H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Her Excellency Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is the 24th and current President of Liberia. She served as Minister of Finance from 1979 until 1980 after which she left Liberia and held senior positions at various international finance institutions. Her Excellency President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was awarded the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize, jointly with Leymah Gbowee of Liberia, and Tawakel Karman of Yemen.

Dr. Donald Kaberuka

Donald Kaberuka is currently serving his second five-year term as President of the African Development Bank Group (AfDB). He was first elected in 2005, becoming the seventh president of the Bank Group since its establishment in 1963.

He was re-elected in May 2010 at the AfDB’s headquarters in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, for a second five-year term. He took the oath for his second term in September of that year in Tunis.

Before joining the African Development Bank, Kaberuka, 61, had a distinguished career in banking, international trade and development and government service. A national of Rwanda, he was the country’s Minister of Finance and Economic Planning between 1997 and 2005. During this period, he oversaw Rwanda’s successful economic reconstruction after the end of the civil war there.
He initiated and implemented major economic reforms and introduced new systems of structural, monetary and fiscal governance, laying special emphasis on the independence of Rwanda’s Central Bank.

These reforms led to the widely-recognized revival of Rwanda’s economy, and to the sustained economic growth that enabled Rwanda to obtain debt cancellation under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative in April 2005.

During his service at the AfDB, Kaberuka has presided over a major redirection in its strategy for development and poverty reduction in Africa. To that end, the AfDB has placed increased emphasis on the private sector, and on the importance of major infrastructure developments in areas such as road, railways, power plants and communications, especially in their role in promoting regional integration in Africa.

During Kaberuka’s period of office, the AfDB has become Africa’s premier financial institution. In 2009, in response to the global financial crisis, the African Development Bank Group made record approvals of loans and grants totaling more than USD 12.6 billion.

Donald Kaberuka was educated at universities in Tanzania and Scotland. He holds a PhD in Economics from Glasgow University.

**H.E. Emilia Pires**

Her Excellency Emilia Pires was appointed the Minister of Finance of Timor-Leste on August 8, 2007 in the first coalition government under the leadership of Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao.

Known for implementing a reformist agenda for the Gusmao Government, Pires corporatized the Ministry of Finance expanding decentralization to expedite service delivery, pioneering one of the first fragile and post-conflict countries to go from negative growth rates to three years of average double-digit economic growth making Timor-Leste one of the top 10 fastest-growing economies in the world between 2008 and 2011.

Under Pires’ leadership, promoting transparency and accountability as well as strengthening institutional capacity of the Ministry of Finance in the area of financial management was at the forefront of her mandate. The Timor-Leste Transparency Portal, launched in early 2011, set a global precedent allowing the public to interface, evaluate and analyze state expenditures in real time, enabling national participation and inclusivity in the process of nation-building. The reforms led to the reduction by 19 countries of the Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index and reforms to taxes reached the highest change in rank by 70 places to reach the top 20 globally in the 2009 Doing Business Report.

By 2010, Pires’ outspoken views and radical actions in aid reforms received international recognition with Timor-Leste leading global forums including the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding and the 17 fragile and post-conflict nations in the G7+,
representing 350 million of the world’s most vulnerable citizens.

Pires also co-chairs the International Dialogue of Peacebuilding and Statebuilding with the Netherlands, which has recently taken over from the United Kingdom. She holds a Bachelor’s degree in mathematics (statistics) from Latrobe University, has done postgraduate studies in government law from the University of Melbourne, and a Master’s of Science in development management from the London School of Economics and Political Science in the United Kingdom.

Pires, a refugee to Australia after 1975, started her professional career at the age of 22 as a junior public servant with the Victorian government where she reached senior management level and continued to assume high-level positions with global organizations including the World Bank as a Senior Aid Management Specialist in the West Bank and Gaza, with the United Nations in UNMISET’s Senior Advisor to the Timor-Leste Ministry of Planning and Finance, and with UNTAET’s Head of the Planning Commission Secretariat as well as the Chief of the National Development and Planning Agency (NPDA). Prior to becoming Minister of Finance, Pires held the post of UNMIT Senior Coordination Advisor on the International Compact to the DSRSG in Timor-Leste.

Dr. Jakkie Cilliers

Executive Director of the Institute for Security Studies, Dr. Jacobus Kamfer (Jakkie) Cilliers has a B. Mil (B.A.) from the University of Stellenbosch and a B.A. (Hons.), M.A. (cum laude) and Ph.D. from the University of South Africa (UNISA). Awards include the Bronze Medal from the South African Society for the Advancement of Science and the H. Bradlow Research Bursary. Dr. Cilliers co-founded the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in 1990 and played an important role in the transformation of the South African armed forces and the institution of civilian control over the military in the period 1990 to 1996. At present most of Dr. Cilliers’ interests relate to the emerging security architecture in Africa as reflected in the developments under the banner of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union as well as issues around African futures.

Dr. Cilliers has presented numerous papers at conferences and seminars and published several books on issues relating to peace and security in Africa. He is a regular commentator on local and international radio and television. He is an Extraordinary Professor in the Centre of Human Rights and the Department of Political Sciences, Faculty Humanities at the University of Pretoria. He also serves on the International Advisory Board of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) in Switzerland and as a member of the board of advisers of the Center on International Conflict Resolution, Columbia University, New York.
Mr. Vasu Gounden

Founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), Mr. Vasu Gounden is a lawyer and a mediator, trainer and researcher in the field of conflict management. He holds a Master’s Degree in Law from Georgetown University, which he obtained on a Fulbright Scholarship in 1990. Mr. Gounden is an experienced Conflict Management Trainer, having been an active trainer in the field since 1990.

Mr. Gounden has been involved in preparing conflicting parties across Africa for negotiations, including rebel groups in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). He has provided mediation support to the facilitators of the Burundi Peace Process, which included former President Nelson Mandela, President Jacob Zuma and Minister Charles Ngcakula, and has served as an advisor on strategy to former President of Botswana, Quett Ketumile Joni Masire, on the Inter-Congolese Dialogue Peace Process. Mr. Gounden has been involved in the recent Madagascar mediation, assisting the parties in their negotiation strategy development.

He also serves on the Boards of several institutions across the world involved in conflict management. He has addressed the United Nations Security Council on matters relating to conflict management and has been elected by the World Economic Forum as one of their Global Leaders for Tomorrow.