



Speaker Biographies



Theo de Jager was elected as president of the World Farmers' Organisation (WFO) on 14 June 2017. Dr de Jager is the first South African to head the organisation and the second African after Dr Evelyn Nguleka from Zambia. He represented AgriSA at the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU) for the past eight years and has been president since 2013. He was also President of the Pan-African Farmers' Organisation (PAFO) until recently. De Jager is a co-founder of Agri All Africa, a company which assists small farmers in Africa to transition to commercial farming. He was also voted South African Agriculturalist of the Year in 2016 by the Agricultural Writers SA.

John Furlow is the Director of the International Research Institute for Climate and Society at Columbia University's Climate School. Prior to coming to IRI, Furlow designed and led the Climate Change Adaptation Program in USAID's climate change office. He advised the government of Jamaica in the development of its national climate change policy and its climate smart agriculture sector plan. John also led a project to develop Jamaica's agro-climate service, which produces a seasonal forecast tailored for farmers and disseminated by text and agriculture extension workers. Furlow helped launch the Climate Services Partnership in 2011. In 2015, he worked at the US Department of State designing and managing the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Global Network as part of US preparations for the UN Climate Conference in Paris.





Diane Holdorf is Managing Director of Food and Nature at the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), based in Geneva, Switzerland, since December 2018. In this role she leads business efforts to accelerate the much-needed system transformation in the areas of food, nature and water. With members and partners, this work brings leadership standards and tools, advocacy and projects across the value chain – from production to consumption – which deliver impact at scale where the urgent agendas of climate, nature and food systems intersect. Before joining WBCSD, Diane was Vice President, Chief Sustainability Officer for Kellogg Company.

Greg Sixt directs the Alliance for Food and Climate Systems Transformation, an MIT J-WAFS-led global network of 16 leading research institutions and collaborating stakeholder organizations working to shorten the link between research and action. Greg is also the Research Manager for Food and Climate Systems on various J-WAFS projects. Before joining J-WAFS, Greg worked at the US Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA) in the Institute of Bioenergy, Climate, and Environment and the Center for International Programs. He has extensive experience on issues that include agricultural innovation systems, climate change adaptation in agriculture and water management, water-energy and food-water-energy nexus governance, and foreign aid investment.



Pete Smith is Professor of Soils and Global Change at the Institute of Biological and Environmental Sciences at the University of Aberdeen (Scotland, UK) and Science Director of the Scottish Climate Change Centre of Expertise (ClimateXChange). His interests include climate change mitigation in agriculture and food systems modelling. University of Aberdeen is a founding member of the FACT Alliance.

Professor Charlotte Watts is the Chief Scientific Adviser and Director for Research and Evidence in the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). She is seconded from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), where she is Professor of Social and Mathematical Epidemiology. Charlotte has over 200 peer review academic publications, commentaries and book chapters. She is a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences and Foreign Associate Member of the US National Academy of Medicine.



Maria Zuber is the E. A. Griswold Professor of Geophysics and Vice President for Research at MIT, where she is responsible for research administration and policy. Vice President Zuber is the first woman to lead a science department at MIT and the first to lead a NASA planetary mission. In 2013, President Obama appointed her to the National Science Board, and in 2018 she was reappointed by President Trump. She served as Board Chair from 2016-2018. In 2021, President Biden appointed Zuber to co-chair the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST).