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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** October 2, 2018  
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**MAYOR DE BLASIO APPOINTS AYIRINI FONSECA-SABUNE AS FIRST-EVER  
CHIEF DEMOCRACY OFFICER**

**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio announced the appointment of Ayirini Fonseca-Sabune as the City's first-ever Chief Democracy Officer. In her new role, Fonseca-Sabune will continue to develop and expand the Mayor's DemocracyNYC agenda which aims to strengthen democracy locally and nationally by engaging more people in civic life.

"Our democracy works best when everyone gets involved, when all voices are heard and when government provides its people with the resources and information necessary to do these things effectively," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "That's why I'm excited to bring Ayirini Fonseca-Sabune on board as our first-ever Chief Democracy Officer. Ayirini and her experience helping communities of all backgrounds will be key in developing plans to get more people from across all demographics involved in our democracy locally and nationally. I look forward to working with her to expand DemocracyNYC."

"Without a strong democracy, there is no strong America," said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives Phil Thompson**. "In New York City, we want to build the strongest democracy in the country by making sure every New Yorker has a voice and knows how to be civically engaged. Strong democracy and civic engagement mean better schools, more engaged young people, active and improving communities and a more equitable city. That's what we are building in NYC."

"I'm thrilled to be joining DemocracyNYC as New York City's first Chief Democracy Officer – giving a voice to every New Yorker is essential to the health of our city and our democracy. I look forward to partnering with New Yorkers from all walks of life to democratize our city and engage residents in voter registration, participation and more opportunities for engagement throughout our shared civic life," said **Ayirini Fonseca-Sabune, Chief Democracy Officer**.

Ayirini Fonseca-Sabune is an accomplished civil and human rights lawyer who most recently worked at the Community Development Project of the Urban Justice Center. During her time there, Fonseca-Sabune represented low-income tenants facing harassment by their landlords.

In her new role, Fonseca-Sabune will be responsible for amplifying the voice of every New Yorker by engaging people from across all demographics in our democracy. This includes developing robust voter registration drives, expanding civics lesson plans for teachers in New

York City school through Civics for All, and engaging local and national partners to develop new ways to engage people civically at all levels of government – from community boards to the City Council, to our state legislature and federal government.

### **ABOUT AYIRINI FONSECA-SABUNE**

Ayirini Fonseca-Sabune has shown a life-long commitment to social and racial justice as an attorney, a teacher and an advocate for low-income communities of color. She has received numerous fellowships to fund her innovative work and study, including the Skadden Fellowship and the Marvin J. Karpatkin Fellowship. Fonseca-Sabune was previously a law clerk for the Honorable Harold Baer, Jr., in the Southern District of New York, and the Honorable Joseph A. Greenaway, Jr. of the Third Circuit.

As a teacher, Fonseca-Sabune partnered with community organizers in Brooklyn to develop curriculum for a first-in-kind, year-long social justice seminar for high school seniors at the Bushwick School for Social Justice. She also volunteered as a teacher at Rikers Island, where she taught GED and writing courses to incarcerated women and investigated police misconduct with the Civilian Complaint Review Board. Internationally, Fonseca-Sabune worked with Partners in Health in Rwanda to roll out a community health worker training program. She also worked as a secondary school teacher in Uganda.

Fonseca-Sabune is a cum laude graduate of Harvard Law School and she received her Masters in Teaching from the Fordham Graduate School of Education. Ayirini Fonseca-Sabune was born in New York and grew up in Newark, New Jersey. She is the daughter of immigrants from Uganda and Guyana.

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