



**United
Nations**

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



INTERNATIONAL
DAY OF FAMILIES
15 MAY 2022

Families and Urbanization

Online Webinar in Observance of the

2022 International Day of Families

Friday, 13 May, 10:00-11:15 AM (New York time)

Biographical Notes of Speakers

Introductory remarks



H.E. Alya Ahmed bin Saif Al-Thani was appointed Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations in October 2013. An international leader on human rights, social justice and

sustainable development issues, Ambassador Al-Thani has authored and facilitated numerous ground-breaking General Assembly Resolutions dealing with issues such as international day to protect education from attack, the right to education in emergencies, autism, and improving the effectiveness and coordination of military and civil defence assets for natural disaster response, among others. Since assuming her functions, she has played a key leadership role in numerous initiatives such as Chairperson of the Fiftieth Session of the Commission on Population and Development (2017). Ambassador Al-Thani has co-facilitated several critical processes, such as the Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council Reform; the intergovernmental negotiations on the Declaration for the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations (2020); the General Assembly Resolution establishing the modalities for the 25th anniversary for the Beijing platform for action for women (2019); the Review of the Economic and social Council (ECOSOC) (2018); and the preparations for the high-level meeting to appraise the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (2017). She has initiated several United Nations Group of Friends, and currently co-chairs the Group of Friends for Gender Parity, the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect; and the Group of Friends to Assist on the international, impartial and independent mechanism (IIIM) to assist in the investigation in crimes committed in Syria.

Between 2011 and 2013, Ambassador Al-Thani was Qatar's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and General Consul of the State of Qatar to the Swiss Federation. During the same period, she represented Qatar in the UN Human Rights Council, the Executive Council of the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Executive Council of the International Labour Organization (ILO). She also held the prestigious post of President of the Social Forum of the Human Rights Council. Prior to this, from 2007 to 2011, she held several posts the Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar in New York, including as Deputy Permanent Representative. Earlier in her career, Ambassador Al-Thani held a number of positions in Qatar, including as Director of the Department on the Rights of the Child in Qatar's Supreme Council for Family Affairs. Ambassador Al-Thani sits on the boards of several international human rights and development organizations. She is the recipient of prestigious awards, including being selected as a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum Committee to improving the State of the World in 2013. She holds a M.A. in International Studies and Diplomacy from the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies and a Bachelor of Science in Economics from Qatar University.

Moderator



Angela Mwai is the Chief (a.i.) of the Human Rights and Social Inclusion Unit at UN-Habitat global headquarters in Nairobi. She is UN-Habitat's gender focal point and her responsibilities include gender mainstreaming and social inclusion in all policies, programmes and projects in UN-Habitat, raising awareness and capacity building on gender, human rights and social inclusion issues, which includes children, youth, older persons and people with disabilities, for both internal colleagues and external partners, guidelines and tool development, engaging colleagues and partners. She is responsible for ensuring gender and human rights and social inclusive responsive initiatives and interventions are considered in all areas including land rights, economic empowerment, governance, spatial planning and

urban basic service provision among others. As a cross cutting thematic issues, safety and crime prevention strategies for cities under the Safer Cities programme also fall in her docket. Angela is also involved with other UN Agencies and partners on advocacy events on gender and women's issues in international forums around the world. In addition, she is also responsible for global reporting on all the social inclusion and cross-cutting issues which are gender, youth, human rights, children, older persons and people with disabilities, as well as other marginalised groups which include refugees, migrants and indigenous people. Angela holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics from York University in Canada and a Master's degree in Organizational Leadership from Azusa Pacific University, USA.

Keynote speaker



Bahira Sherif Trask, PhD., is Professor and Chair 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, women's employment and family change in Western and non-Western countries, and she presents regularly on these topics at international 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). 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 and supporting low-income families.

Panelists



Brenna Hassinger-Das, PhD., is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Pace University. Her research examines children's play and learning in home, school, and community contexts, particularly for children experiencing poverty. She is particularly interested in investigating the effects of both play and digital

media on caregiver-child interactions and child learning. She is committed to translating her research for use by the public through community-based research projects transforming everyday spaces into hubs of playful learning and also through other outreach activities.



Piotr Całbecki has been the President of the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Region since 2006. Graduate of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, he is a biologist by education and regional politician by profession. From 1998 to 2002 he was the Councilor and board member at the Toruń City Hall. Before being elected as the President of the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Region, he was the director of the Department of Development and European Projects at the Toruń City Hall and advisor and plenipotentiary of the Governor of Toruń for cooperation with the World Bank, and secretary of the Provincial Team for European Integration. With long-time experience in managing a region of 2 million inhabitants he always underlines the importance of family-oriented policies and programs. He led the region to be the first in Eastern-Central Europe that signed the Venice Declaration. As the President of the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Region, he directs the region to fulfill the UN Sustainable Development Goals and to follow up the goals of the Venice Declaration. He is the European Committee of the Regions rapporteur of the opinion on “Safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food system”. Mr. Całbecki is the recipient of the Gold Cross of Merit for his achievements in the development of local government in Poland and recipient of the Order of Polonia Restituta awarded by the President of Poland for outstanding services in the local community and achievements in local government work.



José Alejandro Vázquez Alarcón, PhD., as the United Nations representative of the International Federation for Family Development, opens the line of communication between Member States, the Academia, the UN-System, families and various Civil Society actors to highlight a family perspective and child protection scope in the design of various social policy recommendations. With a PhD in Political Thought and Development, Alex brings a substantial contribution to the global discussion and a practical engagement among stakeholders. He has been an invited expert to several Expert Group Meeting organized by the United Nations on Families, Parenting and Youth Transitions at the UN Headquarters in New York, European Union in Brussels and other international venues. Alex has been the project manager of comprehensive evidence-based Global Report on Families, Family Policies and the Sustainable Development Goals in partnership with UNICEF. Now, he manages a global project "Inclusive Cities and Sustainable Families", gathering policy recommendations from almost 200 hundred territories in 3 continents in support of the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Looking forward the 30th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, he is coordinating together with other transnational non-governmental organizations the initial draft of the Civil Society Declaration. Alex has been a visiting scholar of the European Institute of Columbia University in the City of New York and holds a M.A. in Government and Culture of the Organizations at the Enterprise and Humanism Institute of the University of Navarra, Spain. He is also the co-chair of the Non-Governmental Organization Committee on the United Nations Children's Fund as the entity officially mandated to represent civil society and interact with UNICEF's Executive Board. He is contributing with UNICEF to launch and raise awareness the Parenting Month initiative to support parents around globe for better parenting and children care. Alex has advocated for work-family balance, shared responsibility at home and parenting education programmes and support at various United Nations Conferences.