



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 26, 2015

CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

MAYOR DE BLASIO APPOINTS PENNY ABEYWARDENA TO THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NEW YORK—Mayor de Blasio today announced the appointment of Penny Abeywardena, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office for International Affairs, to the Board of Directors of the United Nations Development Corporation.

Abeywardena brings a strong record of hands-on and innovative leadership to her new role, and her appointment deepens the de Blasio Administration’s commitment to the United Nation’s presence in New York City. As Commissioner of International Affairs, she serves as the primary liaison between the City of New York and the diplomatic community, foreign governments, the United Nations and the U.S. Department of State. New York City is home to the largest diplomatic community in the world, with 193 Permanent Missions, 115 Consulates, and the headquarters of the United Nations – and 75 international trade commissions. In her current role, Abeywardena is building a global platform from which the City promotes its goals for a more just and accessible society, showcasing the diversity of New Yorkers and sharing policies and best practices with the world. The Commissioner’s team works constantly to foster positive relations and to encourage collaboration between the international community and New York City’s agencies and local neighborhoods.

The United Nations Development Corporation is a New York State public benefit corporation created in 1968 to assist the United Nations community with its office space and other real estate needs. The Corporation also provides advice and services – including studies – with respect to real estate needs and development in New York, as requested by the State or City of New York, the United States, or the U.N.

About Penny Abeywardena

Prior to joining Mayor de Blasio’s administration in Fall 2014, Penny was the Director of Girls and Women Integration at the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI), a non-partisan organization that convenes global leaders to devise and implement innovative solutions to the world’s most pressing problems. Penny joined CGI in 2009 to develop strategy highlighting and integrating the gender lens throughout the organization’s various platforms, and led the program’s evolution into one of CGI’s most successful efforts. While serving in this role, she advised multinational corporations, philanthropists, NGOs, and multilateral institutions to increase investments in gender-focused development initiatives, and expanded the community of CGI members who incorporate the gender lens in their work. Before joining the Clinton Global Initiative, Penny worked in both development and programmatic areas for Human Rights Watch, the Funding Exchange and the Drum Major Institute for Public Policy.

Penny is a member of the World Bank’s Advisory Council on Gender and Development. She is also a Term Member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and a contributing author in the book “Women in the Global Economy: Leading Social Change.” She serves on the Board of New Course, Global Partners and the Eastside

Greenway and Park. Penny is a graduate of the University of Southern California and completed her Masters of International Affairs at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.

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