

Hello everyone and welcome to our **Alternative Road to Paris: Examining the UN Climate Summit**. I'm **Michelle DePass**, Dean of the Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy and the Director of the Tishman Environment and Design Center here at The New School.

I would like to start out by acknowledging and recognizing the horrific events that happened in Paris on Friday. They certainly have been sobering. As you may know, we have a campus there and fortunately all of our students, faculty and staff are accounted for and safe. Such violent acts are in many ways unfathomable, and yet unfortunately these kinds of events are no longer rare in the world. Just one day before the attacks in Paris, 43 civilians in Beirut lost their lives in an ISIS suicide bombing attack. **[OPTIONAL MOMENT OF SILENCE]** So I'd like for us to pause for a few seconds for a moment of silence.

These events, while horrible, only make more important our commitment to tolerance, to engaging in current social issues in a critical manner and to the non-violent promotion of social justice.

With Paris in our hearts and in our minds, our focus tonight is on elevating the theme of justice as we consider the climate agreements that need to be made in Paris next month.

Tonight, we will hear from both private and government practitioners about the historic COP21 conference happening next month and its implications for the future.

I'd like to acknowledge my colleague and former TEDC Director Joel Towers. Joel will be moderating our panel today I also want to thank **Global Urban Futures** team, and the **Tishman Environment and Design Center** team for making this event possible and for dedicating their time to be here to have this important conversation. Our panel this evening includes New School Faculty members, government leaders and private advocates who have all dedicated countless hours to bring these important issues to light. And to our panelists - thank you for joining us. I'm eager to hear from you.

[PANELISTS NAMES]

Stefan Ali, Esq, Ironbound Community Corporation

Dr. Ana Baptista, The New School (Milano)

Michael Cohen, The New School (Milano School of International Affairs)

Taylor Drake, The New School (Parsons The New School for Design,
Eugene Lang College)

Ambassador Mary Elizabeth Flores Flake, Permanent Representative of
the Republic of Honduras

Shay O'Reilly, Center for Earth Ethics

With that, I'd like to introduce, **Professor Shagun Mehrotra**.

Shagun Mehrotra is a professor of Sustainable Development at the Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy. **Professor Mehrotra** is also the founding director of the Sustainable Development Solutions Center and serves on the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network Urban Thematic Group. He co-directs the Urban Climate Change Research Network, a global research network of 500 scholars and practitioners based in 100 cities dedicated to climate change research and policymaking. His research and advice has widely engaged both government and the private sector in Africa, Asia, and Latin America on climate change, infrastructure economics and finance, and poverty reduction in cities.

I will now gladly turn your attention to my colleague, **Professor Shagun Mehrotra** for a special presentation.

Thank you.