Professor Mukesh Kapila, CBE

Dr Kapila has extensive experience in global and public health, international development, humanitarian affairs, conflict and security issues, human rights and diplomacy, and social entrepreneurship, with substantive leadership roles in government, United Nations system and multilateral agencies, International Red Cross and Red Crescent, civil society, and academia.

His work has taken him to some 120 countries in all continents. Originally schooled in India and England, Dr Kapila graduated in medicine from the University of Oxford and received postgraduate qualifications in public health from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

After an initial clinical career (1980-1984) in hospitals and general practice in Cambridge, and then in public health (1984-1990) including initiating and leading the first National UK HIV/AIDS Programme, Dr Kapila joined the UK Government's Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1990 at the Overseas Development Administration where he oversaw British aid health programmes in Asia and Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean, followed by a spell based in Central and Southern Africa. Subsequently, he went on, at the Department for International Development (1994-2002), to found and head a large new government department for conflict and humanitarian affairs covering crisis and emergency situations due to wars and disasters worldwide. In that role, he was responsible for several global initiatives to reform and strengthen the international multilateral humanitarian and human rights systems, and represented the UK in numerous fora at the European Union, UN General Assembly, and on the boards of UN agencies.

Dr Kapila was seconded by the UK Government to the United Nations in 2002-03 initially as Special Adviser to the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General in Afghanistan and then to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva. He then became the United Nations' Resident and Humanitarian Co-ordinator for Sudan (2003-04) leading what was at the time, the UN's biggest operation in the world. in 2004, he arrived at the headquarters of the World Health Organization in Geneva as Director for Emergency Response handling major operations such as for the Indian Ocean Tsunami.

In 2006, he joined the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the world's largest humanitarian and development network serving in different roles such as Special Representative of the Secretary General, Director of Policy and Planning, and finally as Undersecretary General where he oversaw several transformations and strategic interventions to scale-up programming.

Dr Kapila has also served in many policy advisory roles, conducted strategic reviews and formulated new programmes with several other international agencies such as the World Bank, UNAIDS, International Labour Organization, UN OCHA and ISDR, as well as served on the Boards of the UN Institute for Training and Research, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, and the International Peace Academy. Short spells have included Vice President of the International Medical Corps and CEO of the Foundation for Genomics and Population Health. He was an early member of the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination System. He was closely involved in the development of the original Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and their successor, the current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Subsequently, he has been active in several civil society groups including chairing the Council of Minority Rights Group International, and chairing the Board of Nonviolent Peaceforce that was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. He has initiated new initiatives on sexual and gender based violence and, as Special Representative of the Aegis Trust, on the prevention of genocide and other crimes against humanity. These came out of his personal experiences in witnessing, at first hand, the genocidal atrocities in Rwanda, Srebrenica, and Darfur.

Since 2012, Dr Kapila is also the Professor of Global Health & Humanitarian Affairs at the University of Manchester, where he also founded and chaired the Manchester Global Foundation. He has also been a Senior Member of Hughes Hall College at Cambridge University, professor at the Geneva School of Diplomacy and International Relations, visiting professor at the International Center for Humanitarian Affairs, Nairobi, Associate Fellow at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, and on the editorial board of "Global Governance"

He returned to the United Nations in 2015-2016 to serve as Special Adviser for the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, and then in 2018-2019 to found and direct the innovative Defeat-NCD Partnership. In 2019, he joined the new Digital Health Global Initiative to help shape its development and progress its ambitious agenda to advance Universal Health Coverage as part of the SDGs.

Dr Kapila has received several awards for his public service. In 2003 he was bestowed as a Commander of the Order of the British Empire by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. In 2007 he received the Dr Jean Mayer Global Citizenship Award of the Institute for Global Leadership for (as stated): "moral courage, personal integrity, and passion…dedicated to solving the most pressing problems facing the world". In 2013, he was given the "I Witness" Award for human rights protection and, in 2014, the California State Legislature passed its Special Resolution 395 for recognising (as stated) "a lifetime of achievements and meritorious service to humanity".

Dr Kapila has been a public motivational and keynote speaker at numerous events including at TedX, and delivered in Nairobi in 2013, the memorial lecture in honour of Nobel Prize winning environmental activist Wangari Maathai.

His memoir "Against a Tide of Evil" was nominated for the 2013 Best Non-Fiction Book award by the Crime Writers Association and is being filmed. His forthcoming book (due 2020) is entitled "No Stranger to Kindness".

www.mukeshkapila.org