

Speakers' Profiles

Una Europa Talk - Shaping our future together:

Europe and Africa, solving global challenges

1 June 2022, 16:00-17:00CET/ 17:00-18:00EET

Helsingin Yliopisto/ Helsingfors Universitet & on YouTube



Panellist - Ms Johanna Sumuvuori

has a wide experience of politics, communications, culture, and civil society organizations, as well as a Master of Social Sciences and Master of Arts. Sumuvuori was appointed State Secretary to Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr Pekka Haavisto on 4 July 2019. In her current position, she assists the Minister in matters relating to political steering and preparatory work and represents him in the drafting of policy papers and in inter-ministerial coordination. Sumuvuori deals with matters relating to public relations and she deputizes for the Minister. Sumuvuori has previously been a Member of Parliament and a city councillor, and she has held leading positions in civil society organizations as well as in different kinds of positions of trust.



Panellist - Ms. Tuija Brax

has diverse experience in legal matters, having served as both a member of parliament and the minister of justice. As the minister of justice, she was responsible, for example, for the drafting of the current Constitution of Finland, the Act on a Candidate's Election Funding and the Emergency Powers Act. As a member of parliament, she served as the chair of the Legal Affairs Committee and the Audit Committee of the Parliament of Finland and, for three terms, as a member of the Constitutional Law Committee. Ms. Brax up took up the position of director of the Rule of Law Centre at the University of Helsinki in August 2021 after being secretary general of the Finnish Heart Association.



Panellist - Professor Felix Dapare Dakora

obtained his BSc (Hons) degree in Agriculture from the University of Ghana in 1977, an MSc degree from the University of Sydney, Australia, in 1981, and a PhD in Botany from the University of Western Australia, Perth, 1989. He currently holds a South African Research Chair in Agrochemurgy and Plant Symbioses at the Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa. He won the UNESCO-Equatorial Guinea International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences in 2012, the African Union Kwame Nkrumah Science Excellence Continental Award in 2016. In 2019, the Science and Technology Cooperation Award of Hebei Province, China in 2019, and the Agropolis Foundation - Louis Malassis International Scientific Prize for Agriculture and Food in 2021. He is President of the African Academy of Sciences. He is also Fellow of the African Academy of Sciences, Member of the Academy of Sciences of South Africa, Fellow of TWAS, Foreign Fellow of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, and Fellow of the Royal Society of South Africa. He currently serves as Adjunct Professor to the University of Western Australia (June 2012 to May 2021), Distinguished Professor of Hebei Agricultural University, and Distinguished Professor of China Agricultural University, Beijing



Panellist - Professor James Smith

is currently Vice Principal International at the University of Edinburgh where he has held his personal chair in African and Development Studies since 2010. He completed his masters and doctorate at Wits University in South Africa and worked with Oxfam Southern Africa before moving to Edinburgh. He has just completed a term as a member of the Council of the UK's Economic and Social Research Council and recently took up a role as a Commissioner of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission. He researches technological innovation for development in Africa, having recently completed an ERC project on trypanomiasis and sleeping sickness research and control across the continent. He has worked with a number of universities across the continent, as well as with organisations like the International Livestock Research Institute, FAO and the New Partnership for Africa's Development.



Moderator - Ms Liselott Lindström

is a Finnish freelance journalist, currently covering Finland and the Baltics for the Swedish public broadcaster SVT and writing articles and analyses focussing on Africa for media outlets in Finland. She has extensive experience covering Africa, having recently moved back from Kenya where she lived for four years travelling around and covering the continent for both the Finnish Broadcasting Company Yle and SVT in Sweden. She has worked as a journalist for 14 years, has an MA in conflict reporting and has won several awards for her reporting in Finland, among others the award for outstanding development reporting.