

2017



NACo LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

NACo NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES

Washington, D.C. / February 25–March 1, 2017

## NACo International Economic Development Task Force: Speaker Bios



**Mr. Ashley Daniel Bell, Esq.** is a Special Assistant to the Secretary in the U.S. Department of State, a Landing Team Member for the Presidential Transition Team and a Senior Strategist for the Republican National Committee. He is also the Founder, CEO and Chairman of the 20/20 Leaders of America, LLC, as well as the Co-Founder of the law firm, Bell & Washington, LLP. Previously, Mr. Bell served as a Commissioner in Hall County, Ga. He holds a J.D. from Louisiana State University, an Executive Education Certificate from Harvard University's School of Government and a Law degree from the University of Georgia.

**Ms. Virginia Beckett** is the Deputy Director of the Canadian American Business Council, with professional experience as a government relations practitioner, assisting clients with public policy challenges relating to Canada/U.S. policy and U.S. public policy at the federal and state level. Ms. Beckett's experience also includes time in the U.S. House of Representatives as a legislative aide, and as a campaign operative in the 2012 Presidential election. Ms. Beckett holds a Masters in Public Policy from American University.



**Mr. Rodrigo Contreras** serves as the Head of the Economic Department and Trade Commissioner at the Embassy of Chile in Washington DC. In this position, he represents the economic interests of Chile in the U.S., promotes and facilitates exports of Chilean goods and services, attracts foreign direct investment to Chile and promotes Chile as a tourist destination. Previously, Mr. Contreras has served as a legal counsel and trade negotiator in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, consultant in the Inter-American Development Bank and professor at the University of Valparaíso. Mr. Contreras holds an LLM from Georgetown University and a law degree from University of Valparaíso.

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**Mr. Jason LaTorre** has worked for Global Affairs Canada for 17 years. Prior to his current assignment in Washington D.C., Mr. LaTorre served as Trade Commissioner in Singapore and Vietnam. He has also held various positions at headquarters in Ottawa, where he contributed to new programs and initiatives to support the global competitiveness of Canadian industry. Mr. LaTorre obtained his Bachelor Degree (with honors) in International Business from the University of Victoria in British Columbia, and his Masters Degree in International Affairs from Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario.



**Ms. Patricia R. Sheikh** is an agricultural trade and development expert and is currently the Agribusiness Director at the Corporate Council on Africa. In this role, she is responsible for promoting agribusiness and investment between the United States and nations of Africa for their member companies. Previously, Ms. Sheikh worked in the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service. Ms. Sheikh holds a B.A. in History and Political Science from Notre Dame of Maryland University and an M.A. in International Relations from the John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, D.C.

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