



INTERNATIONAL  
DAY OF FAMILIES  
15 MAY [2024]



[2024] THIRTIETH  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
YEAR OF THE FAMILY

***Families and Climate Change:  
International Year of the Family + 30***

**Observance of the  
2024 International Day of Families  
and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
of the International Year of the Family  
15 May, 10 – 11:45 am, UNHQ, CR11**

***Biographical notes of speakers***  
(7 May 2024)



### **Mohamed Gamal Abdelmonem**

#### **Chair of Architecture and the Founding Director of Research, York School of Architecture, the University of York**

Professor Abdelmonem was a Chair in Architecture at Nottingham Trent University. He held various academic roles at Queen's University Belfast, the University of Sheffield, and served as Visiting Professor at The University of California at Berkeley, Royal College of Art, and Beijing Institute of technology & CEPT University in India. Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and Patron of the Home Renaissance Foundation, Gamal is a multiple award winner and the recipient of The Queen's Anniversary Prize (2021), UK's highest national award for research, Research Excellence Award (2020), the Jeffrey Cook Award (2014), and the runner up for the prestigious Newton Prize (2020). Professor Abdelmonem research focuses on architectural theory and history, architectural and urban heritage, architecture of home, spatial practices in urban spaces, virtual technologies, and IT for Older people homes and climate change. Gamal's research has informed governments, international organisations, and featured in leading academic journals and government policies. His recent books include 'Peripheries: Edge Conditions in Architecture' (2012), 'Portrush: Towards an Architecture for the North Irish Coast' (2013); 'The Architecture of Home in Cairo' (2016), and "Architecture, Space and Memory of Resurrection in Northern Ireland" (2019); and 'People, Care and Work in the Home' (2020).



### **Sharifa Noaman Al Emadi**

#### **Executive Director of Doha International Family Institute, DIFI**

Dr. Al Emadi is a certified clinical psychologist by the Ministry of Public Health in Qatar. She currently functions as a licensed psychologist to treat behavioral disorders, specifically drug addictions. She has been teaching family relations at Qatar University. She has delivered several courses and workshops in this field in Qatar and abroad and has presented papers in several international conferences pertaining to several fields of study and research, some of which were published in international magazines. She held the position of Executive Director of Protection and Social Rehabilitation and Executive Director of International and Community Relations at the Naufar Center. Besides her role as the Executive Director of Doha International Family Institute, she is also a member of the National Committee for Women, Children, the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities; and a board member in the Social Sciences and Humanities Department at Qatar University. Dr. Al Emadi holds PhD and Master's degrees in Psychology and Counselling from Manchester Metropolitan University and was awarded the PhD Degree holders Platinum Medal at the Education Excellence Day in Qatar for the year 2009.



### **Juan Antonio López Baljarg**

#### **Director general, Instituto de Análisis de Política Familiar, IAPF**

Mr. Baljarg holds a Master's degree in Government and Public Policies from the Universidad Panamericana with a specialization in Institutional Government from the "Universidad Complutense de Madrid", and a Bachelor's degree in Communication from the "Universidad Anáhuac". As a Director General of IAPF he has promoted laws and public policies for the Federal Government of Mexico, Senate of the Republic, Chamber of Deputies, 7 State Governments, 12 Local Congresses, and 40 Municipal Governments. He is the Counselor of "COPARMEX Nacional" and member of the Ethics Committee of "TV Azteca." In 2021 and 2022, he was recognized by the magazine Campaigns and Elections as one of "the 100 young people who are already shaping the future of Mexico." Advisor and counselor on political and social issues in organizations such as "Consejo de la Comunicación", "Unión Nacional de Padres de Familia", and "Educación con Rumbo", he has conducted workshops and lectures on government and civil society in most states of the Mexican Republic and various countries in Latin America.



### **Donna Butts**

#### **Executive Director, Generations United**

Donna Butts has served as the Executive Director of Generations United since 1997. Generations United is a global organization headquartered in Washington, DC. Founded over 35 years ago, the 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. Butts is an internationally known speaker, author and advocate addressing intergenerational connections, grandparents raising grandchildren and policies effective across the lifespan. She has served on five United Nations expert panels on intergenerational and family issues and is a graduate of Stanford University's Executive Program for Nonprofit Leaders. Her awards include recognition three years in a row by The Nonprofit Times as one of the Top 50 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. Butts is a member of the National Academy of Social Insurance. In 2023, in preparation for the International Year of the Family+30, Butts directed an international expert symposium resulting in the publication of Changing Demographics can Result in Strengthening Families. The report outlined findings, best practices, and policy and other recommendations to support intergenerational solidarity.



### **Roberto Ciambetti**

#### **President, Regional Council of Veneto Region**

Mr. Ciambetti is a surveyor and by working in the private sector he has developed high skills in the environmental field, major hazards and civil protection. He was the author of regional laws on environmental issues, such as protection of water resources and fight against light pollution. He has been also the drafter of the law for the implementation in Veneto of circular economy. For his environmental commitments he has had the satisfaction to see the International Astronomical Union (IAU) at Harvard University giving his name to the asteroid 24087. Since June 2015 he has been President of the regional Council of Veneto and vice President ELISAN, European Local Inclusion and Social Action network, member of European Committee of the Regions and member of the European Commission's Enve (Environment Climate change and Energy) , Nat. (Natural Resources) Sedec (Social Policy education, employment, research and Culture), Cives (Commission for citizenship, governance, institutional and external affairs). He is an expert in Venetian traditions, history and culture. Mr. Ciambetti is married and he has two daughters.



### **Maria Regina Maroncelli Florio**

#### **President, European Large Families Confederation, ELFAC**

Ms. Florio graduated in foreign languages and literature, and works as a teacher and a journalist, specialising in sustainability and integral ecology. She has volunteered for the Italian Large Families Association (ANFN) as a communication director, and has been a member of the board together with her husband Fabrizio for 8 years. They are now delegates for international issues. In June 2018 she became the president of ELFAC which gathers large families' associations from 23 European countries, promoting and advocating for the rights, the values and the wellbeing of families, particularly those with 3 and more children. Since the establishment of the European Network of family friendly municipalities she has served as its coordinator; today it counts 150 municipalities from 9 European Countries. She loves to travel and meet new people, cultures, and stories. She believes in the power of beauty and in the beauty of family. She is married and has 4 children. She lives in Bergamo, Italy





**Vivian Lou**

**Professor at Department of Social Work & Social Administration at the University of Hong Kong**

Professor Lou Vivian W. Q. is the Director of Sau Po Centre on Ageing, and Professor at Department of Social Work & Social Administration at the University of Hong Kong. Her research interests focus on family gerontology, in particular family caregiving for dementia, stroke, end-of-life older adults, and social adaptation and mental health of Chinese older adults and family caregivers. She has committed to cross-sector collaboration with community partners, social enterprises, and the market. Prof. Lou has been appointed as a member of Statistics Advisory Board, Community Investment and Inclusion Fund, Senior Police Call Central Advisory Board, and Elderly Academy Development Foundation of the HKSAR Government. She is a fellow of the Gerontological Society of America, and a Council member of Hong Kong Association of Gerontology and Consortium of Institutes of Family Limited (CIFA). Professor Lou is recognized as Healthy Ageing 50 leaders transforming the world to be a better place in which to grow older in 2022 and Woman Change Maker in STEM in 2023.



**Irwan Nadzif Mahpul**

**Researcher at the Population and Family Research Division, National Population & Family Development Board, NPFDB**

Mr. Irwan Nadzif Mahpul serves as a researcher at the Population and Family Research Division, National Population and Family Development Board (NPFDB), Malaysia since 2004. Having served for 20 years, he is responsible for conducting national population and family research in the country. His latest research projects include the Malaysian Family Well-Being Index 2022 and the Sixth Malaysian Population and Family Survey 2024. In addition, he is also doing evaluation research on programs and services offered by the NPFDB to the communities.



**Diosdado B. Marasigan**

**President, Educhild Foundation, Inc.**

Diosdado B. Marasigan is the president of EDUCHILD Foundation (part of the International Federation for Family Development, IFFD) in the Philippines. EDUCHILD is a Philippine non-stock, non-profit organization formed by parents in 1976 to help fellow parents in the task of raising a family. He also serves as a Board Member of IFFD with its mission to support families through training based on participative methodology to help parents improve their relationships with their spouses and develop their child-rearing skills. He was a head organizer of the 21st IFFD World Congress of Family Enrichment and 2nd IFFD World Congress of Personal Project, held on 24-25 February 2024 in Cebu City, Philippines. He is a lawyer by training and vice dean of the UA&P Institute of Law and the UA&P Entrepreneurial Management Program, School of Management. He is also a Certified Public Accountant.



### **Dominic Richardson**

**Managing Director of the Learning for Well-being Institute**, a global research 'start-up' working to promote a more holistic appreciation of child well-being in public policy and practice. For almost a decade, Dominic led two of UNICEF's global research teams, education and social policy and economic analysis at the Office of Research – Innocenti, where he oversaw work on cash transfers and cash plus programmes (including gender responsive social protection), social expenditure and ECD policies, the Innocenti Report Card Series, and global research on family policies and child development and well-being. Dominic previously worked with OECD Social Policy Division on a broad range of studies covering child well-being, evaluating family policies, integrating human services, and social impact investment.

Dominic has led or co-authored multiple reports on comparative child well-being in high-income countries, including studies evaluating the content and quality of international surveys of school children in high and middle-income countries, studies of children's life skills development in middle-income settings, and studies of teacher absenteeism and motivation in low-income settings. His most recent work on child well-being 'What Makes Me?' is a review of global literature on age-related child development of innate human skills. Dominic was awarded the 2018 Jan Trost Award (lifetime achievement) for Outstanding Contributions in International Family Studies by the National Council for Family Relations in the United States.



### **Ignacio Socias**

**Director of International Relations for the International Federation for Family Development**

Ignacio Socias holds a doctorate in Law and serves as the Director of International Relations for the International Federation for Family Development. Since 2010, his role has involved extensive global engagement in coordination with United Nations' activities. He has visited 64 cities in 45 countries, participated in 206 international meetings, delivered 198 keynote speeches, and conducted 87 high-level meetings with government representatives. He has been instrumental in driving the global projects 'The SDGs and families' and 'Inclusive Cities for Sustainable Families'. Furthermore, he represented IFFD in the European Commission project 'FamiliesAndSocieties' (2013-2017) and has actively participated in high-level family-focused events at the European Parliament, the Committee of Regions, and the Economic and Social Committee. In recognition of his contributions, Ignacio Socias has received several prestigious awards in Europe and America.



### **Jose Alejandro Vazquez Alarcon**

#### **Representative to the UN/Strategic Partnerships Coordinator, IFFD**

Jose Alejandro Vazquez Alarcon is the United Nations representative for the International Federation for Family Development. He plays a crucial role in connecting Member States, academia, the UN system, families, and diverse civil society stakeholders. With a Ph.D. in Political Thought and Development, Alex offers valuable insights and actively engages stakeholders in finding practical solutions. He is a strong advocate for work-family balance, shared responsibilities at home, and the implementation of parenting education programs. Alex has shared his expertise in promoting these causes as an invited expert at numerous United Nations Conferences, Meetings, and Commissions on Family, Parenting, Ageing, Care, and Youth Transitions held at prestigious venues worldwide. Notably, Alex has led the creation of a comprehensive evidence-based Global Report on Families, Family Policies, and the Sustainable Development Goals in collaboration with UNICEF. Currently, he oversees various projects, including "Inclusive Cities and Sustainable Families," which gathers family-friendly policy recommendations from urban areas. He is also coordinating preparations for the 30th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2024, leading a Civil Society Declaration signed by more than 40 organizations across five continents. Alex's academic background includes a stint as a visiting scholar at the European Institute of Columbia University, New York, and he holds a Master of Arts in Government and Culture of Organizations from the University of Navarra, Spain.



### **Madeleine Wallin**

#### **Secretary General, European Federation of Parents and Carers at Home, FEFAF**

Madeleine Wallin is General Secretary of the European Federation of Parents and Caregivers at Home (FEFAF) as well as the International Coordinator and Board Member for Haro: she previously served as President of both organizations. In her work at FEFAF and Haro, she advocates freedom of choice and equality for parents in Swedish family politics and wants to raise awareness about children's needs and the importance of motherhood. She is a mother of five children.

## **United Nations Staff**



### **Masumi Ono**

#### **Chief, Social Inclusion and Participation Branch, UNDESA**

Masumi leads a dedicated team of specialists on issues related to older persons, youth, persons with disabilities and family. Her 25 years of UN experience include supporting the development of Sustainable Development Goals from the Secretary-General's office, mobilizing high-level advocacy work on education finance, preparing reports for the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on cross-sectoral themes such as gender, poverty eradication and UN system coherence, and managing trade facilitation programmes in the Asia Pacific region. Before joining the UN through the National Competitive Exam (YPP), she worked in Finance having obtained MBA and BA (Economics) both from Cornell University (USA).



**Chista Behbin-Guirand**

**Intern, UNDESA**

Ms. Chista Behbin-Guirand joined the UN as a social affairs intern. Prior to interning at the UN, she attended the University of Toronto (U of T), receiving her Bachelor's in Environmental Studies with a double minor in Environmental Ethics and Environmental Anthropology. While studying at U of T, she conducted a number of research projects focusing on equitable and climate change initiatives. She acted as project lead for her senior capstone, focusing on container gardens in the urban environment. Upon completing her studies at UofT, she returned to New York to complete her second Bachelor's in International Trade and Marketing with a double minor in Economics and History of Art at the Fashion Institute of Technology. Here, she gained a deeper understanding of global trade and corporate social responsibility. She produced several presentations which included demographics research, environmental scanning, and market analysis. She is passionate about sustainable development initiatives and eager to learn at the UN while contributing her academic knowledge and fluency in two languages.



**Renata Kaczmarska**

**Social Affairs Officer, UNDESA**

Renata is the Focal Point on Family in the Division for Inclusive Social Development in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs at the United Nations Secretariat in New York. In this capacity, she acts as a spokesperson on family issues for the United Nations Secretariat. She prepares publications and drafts UN reports on a variety of subjects relating to families and organizes international and regional expert group meetings on family policy issues, observances of the International Day of Families and other events to raise awareness of the importance of family policies for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals and targets. She is currently engaged in the preparations for the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Year of the Family, 2024. She holds a Master of Science Degree in Social Sciences and Bachelor of Arts in Political Science as well as United Nations Studies Graduate Diploma.