

Prince Claus Chair Highlights Report 2023-2024



Prince Claus Chair Equity and Development

Table of content / At a glance



Table of content

3	Foreword by Professor Bert Koenders	>
4	Professor Fatima Denton: Power and Climate Justice	>
6	Professor Sebastián Ureta: Citizen Science for Environmental Action	>
8	Professor Shazly Savahl: Championing Child and Youth Well-being	>
10	Celebrating 20 Years of the Prince Claus Chair	>
12	About the Prince Claus Chair	>

Prince Claus Chair

- Established: 2003
- Focus: Equity and Development
- Host Institutions: Utrecht University and International Institute of Social Studies (ISS)
- Chairholders: Exceptionally promising young academics from Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean or the Pacific
- Tenure: Two years, alternating between Utrecht University and ISS
- Patroness: Her Majesty Queen Máxima of the Netherlands

Highlights 2023-2024

- 3 chairholders from 3 continents
- 3 postdoctoral researchers supporting chair activities
- 2 inaugural lectures delivered
- 20th anniversary celebration with 150+ attendees
- 1 international workshop on citizen technoscience planned
- 1 documentary film on climate justice in production
- 1 state-of-the-art research lab equipped for environmental analysis

Foreword by Bert Koenders, Chair of the Curatorium of the Prince Claus Chair



PROFESSOR BERT KOENDERS

As we reflect on the past year I am filled with pride and optimism regarding the Prince Claus Chair's continued work and relevance on global equity and development. This year has been particularly significant, marking two decades of our commitment to fostering academic excellence and international collaboration in this crucial era.

Our unique chairholders from the Global South have once again demonstrated the importance of innovative research in addressing critical global challenges. Professor Fatima Denton's work on power dynamics in climate diplomacy has provided invaluable insights into achieving just transitions. Professor Sebastián Ureta's focus on citizen technoscience is revolutionizing how we approach environmental degradation. And as we welcome Professor Shazly Savahl, we anticipate groundbreaking contributions to child and youth well-being research.

The 20th anniversary celebration was a testament to the enduring legacy of Prince Claus and catalysed our future programme. We were especially honoured by the presence and active participation of Queen Maxima, as the patroness of the Prince Claus Chair. The Lustrum brought together luminaries from various fields, reinforcing our commitment to tackling pressing issues like climate transition, citizens participation and equitable development in times of geopolitical rivalry and international divisions.

Looking ahead, we remain dedicated to challenging current thinking on global issues. Our focus on just transitions, with global cooperation and social and economic equity and development at its core, promises to keep the Chair at the forefront of innovative development discourse.

Bert Koenders

Chair of the Curatorium of the Prince Claus Chair

Professor Fatima Denton: Reflecting on Power and Climate Justice Chairholder 2022-2024

"I recognised that a key method to decolonise knowledge on just transitions is to broaden its conversation and to reclaim power from elitist, mainstream narratives."

Professor Fatima Denton

A Journey of Highlights and Opportunities

Professor Fatima Denton, along with postdoctoral researcher Dr. Thelma Arko, recently completed her tenure as the Prince Claus Chair (PCC) in Equity and Development, a role that provided her with a platform to explore the intricate relationship between power, political economy, and the climate negotiation process. "The PCC's tenure has several highlights. Undoubtedly, the inaugural lecture stands out as a key landmark on this journey," Professor Denton remarked.

Advocating for Justice in Green Development

During her inaugural lecture, Professor Denton delved into the complexities of how sacrificing justice for 'green' development can hinder the realization of a sustainable transition process. "Indeed, there can be no 'green' if the pathway towards low-carbon development mutes the voices of millions of vulnerable communities, and if poorer nations in Africa and the developing world are mere observers of a green transition future," she noted.

The Dare to Share Initiative

One of Professor Denton's proudest achievements was the *Dare to Share* initiative, which sought to broaden the conversation on just transitions. "The idea has evolved beyond a concept note," she explained. "I recognised that a key method to decolonise knowledge on just transitions is to broaden its conversation and to reclaim power from elitist, mainstream narratives."

Building Bridges

The launch of the *Dare to Share* platform in Ghana emphasized the importance of involving diverse voices, cultures, and solutions in the journey towards a climate-resilient economy. "The event highlighted that science without people and transitions without the involvement of all stakeholders are like building a bridge that only goes halfway across a river," Professor Denton reflected.

Camaraderie and Collaboration

Professor Denton cherished the camaraderie and warmth she experienced while working with distinguished colleagues. "Working with [Prof. Joost de Laat](#) and his team has been a pleasure," she shared. "Prof. de Laat has been an excellent sparring partner." Joost de Laat is Chair of Global Economic Challenges at the [Utrecht School of Economics](#), and directing the [Utrecht Centre for Global Challenges](#).

Future Research

As she moves forward, Professor Denton recognizes that the intellectual space she gained during her time at the PCC has provided invaluable signposts for her future research. "The support and intellectual stimulation I received have enriched my work and opened new avenues for further exploration," she noted.

Gratitude and Support

Reflecting on the overall experience, Professor Denton concluded, "Today, as I look back, I feel truly grateful to have enjoyed such warmth and support during my tenure at the PCC."



PROFESSOR FATIMA DENTON

About Chairholder Fatima Denton and Postdoctoral Researcher Thelma Arko

Fatima Denton is the Director of the United Nations University Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA). She is a leading expert in climate change adaptation, renewable energy, and sustainable development. Professor Denton serves on various international committees, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). She is a key contributor to the *Dare to Share* knowledge platform, promoting sustainable economies and societies. Professor Denton is also an accomplished author, with numerous publications on climate justice and equitable development.

Her Chair is hosted by Utrecht University.

Dr. Arko's research [on energy transition, mineral governance, and energy poverty](#) has been instrumental in supporting Fatima Denton's work. Her empirical research across African countries has provided valuable data on transition levers and sectors leading the push for a green transition.

Key contributions:

- Co-authored report on *Stranded Assets and Socio-economic Realities in the Shift to Low Carbon Development in Africa*.
- Coordinated the JUSTIS project at UNU-INRA [link](#).
- Developing a book project with Professor Denton on *Making Carbon Markets Work for Africa*.

More about Fatima and Thelma on the [PCC-website](#) [link](#).



DR. THELMA ARKO

Key Achievements and Impact

- Pioneered the *Dare to Share* [link](#) knowledge platform, promoting sustainable economies and societies.
- Delivered a groundbreaking inaugural lecture *Power and powerlessness in climate diplomacy: looking beyond the surface for a just transition*. [Read the interview](#) [link](#) prior to her inaugural lecture, where Professor Fatima Denton talks about her career trajectory and future aspirations as holder of the Prince Claus Chair.
- Contributed to the CCAG report on the voluntary carbon market, influencing global policy discussions.
- Hosted the [BIG IDEAS Dialogue](#) [link](#) on Africa's readiness towards a carbon-resilient economy.

Pioneering Equality: The *Dare to Share* Initiative

Professor Denton, launched the groundbreaking *Dare to Share Initiative* to democratize the path to just transitions. This innovative platform, officially known as the *Dare to Share Knowledge Platform (DtoSKP)*, aims to foster sustainable economies and societies.

The launch event, themed *Justice for whom? Justice for what? Democratizing Just Transitions*, was a hybrid gathering held in Ghana and the Netherlands. It brought together diverse stakeholders to engage in open dialogue, focusing on equitable solutions and resilient communities. Crucially, the platform amplifies voices from the Global South, ensuring marginalized perspectives are heard in the transition to greener solutions and economies.

"The *Dare to Share Initiative* provides a safe space for stakeholders to come together, with an emphasis on solutions that are fair and create resilient societies. We're making sure marginalized voices have a seat at the table as we work towards a just green transition." — Professor Fatima Denton

Learn more about this exciting initiative and how to get involved at www.daretoshare.org [link](#).

Publications

- CCAG. (2024). *Voluntary Carbon Markets Potential, Pitfalls, and the Path Forward* [link](#).
- De Lombaerde, P. (Ed.). (2024). *Handbook of Regional Cooperation and Integration* [link](#).
- Denton Fatima. (2022). *It's time to create an 'After Carbon' agenda for Africa | Context* [link](#).

Work in progress

- Fatima and Thelma are working on a book project, *Making Carbon Markets Work for Africa* Denton and Arko (forthcoming Book).
- Fatima and Thelma contributed to the report *Counting the Costs: Stranded Assets and Socio-economic Realities in the Shift to Low Carbon Development in Africa* (not published yet).
- Fatima is working on a paper, *Justice, Power and Governance — the Transition to Low Carbon Resilience* (Draft Paper).
- Fatima and Thelma are working on a book project, *Critical Green Minerals: Critical for Whom and for What? Unlocking the Green Mineral Potential and energy security for carbon resilient economies* (Forthcoming Book).

Looking Ahead

As Fatima concludes her tenure, her work continues to influence global discussions on climate justice and equitable development. Her emphasis on recognizing our shared humanity in the face of environmental challenges sets a powerful agenda for future research and policy.

"Nature is impartial to ethnicity, race, and wealth," Professor Denton reminds us. "We must position ourselves on the barrier of justice, not as dividers, but as enablers and uniters, indicating our shared humanity."

Professor Sebastián Ureta: Citizen Science for Environmental Action Chairholder 2023-2025

“Citizen technoscience can become a powerful tool for climate action, sustainable development, and environmental protection through civic engagement.”

Professor Sebastián Ureta

Empowering Communities through Citizen Technoscience

Professor Sebastián Ureta and postdoctoral researcher Dr. Mandy Geise are currently immersed in their project, *Technology and Citizen Technoscience: Connecting Local Environments with the Ecological Crisis*, studying citizen science initiatives tackling environmental degradation in Latin America.

“Especially in the Global South, local impacts of environmental degradation are extensive,” Professor Ureta explains. “While this greatly affects human and non-human well-being and health, reliable and independent information on the socio-environmental impacts is often lacking.”

Innovative Approaches to Environmental Monitoring

To address this information gap, various collectives and organisations have turned to citizen science. “Working within the frames of citizen science, DIY labs and maker movements, they have implemented projects to design and test cost-effective methods and devices for the local measurement of several environmental parameters and phenomena,” Dr. Geise elaborates.

These initiatives, termed *citizen technoscience*, focus on producing community-relevant environmental data with limited, context-specific means. However, they often face barriers to expansion and sustainability, especially in the Global South.

Analysing Challenges, Envisioning the Future

Through ethnographic fieldwork and interviews, Professor Ureta and Dr. Geise are engaging with initiative leaders, technical experts, and community participants to understand the challenges faced by citizen technoscience projects. “Questions we try to answer include what citizen science collaboration looks like, what barriers and challenges the actors involved faced when trying to replicate the model in different locations,” Professor Ureta shares.

In the upcoming months, fieldwork visits to project sites in Ecuador, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Chile are planned to intensify data collection and dialogue. These conversations will lead to a workshop in 2025, fostering exchanges between stakeholders and working towards consolidating sustainable citizen technoscience.

Glimpses of a More Democratic Science

Reflecting on the highlights so far, Dr. Geise notes, “While there are certainly still challenges facing citizen science as a practice when it comes to ethics and inclusivity, the collaborations that are formed in these projects suggest apertures for a new, more democratic and just science that finds its applications in the ways and places it matters.”

“The exchange of different kinds of knowledge stems hopeful that while there is still a long way to go, engaging the public in scientific endeavours will not only democratise knowledge and tools for action, it will also help disseminate and acknowledge the importance of different forms of knowledge,” she adds.

Looking ahead, the researchers hope their work can serve as a springboard for a platform facilitating sustainable and inclusive citizen technoscience. “With this aim in mind, we are already in discussions with other key stakeholders in Europe and Latin America, to explore concrete ways in which we can move this agenda forward,” Professor Ureta concludes.



About Chairholder Sebastián Ureta and Postdoctoral Researcher Mandy Geise

Professor Sebastián Ureta is an Associate Professor at the Sociology Department of Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Chile. His research focuses on environmental governance, citizen science, and the social aspects of technological innovation. Professor Ureta leads the project *Technology and Citizen Technoscience: Connecting Local Environments with the Ecological Crisis*, studying grassroots environmental monitoring initiatives across Latin America. He is a member of the Society for Social Studies of Science and has published extensively on environmental policy and community-driven scientific practices.

His Chair is hosted by the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Dr. Mandy Geise brings her expertise in anthropology of health and the environment to the project. Her focus on collaborative approaches and lived experiences enriches the research methodology.

Key contributions:

- Developing ethnographic approaches for the project.
- Facilitating dialogue between researchers and community participants.
- Co-presenting research findings at the EASST-4S conference in Amsterdam.

More about Sebastián and Mandy on the [PCC-website](#) .

Spotlight on Citizen

Technoscience Projects: Empowering Communities Through Grassroots Science

The Prince Claus Chair is highlighting innovative citizen science initiatives across Latin America. These projects demonstrate how local communities can harness technology to address pressing environmental challenges.

1. Coastal Ecosystem Monitoring: Mexico

Along Mexico's coastlines, fishing communities are engaging in citizen science to protect their marine ecosystems. These seafaring researchers monitor water quality and temperature, algae blooms, and fish populations. Their efforts provide valuable data on the health of coastal waters and the impact of environmental changes on local livelihoods.

2. Women in Geospatial Technology: Costa Rica

A groundbreaking initiative in Costa Rica is equipping women with geospatial technologies and digital applications. Through hands-on training, participants learn to apply these tools to address water, agriculture, and environmental issues. This programme not only enhances technological skills but also empowers women to take leadership roles in environmental stewardship.

3. Community-Led Soil Pollution Assessment: Chile

In Chile's mining and industrial regions, a pioneering project has developed low-cost, easy-to-use kits for assessing soil pollution, including heavy metal contamination. Complemented by user-friendly manuals and participatory workshops, this initiative enables communities to understand and address soil quality issues in their areas.

Professor Ureta, current holder of the Prince Claus Chair, emphasises the importance of these projects: "Through our research, we're examining how these citizen technoscience initiatives can overcome barriers to sustainability and expansion. Our goal is to understand how these projects can have a lasting impact on environmental justice and community empowerment."

By combining scientific expertise with local knowledge, these citizen technoscience projects are fostering a new era of environmental stewardship—one where communities are at the forefront of understanding and protecting their environments.

Research Focus: Democratizing Environmental Science

Sebastián' work aims to overcome barriers facing the mobilization of citizen technoscience in the Global South. Key aspects include:

- Examining the genealogies and afterlives of citizen science initiatives.
- Addressing challenges in sustainability and replicability of projects.
- Fostering collaboration between academics, communities, and policymakers.

"Our goal is to create a platform that facilitates sustainable and inclusive citizen technoscience," Professor Ureta explains. "We want to bridge the gap between community needs and scientific practice."

Key Events and Activities

Inaugural Lecture: Beyond Co-creation

On 21 June 2024, Professor Ureta delivered his inaugural lecture at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS). Titled *Beyond Co-creation: Sketching a Critical Citizen Science for a World on Fire*, the lecture explored the potential and challenges of citizen technoscience in addressing environmental issues in the Global South. Professor Ureta advocated for a critical approach that prioritises social and epistemic justice.

Read his inaugural lecture [🔗](#).

Panel on Latin American Transformations

Prior to his inaugural lecture, Professor Ureta participated in a panel discussion on sustainable structural transformations in Latin America, organised by ISS and LDE Global [🔗](#). The panel explored alternatives to commodity-dependent economies in the face of climate change and social inequality.

EASST-4S Conference Presentation

In July 2024, the team presented their research at the [EASST-4S joint meeting](#) [🔗](#) in Amsterdam. Their presentation, “Zombie participation: Exploring the afterlives of environmental citizen science projects in Latin America”, examined the long-term impact of citizen technoscience initiatives.

Looking Ahead: Citizen Technoscience Workshop

In April 2025, Professor Ureta and his team will host a workshop in The Hague. This workshop will bring together key stakeholders to address barriers facing citizen technoscience initiatives in Latin America and develop strategies for their sustained impact.

“This workshop will be a crucial step in developing strategies to help successful citizen technoscience initiatives overcome barriers and achieve their aims of socioecological transformation,” Professor Ureta shares.

Objectives:

- Draft a summary document for future discussions with stakeholders.
 - Initiate a working group on sustainable citizen technoscience in Latin America.
 - Explore concrete ways to move the citizen science agenda forward.
-

Professor Shazly Savahl: Championing Child and Youth Well-being Chairholder 2024-2026

“We’re not just conducting research—we’re building a movement to prioritize child and youth well-being on a global scale.”

Professor Shazly Savahl



Meet Professor Shazly Savahl:

Advocate for Child and Youth Well-Being

Professor Shazly Savahl [↗](#), a registered research psychologist at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), will assume the prestigious Prince Claus Chair in Equity and Development in September 2024. In this two-year role, he will advance well-being and quality of life research for children and youth through a global social justice lens.

Amplifying Young Voices

Central to Professor Savahl's approach is his conviction that the well-being of children and young people should be given the highest priority. He believes that ensuring their physical, emotional, and psychological health is fundamental to fostering their overall development and success. His research focuses on advancing key aspects of quality of life for children, such as health and education, while also striving to enhance their overall life satisfaction and happiness.

"We use subjective data to complement objective quality of life indicators, providing a more comprehensive understanding when developing programs and policies for children and young people," Shazly explains. This focus on the subjective aspect of well-being is key to his mission, promoting genuine participation and elevating the voices of young people.

Addressing Critical issues

Professor Savahl highlights pressing issues facing South African youth, such as child poverty, material deprivation, crime and violence against women and children, and youth unemployment. "Inequality in education is a significant barrier," he notes. "Investing in young people's well-being directly impacts their adult experiences and the socio-economic success of nations." His work aims to inform government policies to address these challenges comprehensively.

Aspirations and impact

During his tenure, Shazly aims to reshape how societies invest in their youngest members. "We aim to foreground children's voices through participatory initiatives and harness evidence-based research to develop programs and policies for children and young people", he emphasizes. He seeks to

create opportunities for emerging researchers and advance the discipline of quality of life research.

"I want to prioritize a child and youth centred perspective, ensuring their views inform all programs and social policy decisions. This approach, grounded in a social justice framework, is a moral imperative; ultimately, we are striving for a child-conscious society", he states.

Early Initiatives and Goals

Professor Savahl has already begun his work ahead of his official start. "There are certain activities earmarked for year one and year two, but many will happen simultaneously," he says. He's part of the core group leading the Children's Worlds International Survey on Children's Well-Being and the Multinational Qualitative Study on Children's Understanding of Well-Being. Further to that, he's also in the final stages of completing the edited book on Addiction and Quality of Life, and has commenced with the development of a new Handbook of Quality of Life of Children and Young People from a global social justice perspective.

Collaborative Efforts

Shazly is particularly enthusiastic about collaborating with Utrecht University. "I'm looking forward to integrating my research with the initiatives at Utrecht and contributing to the broader field of child and youth well-being research," he shares. This partnership promises to bring new perspectives and enhance the impact of his work.

Reflecting on the partnership between UWC and Utrecht University, Professor Savahl sees significant value. "The strengths of both institutions can create a dynamic academic space for innovative research," he believes. "This synergy will provide a robust platform for advancing child and youth well-being research."

Impactful Research

With a clear vision and a collaborative spirit, Professor Savahl is poised to make significant strides in child and youth well-being. His upcoming tenure promises impactful research and meaningful advancements. "I'm enthusiastic about the future and committed to making a real difference in the lives of children and young people," he concludes.

About Shazly Savahl

Shazly Savahl is a registered research psychologist and professor of psychology based at the University of the Western Cape. He is the principal investigator of the Children's Worlds International Survey of Children's Well-Being and the Multinational Qualitative Study on Children's Understanding of their Well-Being. He is a founding and current executive member of the South African Positive Psychology Association, a member of the National Children's Rights Intersectoral Coordinating Committee, and an executive board member of the International Society for Child Indicators.

His Chair is hosted by Utrecht University.



PROFESSOR SHAZLY SAVAHL

Celebrating 20 Years of the Prince Claus Chair



“The work of the Prince Claus Chair over the past 20 years exemplifies the kind of interdisciplinary, globally-minded research we need to tackle climate change.”

Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations



“As we face unprecedented global challenges, the Prince Claus Chair stands as a beacon of hope, fostering research and education in international development and equity.”

**Professor Henk Kummeling,
Rector Magnificus, Utrecht
University**





Celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Prince Claus Chair
In a grand celebration marking two decades of academic excellence and international collaboration, the Prince Claus Chair (PCC) commemorated its 20th anniversary on 6 December. The event, graced by Her Majesty Queen Máxima of the Netherlands, brought together luminaries from various fields to discuss one of the most pressing issues of our time: climate transition.

A legacy of challenging norms

The PCC, a joint initiative of Utrecht University and the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam, honours the memory of Prince Claus (1926-2002). Known for his innovative thinking on North-South relations and equity, Prince Claus's legacy continues to inspire global cooperation and challenge conventional wisdom.

Climate transition: The focal point

This year's anniversary event zeroed in on climate transition, exploring current progress and future pathways with global cooperation at the forefront. The discussions were led by an impressive roster of speakers, including:

- [Vera Songwe](#): Economist and former Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
- [Bart van den Hurk](#): Professor of Climate Interactions with the Socio-Ecological System at VU Amsterdam and co-chair Working Group II of the IPCC
- [Joost de Laat](#): Professor of Governance and Human Development at Utrecht University

And (former) PCC Chairholders:

- [Sebastián Ureta](#): Associate Professor at the Sociology Department of Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Chile
- [Fatima Denton](#): Director of the United Nations University Institute for Natural Resources in Africa
- [Khayaat Fakier](#): Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at Stellenbosch University
- [Veena Srinivasan](#): founder and Executive Director of WELL (Water, Environment, Land and Livelihoods Labs)
- [Gustavo García López](#): Associate Professor, currently based at the Center for Social Studies in Coimbra, Portugal



Adding a global perspective to the proceedings, [Amina Mohammed](#), Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, shared insights from the ongoing COP28 in Dubai.

A multifaceted approach

Moderator [Lynn Zebeda](#), co-founder of Catalytic, a pioneering institute dedicated to helping the trailblazers of our time maximize their leverage for change, guided the dialogue, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of just climate transition. The discussions encompassed various dimensions, including:

- Gender perspectives.
- Socio-economic factors.
- Development finance.

This multifaceted approach underscored the complexity of climate action and the need for inclusive solutions.

Art meets academia

The event wasn't all academic discourse. Attendees were treated to captivating performances by the choir Dekoor and spoken word artist [Lisette Ma Neza](#), adding a touch of artistic flair to the proceedings.

Looking Ahead

As the PCC moves into its third decade, it remains committed to challenging current thinking on global issues. The focus on just transitions, with global cooperation and social and economic equity at its core, promises to keep the Chair at the forefront of international development discourse.

The celebration in The Hague not only honoured the past but also set the stage for future impactful collaborations. As we face global challenges, the Prince Claus Chair stands as a beacon of hope, fostering research and education in international development and equity.

Here's to another 20 years of innovative thinking, global cooperation, and positive change!

About the Prince Claus Chair

Colophon

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Contributions by: Thelma Arko, Fatima Denton, Mandy Geise, Bert Koenders, Shazly Savahl, Thirza Stam, Sebastián Ureta

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Prince Claus Chair

The Prince Claus Chair in Equity and Development is a chair that is held alternately by Utrecht University and the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam. Exceptionally promising academics from low- and middle-income countries are eligible for this position. Both institutions use the Chair to advance research and education in the field of equity and international development, in line with the ideas and work of the late Prince Claus. Professor Bert Koenders is the chair of the Curatorium of the Prince Claus Chair. Her Majesty Queen Máxima of the Netherlands is the patroness of the Prince Claus Chair, after having served as the Curatorium's first chair in 2003–2014.



Utrecht
University

International
Institute of
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Curatorium of the Chair

The procedure for the appointment of a candidate to the Prince Claus Chair is carried out by the Curatorium of the Chair.

The Curatorium consists of the following people:

- Professor [Bert Koenders](#) (chair) Professor by special appointment of Peace, Law and Security at Leiden University.
- Professor [Joyeeta Gupta](#) (vice-chair) Professor of Environment and Development in the Global South University of Amsterdam.
- Professor [Henk Kummeling](#) (member) Rector Magnificus, Utrecht University.
- Professor [Ruard Ganzevoort](#) (member) Rector of the Institute of Social Studies.
- [Rianne Giethoorn](#) LLM (secretary) Policy advisor student & academic affairs.

