David DaCosta Archer Jr., Deputy Governor, Government of the British Virgin Islands, Chairman of CARICAD

Archer holds a Bachelor of Science Degrees in Business Administration and Human Resources Management from Tennessee Wesleyan College; a Master’s Degree in Human Resources and certificate studies in Organisational Development from the Robert J. Milano Graduate School; and a Masters of Business Administration from Capella University.

Archer was sworn in as the Deputy Governor of the Virgin Islands on Thursday, 1 March 2018 at a ceremony held at Government House. He previously acted in the post of Deputy Governor from 2 June to 31 July 2016 and has over 20 years of Public Service experience with the Government of the Virgin Islands, having joined the Service as a Professional Cadet in the Human Resources Department in 1997.





Mr. Juwang Zhu, Director, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)

Mr. Juwang Zhu is currently Director of the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government in UN DESA. In that capacity he leads a team in normative, analytical and capacity-building work in promoting inclusive, effective, accountable institutions that are well equipped to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 16. This is the second time Mr. Zhu coordinated the work of the Division - he served as its Director in 2014-2015. Mr. Zhu is also currently the Acting Director of the Division for Sustainable Development Goals in UN DESA.

Among his various assignments at the UN Secretariat, Mr. Zhu served as Chief of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General/DESA (2008-2013). In that capacity he advised the Under-Secretary-General on a range of policy and management issues. During this period, Mr. Zhu also coordinated the Department's substantive advice to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General on development issues and on the restructuring of DESA's capacity building programme.

Mr. Zhu was Special Advisor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), and in that capacity assisted in coordinating support for the Conference. He also contributed to the departmental support for Rio+20 follow-up, including work on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs (2013-2014). As Director of the Division for Sustainable Development Goals (Jan 2016- February 2019), Mr. Zhu coordinated the Secretariat support for the High-level Political Forum, the UN Ocean Conference, and the Global Sustainable Transport Conference.

Prior to his reassignment to DESA in 1993, Mr. Zhu had previously worked as a policy analyst in the secretariat of the UN World Food Council and in the UN Office in Geneva. He joined the UN Secretariat in 1985. Born in Shanghai, August 1961, Mr. Zhu graduated from the Shanghai International Studies University in 1982 and did post-graduate studies in Beijing Foreign Studies University. He has an MSc in financial economics from University of London and an MA in international relations from Webster University.



Mr. Rodney Taylor, Secretary General, Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU)

He was formerly the Chief Digital Technology Officer with Barbados' Ministry of Innovation, Science and Smart Technology (MIST), where he was the technical lead on Barbados' digital transformation, improving public sector service delivery through the strategic use of innovation, science, and SMART technology.

Mr. Taylor's over 20 years of professional experience includes management of the Information Systems Unit in Barbados' Ministry of Foreign Affairs and



Foreign Trade and its overseas missions. He also previously served between 2010 and 2014 as the Business Development and Operations Manager at the CTU, where he worked with regional governments in the development of policies to govern information and communications technology (ICT) and represented the region in many international ICT conferences. He also led the work to operationalise the CTU's Caribbean Centre of Excellence, to offer consultancy services to the Member States and others.

Mr. Taylor is an advisor on Internet Governance and has published research on e-Commerce diffusion in small island developing states in the Journal of Information Systems for Developing Countries. He is an Ethical Hacker and a founding member and former Chairman of the Barbados Chapter of the Internet Society, an organization whose aim is to promote the open development, evolution, and use of the Internet for the benefit of all people throughout the world.

Mr. Taylor holds a Master's in Management and Information Systems from the University of Manchester, UK, and a Post Graduate Diploma in Public Sector Management from the University of the West Indies.



Dr. Adriana Alberti, Chief, Programme Management and Capacity Development Unit, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government, UN DESA

Adriana Alberti, Ph.D., is a senior international expert in the field of governance, public institutions, and digital transformation. She currently works at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs as Chief of the Programme Management and Capacity Development Unit, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government. She brings to this position over thirty years of innovative leadership, international knowledge and experience in leading research, policy analysis and coordinating capacity development initiatives in over 30 countries with a particular focus on institutional development and policy coherence, innovation and digital government, leadership and changing mindsets. She has coordinated the analytical work of and contributed to selected UN E-Government Surveys and to the World Public Sector Report. She has conceptualized and coordinated a publication on Changing Mindsets to Realize the 2030 Agenda and led the development of a Curriculum on Governance for the Sustainable Development Goals, encompassing several training courses on key governance issues related to sustainable development. She also coordinates the UN Public Administration Network, which includes over 30 global and regional institutions working on issues related to governance and public institutions.

For several years, she coordinated the UN Public Service Forum and Awards programme, the most prestigious global event on governance and innovation. As Chief Technical Advisor, she led an innovation programme in the Mediterranean region. She was a founding member of the Network of Innovators in Governance in the Mediterranean region- Middle East, North Africa, and Western Balkan. Through forums, policy dialogue and analytical work, she has promoted a common understanding of governance issues, and fostered knowledge sharing on innovations and successful practices in public administration.



Before joining the United Nations, Adriana worked at the Center of Judicial Studies of the University of Bologna and was Visiting Fellow at the Center for International Studies of Princeton University. She was Professor of Comparative Politics and European Union at Syracuse University and Dickinson College in Italy. She was Visiting Scholar at the Institute of Advanced Social Studies in Cordoba (Spain) and conducted research on democracy and judicial systems at the Institute of Judicial Administration, University of Birmingham (United Kingdom). She was awarded several fellowships, including from the Italian National Research Council, the European University Institute, the Government of Spain for the Salvador de Madariaga Research Grant, and a fellowship from Harvard University. Adriana has led and contributed to major UN publications and scholarly papers and holds a PhD from the European University Institute.



Mr. Devon Rowe, Executive Director, Caribbean Centre for Development Administration, Barbados (CARICAD)

Executive Director, Caribbean Centre for Development Administration, Barbados
Devon Rowe is Executive Director of the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration. In 2014, he was acknowledged for his work and contribution to public service by the Government of Jamaica and received the Order of Distinction, Commander Rank.

His career has spanned various government organizations and he has represented the Government of Jamaica at high-level international meetings. A career public servant, he was appointed Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development in 2005, where he played a lead role in local government reform in Jamaica. Mr. Rowe was later assigned as Director General in the Office of the Prime Minister. In 2010, he was assigned as Director General in the Ministry of Finance and Planning, with the main responsibility of centralizing treasury management operations.

Between 2011 and 2012, he briefly performed dual roles as Commissioner at the Jamaica Customs Department and Director General of the Ministry of Finance and Planning. He later returned to the Ministry of Finance and Planning as Director General. Mr. Rowe served as Financial Secretary in the Ministry of Finance and Planning between 2012 and 2016.

During his career, he has been appointed to the boards of several public sector companies in investment, development finance, infrastructure and health. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Management from the University of the West Indies and a Master's degree in Public Administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.



Webinar 2 on “State of Digital Transformation in CARICAD Member States “



Ashish Uttamchandani, Partner, Caribbean Corner Office

Ashish Uttamchandani is a results-oriented senior executive with over 15 years of experience in leadership, strategy, general management, technology, business development, and consulting. He has worked across various industries, including the public sector, distribution, retail, technology, and manufacturing. His expertise includes eGovernment, digital transformation, strategy formulation/execution, analytics, technology strategy, cybersecurity, project & change management and solving complex business challenges.

Currently, Ashish is a senior technology executive at a large investment holding company, where he is responsible for strategic technology, infrastructure, and eCommerce in the Caribbean and the USA. He is also a partner at Caribbean Corner Office, a boutique consulting firm that offers management consulting and technology services throughout the Caribbean. Before this, he worked as a Senior Business Development Manager at Crimson Logic, where he provided consulting services to Caribbean governments on topics such as eGovernment, cross-border trade strategy, and digitalization in the public service.

In addition to his professional roles, Ashish is a part-time lecturer at the University of the West Indies, teaching Leadership and New Venture Development. He is actively involved in the Barbados Chamber of Commerce's Digital Societies Committee and has contributed as a columnist for the Barbados Business Authority and the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation. He has also served on various non-profit boards, including the Project Management Institute Barbados, and has worked as an advisor with the Barbados Entrepreneurship Foundation.

Ashish has a Master of Business Administration from Durham University Business School, UK, and a Master of Science in Change and Development from the University of Manchester, UK. He also holds a Diploma in Professional Consulting from the Chartered Management Institute, UK. In his spare time, he enjoys reading, traveling, and conducting research in the areas of culture and change management.





Amit Uttamchandani, Chief Technology Officer, Caribbean Corner Office

Amit Uttamchandani brings over two decades of experience in IT and business administration. He has held roles ranging from entry level to senior level, culminating in his current position as Chief Technology Officer (CTO) of a prominent regional insurance company (areas of interest are ai, cyber, data analytics, e-government). Prior to his CTO role, he worked as a government consultant focusing on e-services. With a diverse background spanning both the private and public sector, and in areas including insurance, telecommunications, education, government, construction, and hospitality, Amit has demonstrated his adaptability and expertise in navigating complex technological issues across the private and public sector.

Amit's educational background includes a Master's in Business Administration, post graduate certificate in IT, and an associate degree in computer studies. These qualifications are complemented by several IT certifications. His commitment to continuous learning and professional development underscores his dedication to staying at the forefront of business and technology trends and advancements. Beyond his corporate endeavors, Amit is a passionate blogger and data enthusiast. His blog, caribbeansignal.com, takes a data-centric approach to explore key topics and themes such as crime rates and price trends across the Caribbean region. Additionally, he runs caribbeanweather.org, a niche website focused on providing comprehensive weather updates and insights tailored to the Caribbean community and beyond.

Amit's multifaceted expertise, from his it and business roles, to his entrepreneurial ventures in blogging and website management, reflect his innate drive for innovation and excellence. With a strategic and operational mindset, and a keen eye for leveraging technology to drive business growth and societal impact, Amit continues to make meaningful contributions to the realms of technology, business, and data-driven insights.



Vincenzo Aquaro, Chief, Digital Government Branch, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government, UN DESA

Mr. Vincenzo Aquaro is the Chief of the Digital Government in the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government - Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, supporting the Secretariat in promoting digital government, and leading the UN flagship publication E-government Survey. In 2019 Aquaro was named in Apolitical's list of the World's Top 100 most influential people in digital government. Aquaro has 30 years of experience in ICT in the public sector including extensive senior leadership. He has served as CEO of an Italian corporate specialized in project management and evaluation of strategic ICT projects, and as chairman of the Consortium for Automation and Risk Management in Agriculture, specialized in ICT bank solutions for SME in agriculture. With the University of Roma3 he also co-chaired two editions of the Master's Degree in ICT Governance in Public Administration. Aquaro holds a Master's Degree in Electronic Engineering from University of Bari, Italy.



Webinar 3 on “Innovation in Public Service Delivery”



Dr. Cristina Rodriguez-Acosta, Inter-regional Advisor, Digital Government Branch, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government, UN DESA

Cristina A. Rodriguez-Acosta, PhD is a Senior Interregional Adviser for Public Administration at the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG), of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) in New York specializing on issues of digital government, innovation, and public policy.

Prior to joining UN DESA, Cristina was Assistant Director for Institutional Relations at the Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy at Florida International University (FIU) where she was responsible for the Institute’s executive education and professional programs in innovation and digital government working at the intersection between policy and technology. Cristina was also responsible for institutional relations with government agencies, universities, and research centers in Latin America and the Caribbean. Prior to joining the Gordon Institute, Cristina was the Deputy Director for International Programs at the Institute for Public Management and Community Service also at FIU. In that role she was responsible for the design, coordination and implementation of the Institute’s programs including projects, conferences, field missions, and the annual Inter-American Conference of Mayors and Local Authorities. She has extensive consultancy experience on issues of administrative reform, organizational management, monitoring and evaluation for USAID, the Swedish International Development Agency, and the World Bank among others. She has published several articles and book chapters on public administration reform, decentralization, and local governments issues.

Cristina holds a PhD in Public Affairs from Florida International University in Miami, a MA in Latin American Affairs from Georgetown University in Washington, DC, and graduated from the Universidad del Salvador in Buenos Aires, Argentina with a BA in International Relations and Political Science.



Dr. Marielza Oliveira, Director, Division for Digital Inclusion, Policies and Transformation, Communications and Information Sector, UNESCO

Marielza Oliveira is the Director of the UNESCO Communications and Information Sector’s Division for Digital Inclusion, Policies and Transformation, where she leads the support to Member States to strengthen capacities for access to information, digital inclusion, digital transformation, and protection of documentary heritage. Ms. Oliveira is also Secretary of the intergovernmental UNESCO Information for All Programme; and the UNESCO

Observer in the Internet Governance Forum Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) and Policy Networks on Internet Fragmentation, on AI, and on Meaningful Access; in ICANN; in the Internet & Jurisdiction Policy Network; and in the European Commission’s High-Level group on Internet Governance.



Ms. Oliveira is also the UNESCO representative to the ITU/UNESCO Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development’s Membership Committee.

Prior to her current position, she was Director of the UNESCO office covering the East Asian subregion, in charge of all areas of UNESCO’s mandate in China, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia, and the Republic of Korea. Her experiences before UNESCO include leading the United Nations Development Programme’s global data analytics and results management at the Executive Office of the Administrator; Associate Director for Governance at UNITAR; oversight and support to multiple UNDP offices and programmes in Latin America; democratic governance programme officer in UNDP Brazil overseeing the fiscal modernization of 7 state Secretariats of Finance, the capital markets regulatory entity, and others; and UNDP Brazil’s campaign manager for the UN Millennium Development Goals. She was also Systems Engineer at the US Army Construction Engineering Research Lab (USACERL), where she developed award-winning decision support and expert systems for the US Department of Defense; senior consultant at Fundacao Dom Cabral in Brazil, advising global corporations on marketing and financial strategy; and Director of Executive Education at Brazil’s Ibmec Business School, in charge of 800+ MBA students across 12 Executive MBA programmes.

She holds a Master of Science in Finance and a Ph.D. in Business Administration with a minor in Cognitive Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA. Her professional honors include, among others, the 2007 Human Development Awards Special Recognition for Innovation in Human Development Measurement Tool; the 2005 UNDP Administrator’s Award for Innovation and Commitment; the J.M. Jones Award in Business Administration; the selection by Guia da Boa Governança Corporativa Exame as one of the 15 most important corporate governance specialists in the Brazil; and the Commendation Letter for her nomination as the USACERL Researcher of the Year Award.



Ms. Prudence James Townsend, Director Business Development and Communication, Management Institute for National Development (MIND), Jamaica

Prudence James-Townsend is the Director Business Development and Communication (BDC) at the Management Institute for National Development (MIND), an Agency of the Office of the Cabinet, Government of Jamaica.

Prudence started her journey with the Agency nearly ten (10) years ago, as the Manager Strategy and Accountability and later served as Senior Manager Public Service Capability Development, leading to her current role as Director BDC. As Director, Prudence provides strategic leadership to a multi-disciplinary Branch, with core supporting units such as Client Relations and Marketing, Registry, Creative Development and Production, Information and Communication Technology, Research and Records and Information Management. She is accountable for the overall structure and visibility of the MIND Brand, ensuring cohesive and coherent messaging, image and identity, consistent tone and texture of relationships, for building capability for public service excellence. Throughout her successive roles with the MIND, her passion for service excellence remains high and her goal constant in pursuit of public sector transformation through human capital development.



Prudence holds an MBA in Business and a Bachelor’s Degree in Human Resource Management (First Class Honors), from the University of Technology, Jamaica and a Post Graduate Diploma in Educational Administration from the University of the West Indies, Mona. More recently, Prudence graduated from the Canada-Sponsored Caribbean Leadership Programme (CLP), attained Prosci Change Management Consultant designation, and became a Certified Action Learning Coach, through the World Institute for Action Learning (WIAL). Prudence is the mother of three amazingly intelligent children and the proud wife of her soulmate Mr. Peter Townsend.

Webinar 4 on “Country Experiences in Changing Mindsets, Innovation and Digital Government Transformation”



Mr. Mahammadali Xudaverdiyev, Director General for International Affairs, State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of Azerbaijan

Mr. Khudaverdiyev received his bachelor’s degree in International Law and following to that he got his master on Artificial Intelligence (AI). He is government official on public administration in the field of international relations and expert on digital technologies, future of services, AI based government services.



Dr. Jermaine Jewel Jean-Pierre, Project Manager of the World Bank Funded Caribbean Digital Transformation Project-Project Implementation Unit

Dr. Jermaine Jewel Jean-Pierre is currently the Project Manager of the World Bank Funded Caribbean Digital Transformation Project-Project Implementation Unit. Prior to this, she served as the Director of the Information and Communication Technology Unit, Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica having joined the Public Service of the Commonwealth of Dominica in August of 2000.

She is well known and recognized at the regional level through her interaction with various regional and international agencies and inter-governmental bodies such as the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).



During that time, Dr. Jean-Pierre championed the revolution of the Government of Dominica's telecommunication system from an analog system to a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) system which also saw the creation of the Government's Wide Area Network. Her exemplary leadership resulted in the efficient coordination, execution and monitoring of the use of ICTs within the Public Service. Further, she has demonstrated innovation and thoughtfulness in the planning and execution of a number of eGovernment initiatives.

For dedicated and distinguished service, Dr. Jermaine Jewel Jean-Pierre has received the Government's Public Service Awards for Teamwork, Middle Management, Senior Management and Public Officer of the Year. She was recently awarded the Exceptional Woman Award – Digital Transformation – 2023.

She was also awarded the Caribbean Regional Public Life Award for Leadership Excellence for outstanding leadership and contribution to Public Sector Modernization in the Public Service.

Dr. Jean-Pierre has a Bachelor of Arts in Computer Information Systems, MBA in Management Information Systems, MBA in Information Technology, Master of Philosophy in Management and PhD in Management and Management Information Systems with emphasis on Cybersecurity.

She has published articles in the Journal of Science and Technology and her work has also been featured in the Annual National Meeting of the Sciences Institute in Baltimore, Maryland.

Dr. Jean-Pierre was recently inducted into the University of the Virgin Islands Hall of Fame for Basketball. An inducted member of the Future Business Leaders of America, Dr. Jean-Pierre is also a Fulbright Scholar.

