



UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES
Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)
Division for Inclusive Social Development

Biographical Notes of Speakers

United Nations Expert Group Meeting,

15 – 16 May 2018, UNHQ in NY, Conference rooms S-2725 & 6

“Family policies for inclusive societies”



Charaf Ahmimed is Programme Specialist for the Social and Human Sciences Sector at UNESCO's Regional Office for Southern Africa, based in Harare, Zimbabwe. Prior to this role, he managed the Social and Human Sciences Programme of UNESCO in South-East Asia (Jakarta Office) and Central America (San Jose Office). Mr Ahmimed was formerly the Senior Programme Officer with Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC). He was responsible for the Peace, Conflict and Development Programme in the Middle East and West Africa. He advised various departments of the Government of Canada on the Middle East, including Privy Council Office and Department of Foreign Affairs. Mr Ahmimed has also worked at Partnership Africa Canada (PAC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Council of Europe (CoE). Mr Ahmimed collaborated with international organisations such as Crisis Group and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. His recent publications include *Youth perspectives on relevance of education in Southern Africa* (to be published in 2017), *Masculinities in Latin America* (2016), *Youth political participation in Costa Rica* (2015), *Role of media in the promotion of sustainable development and culture of peace* (2015), and *Public policies and social inclusion in South-East Asia* (2014). Mr Ahmimed graduated with a B.A. in Communication and Politics (University of Montreal, Canada) and Masters in International Relations (Laval University, Canada). He is currently a PhD candidate at the Department of Sociology of the University of Cape Town (South Africa).



Donna Butts is the Executive Director of Generations United, a position she has held since 1997. Generations United's mission is to improve the lives of children, youth and older adults through intergenerational collaboration, public policies and programs for the enduring benefit of all. Previously she held leadership positions at the YWCA, National 4-H Council, and Covenant House. She has served on five United Nations expert panels on intergenerational and family issues and was an at large delegate to the 2005 White House Conference on Aging and attended the 2015 conference. Butts is a graduate of Stanford University's Executive Program for Nonprofit Leaders and her awards include: recognition three years in a row by *The Nonprofit Times* as one of the Top 50 most powerful and influential nonprofit executives in the US; one of the 2015 Top 50 Influencers in Aging by *Next Avenue*; and the 2017 Family Award from the International Federation for Family Development. Under her leadership, Generations United received the 2015 Eisner Prize for Excellence in Intergenerational Advocacy.



Maria Amparo Cruz-Saco is the Joanne Toor Cummings '50 Professor of Economics at Connecticut College. She graduated with a BS and a Licenciada degree in Economics from Universidad del Pacífico (Lima, Peru), and with a MA and a PhD in Economics from University of Pittsburgh (where she also earned a Graduate Certificate in Latin American Studies). She has worked at COFIDE, Peru's largest development bank, Universidad del Pacífico, Mount Holyoke College, and Wesleyan University. She is the recipient of two Fulbright Scholar grants—2007/8 and 2015/6, has held senior administrative positions, serves on the editorial boards of two professional journals, and has conducted extensive consultant work with the United

Nations (DESA), the InterAmerican Development Bank, the Office of International Labor, non-for-profit organizations, and national offices in Peru and Latin America. Her fields of study include development macroeconomics, international finance, and social protection systems with a focus on pensions. She has authored or co-authored four books, co-edited two volumes —on macroeconomics or social protection—and contributed several chapters and more than twenty journal articles or working papers.



Mohammed Ali Loutfy is the representative of Disabled People International (DPI) at the United Nations, and he is the executive director of the Arab Forum for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (AFRPD), the Arab regional office of DPI). He is also the co-chair of the Persons With Disabilities Partnership Constituency Group (PWDPCG) of the General Assembly of Partners (GAP) of the Habitat3 New Urban Agenda. Loutfy was the global coordinator of the World Bank Safeguards and Disability Campaign, a joined initiative between the Bank Information Center (BIC) and the Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union (LPHU). Loutfy started his career as a Junior Professional Associate and the youth focal point at the World Bank Disability Unit under the leadership of Mrs. Judith Heumann. After the Bank he returned to his home country Lebanon, joining the Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union, where he held the position of LPHU's National Program Director, running a series of projects around: budget Transparency, relief and emergency, disability rights, youth leadership etc. Along his advocacy and professional career, Loutfy holds several academic degrees including law and International Development. Loutfy received his master's degree in International Development as a Fulbright Scholar from American University of Washington DC, where he is currently finishing his PhD in anthropology as well.



Prof. Monde Makiwane is a South African National Research Foundation rated scientist who is employed as a Research Director in the Human and Social Development (HSD) research programme of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in Pretoria, South Africa. Monde is also an Honorary Professor at the University of North West. He holds a Masters in Social Science in Sociology from the University of KwaZulu-Natal and a PhD in Demography from the University of the Witwatersrand. He has lectured undergraduate and graduate students at Walter Sisulu University. In addition, he has held two fellowships: one at Harvard University and another at the University of Pennsylvania. His areas of research interest include: family, intergenerational relations, youth, ageing, teenage sexuality, fertility, social security and migration. His publication record includes a number of international and national conference presentations and authoring and co-authoring a number of journal articles.



Dominic Richardson, PhD, is a Senior Education Specialist at UNICEF, Office of Research - Innocenti where he leads research on issues of equity in education and the relationships between schooling, school outcomes and child well-being. Present projects include: Time to Teach, a study of the determinants of teacher absenteeism in Sub-Saharan Africa; Sports for Development evidence on learning and social inclusion; and, violence in schools. Dominic previously worked with OECD Social Policy Division on child well-being, evaluating family policies, and studies of extreme poverty and vulnerability. Dominic has led or co-authored several reports on comparative child and family well-being including: *How's Life for Children?* in OECD's 2015 *How's Life?*, OECD's *Doing Better for Children* and *Doing Better for Families* as well as UNICEF Innocenti Report Cards 7, 9 and 14. Dominic is presently the coordinator of a global project on Family Policies and the SDGs, which will be published in May 2018.



Dr. Mihaela Robila is Professor of Human Development and Family Studies at Queens College, City University of New York. Her scholarship is focused on child and family functioning and family policies in different countries. She edited the *Handbook on Family Policies across the Globe* (Springer, 2014) and *Families in Eastern Europe* (Elsevier, 2004), wrote *Eastern European Immigrant Families* (Routledge, 2010), and co-edited a book on *Global Perspectives on Family Life Education* (Springer, 2018). She is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association Divisions 52 (International Psychology), 43 (Family Psychology), and 37 (Child and Family Policy and Practice).



Denise L. Spitzer PhD is a Professor in the Institute of Feminist and Gender Studies at the University of Ottawa, where she also served as the Canada Research Chair in Gender, Migration and Health and as a Principal Scientist in the Institute of Population Health from 2005-2015. In addition to undergraduate studies in Biology, Chinese Language, and Music, she holds a Master's degree and doctorate in Anthropology from the University of Alberta, Canada. Dr. Spitzer is interested in examining how global processes—intersecting with gender, racialization, migration status and other social identifiers—are implicated in health and wellbeing. Her current program of research focuses on the impact of the global economy on immigrants, migrants and refugees in different parts of the globe and engages with critical perspectives of the body, transnationalism and constructions of identity; the impact of policy on health; community-based research and intersectional analysis. Professor Spitzer has published in journals such as *Gender & Society*, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, and the *Canadian Journal of Public Health*. Her edited collection, *Engendering Migrant Health: Canadian Perspectives*, was published by the University of Toronto Press in 2011 and was recognized by the Women's and Gender Studies Association in 2013 with a WGSRF Outstanding Scholarship citation.



Shanthi Thambiah is a social anthropologist and Associate Professor at the Gender Studies Programme, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Malaya. She received her Phd from the University of Hull and her M. Phil from the University of Cambridge, UK. Her expertise is in the areas of indigenous minority culture and change including changing gender relations in these communities. She has published widely in this area. Her current research interests are in the areas of changing gender relations and livelihood strategies of indigenous communities in Malaysia; gender and migration; changing gender relations in the family; families in flux; gender, work and public policies.



Dr. Bahira Trask is Professor and Chair of the Department of Human Development and Family Sciences at the University of Delaware. She holds a B.A. in Political Science with a concentration in International Relations from Yale University and a Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania. Her research focuses on globalization, social policies, gender and family change in Western and non-Western countries, and she presents regularly on these topics at international, national, and local forums. Dr. Trask has authored and edited a number of books including *Women, Work, and Globalization: Challenges and Opportunities* (Routledge, 2014), *Globalization and Families: Accelerated Systemic Social Change*, (Springer, 2010) and *Cultural Diversity and Families* (Sage, 2007). She has also published over sixty peer-reviewed articles, chapters and review articles in significant journals, handbooks and edited works and served as the guest editor on various special edition journals. Much of Dr. Trask's scholarship has been informed through participation with a number of international, national and community-based research projects that focus on diversity, gender and work, and strengthening low-income families. Her work has been funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Marguirite Casey Foundation,

Blueprints Delaware and various local community initiatives. Dr. Trask is a fellow of NCFR, the National Council on Family Relations, and in 2017 she was awarded the University of Delaware Excellence in Teaching Award. Her Tedx talks on global family change and women and work are popular teaching tools internationally.



Irma Rognoni, City Councilor of Barcelona for Family, Children, Uses of Time and the Disabled, as well as Councillor for the city District of Nou Barris (2011-2015) and City Councilor member of the Grup Municipal Demòcrata (2017-2019). She is a Lawyer and Mediator, with a Master's Degree in Mediation and Alternative Resolution of Conflicts (Ramon Llull University). She was Assistant Professor of the Department of Political Economy and Financial and Tax Law (University of Barcelona). Professor of various Masters Degree courses in mediation and Conflict Resolution Resolution at Ramon Llull University, the Autonomous University of Barcelona and at the Illustrious College of Lawyers of Barcelona. Founder member of Æquitas-Centre of Mediation and Alternative Resolution of Conflicts of Barcelona. Mediator in the field of the family of organisations and community mediator. Responsible for the co-facilitating process of the Intra-Rwandan Dialogue. Collaborations in the UNESCO centre of Catalonia, and Amnesty International, legal adviser for the Association ADDIA in Defence of the Right of Infancy to Adoption). Created the first Collaborating Entity of International Adoption in Catalonia and Spain, a model that has been adopted as unique.



Ignacio Socias is a Director of International Relations of the International Federation for Family Development, an umbrella organization for nearly Family Enrichment Centers that operate in 68 countries. He is also Director of International Relations of The Family Watch, a think tank committed to researching the family and finding solutions to the problems it faces. He has promoted different global research projects and has been invited to more than 20 international conferences on family issues and

has participated in countless UN events and different expert group meetings. He has represented IFFD in the FamiliesAndSocieties 7FP European Commission Project, the biggest European research on families, and has been part of high-level events on family at the European Parliament (2013 and 2014), Committee of the Regions (2012) and Economic and Social Committee (2014 and 2015). He is a Doctor in Law by the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and has been CEO of the Grupo de Comunicación Dynamia and Bisel de Comunicación in Spain.



Dr. Yan Ruth Xia is a professor in the Department of Child, Youth and Family Studies at University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She has passion for research, teaching and outreach to advance health and wellbeing of families around the world. Her research focuses on strengths, stress, and coping of Asian American and Chinese families. She also studies youth and family resilience during such contextual changes as China's socioeconomic transition and family migration process. Dr. Xia has collaborated with colleagues and formed the Global Consortium for International Family Studies (GCIFS), and the GCIFS partners jointly created the first graduate program of its kind in family studies. Dr. Xia has worked extensively with communities at local, state, national, and international levels on family service program development and evaluation. She has served two terms as the chair of the International Section, National Council on Family Relations and serves on the editorial board of two family research journals. She has recently received a Fulbright Distinguished Chair Award.