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

BIONOTES OF PARTICIPANTS

United Nations Expert Group Meeting
In preparation for the 30th anniversary of the International Year of Family 2024
New York, 7-8 September 2022

Megatrends & Families: Focus on Digital Technologies, Migration and Urbanization



Masumi Ono is the Chief of Social Inclusion and Participation Branch in the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs. 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).

Renata Kaczmarska is the Social Affairs Officer and 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 30th



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.



Sharifa Al Emadi

Dr. Al Emadi is the Executive Director of Doha International Family Institute. She 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 is considered to be 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 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.



Ahmed Aref

Dr. Aref is the Planning and Content Manager at Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), Qatar Foundation (QF) Experienced policy-research expert, working on evidence-based policy development including research, interdisciplinary policy analysis, impact assessment, advocacy and international cooperation. Prior to joining QF, Ahmed worked for UNFPA Arab States Regional Office, EU Program on Family and Child Rights and the Egyptian Prime Minister's Office. His broader areas of expertise include politics of social policies, political economy, labour policies, family policies, social justice and protection, migration, social inclusion/exclusion, demography, population dynamics and sustainable development. He led strategic initiatives, delivered consultancies, and managed impact-oriented projects in the mentioned fields. He contributed to

numerous national, regional and international conferences and EGMs. Ahmed is affiliated with the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Bath, UK.

Rosario Esteinou

Rosario Esteinou, PhD., is Professor and Researcher at the Center for Research and Higher Studies in Social Anthropology (Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social) in Mexico City. She is member of the National System of Researchers granted by the National Council of Science and Technology; member of the National Academy of Science and Coordinated its Section of Social Sciences from 2015-2018. Her research focuses on family life, parenting, close relationships, gender differences, and family-oriented policies affecting them in Mexico and Latin America. She has presented on these topics at international forums and has participated at UN's and UNICEF's Expert Group Meetings. Dr. Esteinou has authored, edited, and co-edited several books, including *Intimacies and Cultural Change: Perspectives on Contemporary Mexico*, published in English; and in Spanish, *Multidisciplinary approaches to emotions; Families' new social formation. Assisted reproductive technologies and contemporary issues; Building family relations and strengths*; and authored "The nuclear family in Mexico: connotations about its modernity. From XVI to XX centuries."



Benjamin Freer

Benjamin Freer, PhD, is the Director of the School of Psychology and Counseling and an associate professor of psychology at Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU). He earned his doctorate in Experimental Psychology from the University of Kentucky with a focus on child cognitive development. Dr. Freer's research examines how life experiences can impact children, adults, and families with a specific focus on the response to potentially traumatic events. This research has been published extensively in journals and books, as well as presented to international organizations. He and his colleague, Dr. Steve Dranoff, have recently launched FDU's Center for Empathy Research and Training. The Center's trainings engage and teach individuals to become proactive change agents for societal transformation from a perspective of empathy. Dr. Freer has served on the NGO Committee on the Family-New York since 2012 and concluded a 4-year term as co-chair in 2022. The goal of the NGO Committee on the Family-New York is to "promote, preserve, and protect the well-being of the family" as "stable families are essential for stable communities, stable nations, and a stable world."

Lara Hicks

Lara Hicks is UNANIMA International's Executive Assistant/Assistant UN Representative. She completed a Master of Public Administration degree in 2021 and earned a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations in 2020 as a University Scholar from Syracuse University. While completing her graduate coursework, Lara interned with UNANIMA International and contributed to climate-displacement research and advocacy efforts for events such as the UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues. Before her time at UNANIMA International, Lara served as the Assistant Manager for Adult and Family Programs for a refugee resettlement non-profit organization and interned with the U.S. Trade Representative African Affairs Office.

**Margo Hilbrecht**

Dr. Margo Hilbrecht is the Executive Director at Canada's Vanier Institute of the Family, a national charitable organization dedicated to activating and sharing knowledge of family diversities and wellbeing. A family scholar, Margo completed her Ph.D. in Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, where she studied time use and wellbeing of parents with non-standard work schedules. She has written and co-authored academic articles and reports about gender differences in quality of life related to time use, leisure, work-life integration, and the social and health consequences of changing employment practices. Margo has more than 20 years' experience in the academic and non-profit sectors, including as a

Senior Research Associate with the Centre for Families, Work and Wellbeing (University of Guelph), where she focused on parents' experiences of telework and self-employment and their effect on the quality of family life. As Associate Director of Research at the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (University of Waterloo), she conducted research with academic, local government, and not-for-profit partners on wellbeing in diverse communities across Canada. Before joining the Vanier Institute of the Family, Margo was the Academic Director of Greo, a knowledge translation and exchange organization. She worked with an extensive network of national and international researchers to share evidence about preventing and reducing harm from gambling, including its impact on family wellbeing and older adults' quality of life. She has an Adjunct appointment in the Faculty of Health, University of Waterloo.



Juan Antonio Lopez Baljarg

Juan Antonio Lopez Baljarg is the Managing Director of the Institute for Analysis of family policy, from where he has promoted family laws and policies for the Federal Government, Senate of the Republic, Chamber of Deputies, 6 State Governments, 12 Local Congresses and more than 30 municipalities. He holds a master degree in government and Public Policies from “Universidad Panamericana” with specialty in Government of Institutions from “Universidad Complutense de Madrid” and a bachelor of communication from “Universidad Anáhuac” Member of the Ethics Comitee of “TV Azteca” (second-largest mass media company in Mexico.) He is a Counselor and adviser in politics

and social matters at “Consejo de la Comunicación”, “Unión Nacional de Padres de Familia” and “Educación con Rumbo” (Civil Society Organizations that promote social causes, each within their area). In 2021 he was recognized by the magazine “Campaigns and Elections” as one of the “50 young men who hold the country in their hands”. He has participated as representative of the civil society and the Government of México at the United Nations (UN) and at the Organization of American States (OAS). He is a lecturer, columnist and teacher in matters of government, civil society and family.

Jean Quinn, DW

Jean Quinn, DW is the Executive Director of UNANIMA International, the Chair of the NGO Committee for Social Development, and a member of the International Congregation of the Daughters of Wisdom. Originally a nurse by profession, Jean has studied Family Therapy, Addiction Studies, and Social Housing Studies with the Irish Council for Social Housing. She also studied Theology and Philosophy with Milltown Institute in Dublin. Jean has spent a vast number of years working with the homeless in Dublin and is the Founder of Sophia Housing in Ireland. Her vision and leadership brought strength and growth to Sophia, which is now celebrating its 25th year as an organization committed to providing a holistic approach in supporting people, specifically women and children on their journey from homelessness.





Xuefei Ren

Xuefei Ren is an Associate Professor of Sociology and Global Urban Studies at Michigan State University. She studies urban governance from a comparative perspective and has published on urban development in China, India, Brazil, and the U.S. She is the author of three award-winning books—*Building Globalization* (2011, University of Chicago Press), *Urban China* (2013, Polity Press), and *Governing the Urban in China and India* (2020, Princeton University Press). She is a Public Intellectual Fellow of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations. She received her MA in urban planning from Tokyo Metropolitan University and her PhD in sociology from the University of Chicago.

Pragna Rugunanan

Pragna Rugunanan is a Professor and current Head of Department of Sociology at the University of Johannesburg. Her research focuses on the construction of African and South Asian migrant communities to South Africa and migration in the Global South. Her research interests include the sociology of migration, labour studies, family and well-being, migration and digital technologies, urbanisation, social networks, and community studies. Her co-edited book “Migration in Southern Africa” has just been published by Springer Press. She has published on migration, family and well-being, gender, xenophobia, education and citizenship. Her current research is titled ‘Migration, Identities and Trans-continental Linkages: Studying the South Indian Diaspora in South Africa’. She is the past recipient of a number of research grants such as: URC grant 2022; NIHSS Brics Mobility Grant for 2017-8, NRF Thuthuka grantholder post-PHD track 2017 – 2019; 2016 DST-NRF Centre of Excellence in Human Development; NRF Thuthuka grantholder 2012 – 2014. Pragna served on the Executive of the South African Sociological Association and a council member.



Pragna was part of the Editorial Collective for Gender Questions, an accredited journal with the Department of Higher Education, for the period 2018 to 2020. She was Chair of the Faculty of Humanities Higher Degrees Committee for 2018 and 2019 and was the co-chair in 2020. In 2020, she was nominated for the UJ Distinguished Research Leadership Programme, a flagship programme at UJ to develop future research leaders.

Rugunanen was invited to join the Canadian Excellence Research Chair in Migration at Ryerson University, Toronto, as a Visiting Professor-CERC Migration Distinguished Scholar for the fall of 2022 (September to November 2022) to work jointly with the CERC team in the wider thematic area 'Southern' Perspectives on Migration and Migrant Integration. She was also invited to the School of Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR) at Cornell University, during 6-8 October 2022, to attend a conference on "Migration, Ethnicity/Race, Gender, and Labor Market Inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa & the Asia-Pacific Region" to foster dialogue and mentor junior faculty members.

Bahira Sherif Trask

Dr. Bahira Sherif Trask 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.



Ignacio Socias

Ignacio Socias is Director of International Relations of the International Federation for Family Development. He holds a Phd in Law, has been CEO of the Grupo de Comunicación Dynamia and Bisel de Comunicación in Spain and has published different books and articles about educational, social and historical topics. He has been visiting professor at more than 12 universities in Europe, America and Asia. On the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (2014), he promoted the Civil Society Declaration,

joined by 27 international entities and 542 representatives of 285 civil society organizations, as

well as officials, academics and others. He has also promoted the global project 'The SDGs and families', with the participation of experts from the five continents and the support of UNICEF and UN-DESA. In addition, he has promoted the global project 'Inclusive Cities for Sustainable Families'. He has also represented IFFD in the European Commission project 'FamiliesAndSocieties' (2013-2017), the largest research carried out in Europe on family issues, and has participated in different high-level events on the family at the European Parliament, the Committee of Regions and the Economic and Social Committee.

Alex Vazquez Alarcon

As the United Nations representative of the International Federation for Family Development, Alex 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 to 2024 he is coordinating, together with other transnationals non-governmental organizations, the Preparations of the 30th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family.



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.



Susan K. Walker

Dr. Walker is Associate Professor Emeritus of Family Social Science at the University of Minnesota. For 40 years Susan has worked in the service of families, primarily in parenting education and early childhood research, practice and policy. She is a former state Extension Specialist in Family Life and Human Development at the University of Maryland and recently retired from Minnesota where for 10 years she directed the licensed Parent and Family Education teacher preparation and Masters of Education graduate program. Her specialty bridges family life, and technology. In 2021, Dr. Walker prepared a background report and presented on Technology and the Family for

the United Nations Year of the Family. While at Minnesota, she created the course, Critical Perspectives on Technology and the Family, and will launch an open textbook under the same title this fall. Her research on technology integration in parenting education includes professional readiness, including their experiences adopting face to face programs to online delivery during COVID. Her international work includes consulting with the University of Iceland and Education University of Hong Kong.