

## Speakers Bios

### Ms. Gaynel Curry

Ms. Gaynel Curry is an Independent Expert Member of the United Nations (UN) Permanent Forum on People of African Descent. The Forum, which became operational on 2 August 2021 through UN General Assembly resolution 75/314, serves as a platform for improving the safety and quality of life and livelihoods of people of African descent, as well as an advisory body to the Human Rights Council. Ms Curry has worked with the UN for more than 23 years in various capacities and duty stations, including in Geneva and New York as well as in Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Timor-Leste. Most recently, she served as Human Rights Advisor in the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva, where she led work on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development within the Human Rights Council, supporting States to adopt a human rights-based approach in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Ms. Curry previously served as the Gender and Women's Rights Advisor and Acting Chief of Global Issues in the UN Human Rights Office, New York. In this context, she co-led the implementation of several Security Council resolutions on Conflict-related Sexual Violence by setting up the UN mechanisms to effectively respond at headquarters and in the field. She led engagements with the Commission on the Status of Women and the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women and supported the work of the CEDAW Committee as well as the Special Rapporteurs on Violence against Women and Trafficking in Persons. Ms. Curry oversaw the work of OHCHR-New York Office in support of the International Decade for People of African Descent and regularly coordinated events to promote the Decade. She lectured at the OHCHR Fellowship Programme to Promote the Rights of People of African Descent and advised the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, as well as the UN Group of Independent Eminent Experts on the Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action on Racism.

Ms. Curry has held several positions in her government, including Director of the Department of Gender and Family Affairs within the Ministry of Social Services and Urban Development. She is a Member of the Law Faculty at the University of The Bahamas where she lectures in International Human Rights Law and Public International Law. She has been a guest lecturer at several universities in North America and Europe and a Fellow at the Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs (IIHA) at Fordham University.

Currently, Ms. Curry is also an independent consultant advising Governments and other entities such as the Caribbean Development Bank on a broad range of human rights and social justice issues, including gender equality, environmental racism, climate and reparatory justice, and sustainable development.

Ms. Curry holds a Master's Degree in International Human Rights Law from the University of Oxford, United Kingdom; a Master's Degree in International Affairs from the American University in Washington, DC; a Degree in Law (LLB) from the University of London; a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History and Social Sciences from the University of the West Indies, Jamaica; and an Advanced Diploma in Public Policy from the College/ now University of The Bahamas.

### Me Tamara Thermitus

Lawyer émérite has been appointed *Boulton Senior Fellow* at McGill University's Faculty of Law (2023).

Called to the Quebec Bar in 1988, Tamara Thermitus holds a *Master of Laws from McGill University* (2013). She negotiated the nature and scope of the mandate of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*.

Ms. Thermitus was Chair of the federal Department of Justice's Advisory *Committee on Visible Minorities* (2004-2010) and Chair of the *Cultural Communities Committee* (Quebec Bar). In this capacity, she raised awareness within the Bar on issues relating to racial discrimination in the profession and the justice system. She instigated training on the social context of the law at the École du Barreau. It was under her leadership that *Développements récents en profilage racial* (2009) was published, the first book on the subject in Quebec.

Me Thermitus regularly publishes articles in various media to inform and raise awareness among Canadians and Quebecers on issues such as racism, intersectionality, reconciliation with Aboriginal peoples, and violence against women.

Recipient of the *Queen Elizabeth Golden Jubilee Medal* (2012), Me Thermitus Ad.E. has received numerous awards, including the *Mérite du Barreau du Québec* (2011), making her the first black lawyer to receive such recognition. She has also received the *Employment Equity and Diversity Leadership Award* (Department of Justice, 2010).