9th Metropolis Identities Summit

# Meet our co-chairs

## Elise Herzig

Executive Director

JIAS (Jewish Immigrant Aid Services) Toronto

Elise Herzig is the Executive Director of JIAS (Jewish Immigrant Aid Services) Toronto, a settlement agency that has been serving newcomers and refugees for over 100 years. In this role, Elise has exponentially grown the agency's clients, programs, revenues, and partnerships. Prior to joining JIAS in 2019, Elise worked as a senior executive and consultant in the private and public sectors creating transformational changes and helping organizations remain relevant and sustainable. Elise is a huge advocate of creating trusted collaborations that resonate with the values of each stakeholder so that new possibilities emerge.

Elise has a long-standing relationship with McMaster University. In 2016, she helped create and design the McMaster Indigenous Research Institute to address the urgent need of creating a harmonized approach that utilizes both Indigenous Knowledge and ways of knowing (IK) and mainstream research practices and protocols. As Director of Commercial Operations for the McMaster Nuclear Reactor (MNR), Elise spearheaded the turnaround of the reactor, which had been scheduled for shutdown. She made MNR a financially viable operation that became the largest global supplier of Iodine-125 and increased MNR's revenues 25-fold. Elise has worked in multiple fields, including five years in the energy sector as CEO of the Ontario Energy Association.

Elise is the recipient of the King Charles III Coronation Medal and the National Metropolis Service Provider Award (Non-Profit). She has a Bachelor of Commerce degree from McGill University and a Master of Business Administration from the Schulich School of Business.

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# Meet our co-chairs

## Ahmed Hussein

Chief Executive Officer

TNO – The Neighbourhood Organization

Ahmed Hussein has served as the Chief Executive Officer of TNO – The Neighbourhood Organization, a Toronto-based multi-service agency, since 2014. Under his visionary leadership, TNO has grown from a modest team of 35 staff to an organization of over 300 employees, delivering a wide range of services across Ontario.

With over 30 years of leadership in the community and settlement sector, Ahmed has been a driving force in responding to the evolving needs of newcomers and communities across Canada. He has played a critical role in the transformation of the settlement and community-based service landscape, aligning programs and strategies with changing immigration policies and integration frameworks.

Ahmed's impact goes beyond Canada's borders. He has led the development of innovative programs in regions across Africa and the Middle East, helping to build capacity in global community service delivery.

He is a respected voice in national and provincial settlement discourse, regularly contributing to forums such as the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), and the Canadian Council for Refugees.

Ahmed holds academic credentials in Public Policy from the Caledon Public Policy Institute and a Master's degree in Infrastructure Planning (MIP) from the University of Stuttgart in Germany.

One of Ahmed's signature accomplishments is his leadership in integrating social and health services to improve access for newcomers through a "one-stop" model. This innovative approach allows individuals to access settlement services, primary healthcare, and other supports all in one place.

He was also instrumental in the creation of the Thorncliffe Park Hub, a $25 million centre that has become a cornerstone of newcomer support in the community. Ahmed successfully brought together all levels of government and private donors to support the Hub's construction, making it a model for collaborative service delivery in urban communities. nistration from the Schulich School of Business.

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# Meet our guest speakers

## The Honourable Marc Miller

Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages

Government of Canada

The Honourable Marc Miller was first elected in 2015 as the Member of Parliament for Ville-Marie–Le Sud-Ouest–Île-des-Soeurs in Montréal. He previously served as Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations; Minister of Indigenous Services; and Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

Before entering politics, Minister Miller was a practising lawyer. He specialized in mergers and acquisitions, with a focus on international and commercial law, and worked in Montréal, Stockholm and New York City. Previously, he served as an infantry soldier in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Minister Miller made history in 2017 when he delivered a statement in the House of Commons entirely in Mohawk, marking the first time the language had been spoken in either the House of Commons or Senate since Confederation. He has also been a forceful advocate for increased federal investment in affordable housing, public transit and the Canada Child Benefit.

Minister Miller has been involved in several charitable and pro bono legal initiatives. He has also authored articles on constitutional and human rights law.

Minister Miller is a graduate of the Université de Montréal, where he earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Political Science. He also graduated from McGill University with degrees in Common Law and Civil Law.

He was born and raised in Montréal.

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# Meet our plenary session chairs

## Samina Sami

Board Member, Institute of Public of Administration of Canada TRG and The Association for Canadian Studie

Samina most recently led COSTI as CEO, a social service organization providing a variety of programs including skills training, employment, social services, gender-based violence education, emergency shelters, and housing. Samina previously served as the Executive Director of Community Safety at York University where she oversaw 24/7 community safety and emergency operations and she led the community-driven strategy, "Safer Together.".

Prior to joining the Region and holding leadership positions at COSTI and York University, she also held a variety of leadership and policy roles with the Government of Ontario. While in government, she oversaw a diverse range of priorities, including gender-based violence strategies, public safety programs, economic development policies, community grant programs and public affairs.

She was also an Instructor at the Ontario Police College where she oversaw curricula development and training for police services across Ontario, including in adult education, hate crimes, community policing and anti-racism.

Samina holds a Bachelor of Science and Master of Education from the University of Toronto and a joint Executive Master of Business Administration from the Schulich School of Business and the Kellogg School of Management.

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# Meet our plenary session chairs

## Nketti Johnston-Taylor

Chief Executive Officer

Centre for Newcomers
Calgary, Alberta

Dr. Nketti Johnston-Taylor (JT) is a transformative CEO, Corporate Director, and economist whose leadership is advancing economic inclusion, shaping public policy, and strengthening organizations across Canada.

Holding a PhD in Politics, Economics, and Policy, along with a Master's degree in Development Economics and Policy and the Chartered Director (C.Dir.) designation from McMaster University's Directors College, she brings intellectual rigor, strategic insight, systems thinking, and pragmatic leadership to every role she serves.

As Chief Executive Officer of the Centre for Newcomers (CFN), one of Alberta's largest immigrant-serving organizations, Nketti leads a team of more than 250 professionals dedicated to supporting over 20,000 newcomers annually through employment and career services, language training, housing supports, mental health services, and comprehensive settlement programming. Her leadership has been marked by bold vision and measurable results. Within her first six months as CEO, she secured $2.7 million to support the development, training, and workforce integration of construction workers into Calgary's and Edmonton's skilled trades sectors, helping address critical labour shortages while creating pathways to economic inclusion.

Previously, as Executive Director of the Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council (CRIEC), Nketti led a period of unprecedented organizational growth and impact. Under her leadership, the organization's operating budget tripled, staffing levels doubled, program outcomes increased by 25 percent, and more than $7 million was secured to advance immigrant employment initiatives. Most notably, 90 percent of clients obtained employment within three months of program completion, contributing significantly to regional workforce development and economic prosperity.

Nketti's leadership and community impact have earned widespread recognition. She was named one of Avenue Magazine's Top 40 Under 40 (2024), a finalist for Calgarian of the Year (2025), and a recipient of the CRIEC Leadership Legacy Award

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# Meet our plenary speakers

## Dr. Sahana Mukherjee

Associate Director of Race and Ethnicity Research

Pew Research Center

Sahana Mukherjee is the Associate Director of race and ethnicity research at Pew Research Center. She is an expert on issues of immigration, national identity, and the experiences of U.S. Hispanic, Black and Asian populations. She works across the Center's research process, from designing surveys, analyzing surveys and demographic data, and writing reports that inform public conversation and news coverage.

Before joining the Center, she led a research team at a global consulting firm and served as a tenured professor and department chair at Gettysburg College. She has published widely in academic and non-academic outlets, received multiple grants and awards, and served in leadership and advisory roles in professional organizations. She earned her Ph.D. in Social Psychology from the University of Kansas and a B.A. in Psychology, Sociology, and English from Christ University, India.

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# Meet our plenary speakers

## Scott McLeish

Director of the Centre for Population and Social Statistics, Statistics Canada

Government of Canada

Scott McLeish is the Director for the Centre for Population and Social Statistics at Statistics Canada. His centre is responsible for measuring the characteristics, experiences and outcomes of diverse populations living in Canada. This includes areas related to immigration, ethnocultural characteristics, religion, disability, military experiences, gender, and sexual orientation.

In addition, his centre is responsible for the General Social Statistics Program which measures changes in social conditions, outcomes, and identity in Canada. His centre leads, or contributes to, multiple statistical programs including the Census of Population, the General Social Survey, the Canadian Survey on Disability, the Longitudinal Immigration Database, and the Canadian Veteran Health Survey, among others.

Prior to his current role, Scott has held various positions across Statistics Canada for over 20 years in domains ranging from population health to immigration statistics.

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# Meet our plenary speakers

## Nancy Mitchell

Director, Research Special Projects

The Diversity Institute

Nancy holds a masters degree in political science with a graduate collaborative specialization in Women and Gender Studies from the University of Toronto. Her professional background is in gender equality and diversity, equity, and inclusion. She previously worked as a consultant with UN Women supporting numerous initiatives including gender equality in the workplace and women entrepreneurs. She has also published multiple editions of the State of the Industry report with the Unstereotype Alliance on diversity and inclusion in advertising.

At the Diversity Institute, Nancy works with stakeholders across the public sector, private sector and civil society to develop research and strategies to embed diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility within organizational processes. She has published the City of Markham's Diversity Action Plan and Eliminating Anti-Black Racism Action Plan, The Socio-Economic Review of the Black Muslim Population in Canada, the Micropedia of Microaggressions and manages work as part of the 50 – 30 Challenge, among others.

Her areas of expertise include inclusive employment practices, EDIA strategy development, and inclusive entrepreneurship.

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# Meet our plenary speakers

## Jack Jedwab

President and CEO

The Metropolis Institute and the Association for Canadian Studies

Jack is President and CEO of the Association for Canadian Studies and the Metropolis Institute. He holds a Ph.D. in Canadian History from Concordia University.

Prior to 1998, he served as executive director of the Quebec branch of the Canadian Jewish Congress. He is an author and contributor to academic publications, government reports and newspapers across the country in the fields of immigration, multiculturalism, diversity, human rights and official languages.

Following three decades of wide-ranging research on public opinion and demographics, he is regularly consulted by media and government bodies alike for his expertise and insights on issues of import in the public sphere.

He has taught and lectured at McGill University, the Université du Québec à Montréal and Concordia University, offering courses ranging from public policy to the history of immigration and minority groups, to sports in Canada

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# Meet our plenary speakers

## The Honourable Stéphane Dion

Political scientist, former Member of Parliament, Minister, and diplomat

Government of Canada

Stéphane Dion is a former Canadian diplomat and politician who served as Canada's ambassador to Germany from 2017 and 2022 and to France and Monaco from 2022 to 2025, as well as Special Envoy to Europe from 2017 to 2025.

From 2006 to 2008, he was Leader of the Opposition and led the Liberal Party of Canada. He also served as Minister of Foreign Affairs (2015-2017), Minister of the Environment (2004-2006), and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (1996-2003). He represented the district of Saint-Laurent-Cartierville (later renamed Saint-Laurent) in the House of Commons from 1996 to 2017.

Back at the Université de Montréal, where he was previously a professor of political science, Stéphane Dion is now the university's Diplomat in Residence, where he aims to share his experience with students.

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# Meet our plenary speakers

## The Honourable Bob Rae

Politician and diplomat

Government of Canada

The Honourable Bob Rae brings over five decades of leadership at the highest levels of international diplomacy, national politics, and public policy.

Rae served as the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations in New York from 2020 to 2025, joining the likes of Lester Pearson and George Davidson as Canadians elected in their personal capacity to preside over UN Charter bodies. During his tenure, Rae became the President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for 2024-25, the second Canadian to assume the role, and also chaired the Advisory Committee on Haiti and led discussions on financing for development, children in armed conflict, and counterterrorism.

Prior to his diplomatic service, Rae served as Premier of Ontario from 1990-1995 and interim Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada from 2011 to 2013. He was elected to federal and provincial parliaments 11 times between 1978 and 2013 and has been honoured by the alumni of both bodies for his distinguished service. His return to Parliament representing Toronto Centre in 2008 led to his appointment as Foreign Affairs spokesman and ultimately to his role as interim Leader.

Rae also served as Canada's Special Envoy to Myanmar in 2017, where he engaged in diplomatic efforts to address the crisis in Rakhine State and authored the influential report "Tell Them We're Human". In March 2020, he was named Canada's Special Envoy on Humanitarian and Refugee Issues by Prime Minister Trudeau, leading to his report "A Global Pandemic Requires a Global Response." He also served as Chief Negotiator for the nine First Nations of the Matawa Tribal Council in Northern Ontario from 2013 to 2018 and was appointed to the Security and Intelligence Review Committee by Prime Minister Chrétien.

Rae has practiced law with three distinguished firms and led high-profile assignments including the restructuring of the Canadian Red Cross and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

Between 1996-99 and 2013-2020, Rae taught law, politics, and public policy at the University of Toronto, serving as the Wilson Professor of Public Policy at Victoria University from 2016 to 2020. He is a Fellow of the Forum of Federations (an organization he co-founded in the 1990s), Massey College, and the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights.

Rae is a Rhodes Scholar with an M.Phil in Politics from Balliol College, Oxford University, and a law degree from the University of Toronto. He is a Privy Councillor, a Companion of the Order of Canada, and a member of the Order of Ontario.

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# Meet our plenary speakers

## Bob Watts

Emeritus Fellow, School of Policy Studies Queen's University, Mohawk and Ojibway expert in Indigenous policy, former Interim Executive Director of the Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission

A graduate of the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, and fellow at the Harvard Law School, Robert Watts has been involved in Indigenous issues for more than 30 years. He was an adjunct professor and Distinguished Fellow at Queens University in the School of Policy Studies.

He was also the Vice President of Indigenous Relations at the Nuclear Waste Management Organization. Currently he is a principal at First People Group with a focus on Reconciliation. In addition, he advises corporations, civil society organizations and governments on reconciliation and Indigenous strategy. Previously, he was Chief of Staff and Chief Executive Officer for the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and Interim Executive Director of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. A former public servant, he was an Assistant Deputy Minister with the federal government and senior executive with the province of Ontario. He has taught, debated and lectured at a number of universities in Canada and the United States and at the Canada School of Public Service. Robert is of Mohawk and Ojibway ancestry and resides at the Six Nations Reserve.

Bob is really driven by the opportunity to help build a bright future for our future generations as imagined in the Seven Generations teachings. Unity in diversity and reconciliation are twin themes which help guide his work.

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# Meet our plenary speakers

## Martha Hall Findlay

Director and Palmer Chair in Public Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary; member of the Expert Group on Canada-U.S. Relations; and Senior Advisor for Teneo.

Director and Palmer Chair in Public Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary; member of the Expert Group on Canada-U.S. Relations; and Senior Advisor for Teneo.

Prior to joining the SPP, Martha was Chief Sustainability Officer for Suncor Energy, and before that, CEO of the Canada West Foundation.

Before that, as a twice-elected Member of Parliament, she was a member of the Official Opposition shadow cabinet and served on several House of Commons committees as the critic for International Trade; Finance; Government Works and Public Services; and Transportation, Infrastructure and Communities.

Before politics she worked as an international corporate lawyer and senior executive in North America and Europe, primarily in telecommunications, and has served on the boards of various community organizations.