


COMMISSION for SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

United Nations Headquarters, New York

Bios of Speakers

High-level Panel discussion on the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF)+30

Wednesday, 7 February, 10:00 am-1:00 pm, Conference room 4

Moderator:

Mr. John Wilmoth



Mr. John Wilmoth is the Officer-in-Charge of the Division for Inclusive Social Development. He joined the United Nations following a distinguished academic career, lastly as Professor at the Department of Demography of the University of California at Berkeley. He has also previously served in the Population Division as Chief of the Mortality Section from 2005 to 2007 and is currently the Director of the Population Division.

Mr. Wilmoth is the author or co-author of more than 50 scientific papers examining various aspects of population dynamics and population issues, including the causes of the historical decline of human mortality, prospects for future trends in life expectancy, the impact of population ageing on public pension and healthcare systems, popular perceptions of population growth and its consequences, and methodologies for estimating and projecting demographic trends.

Mr. Wilmoth has also served as a consultant to the World Health Organization and the World Bank from 2009 to 2012, leading the development of new global estimates of maternal mortality. He is a member of the Population Association of America and the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population. He also serves on the editorial boards of some leading demographic journals including Demographic Research and the European Journal of Population.

Ms. Maria Francesca Spatolisano



Ms. Maria-Francesca Spatolisano is the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). She also served in her personal capacity as the Officer-in-Charge and then as the Acting Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology between February 2021 and July 2022.

Ms. Spatolisano has over 30 years of experience in public service including extensive senior leadership in multilateral affairs. She has served as the European Union Ambassador to the OECD and UNESCO, Monaco and Andorra. She was a member of the EU Delegation to the United Nations, serving as the Head of its Economic and Trade Section, covering all issues related to trade, development and environmental policies in the Second Committee and ECOSOC; she also represented the EC to the Fifth Committee.

Before joining the UN, she was responsible for International Organizations and Development Dialogue with other Donors in the European Commission's Directorate General for Development Cooperation. In this capacity, she has assured the EU presence and developed EU positions on development policy in several international fora including the United Nations, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, OECD, G-7 and the G-20. Ms. Spatolisano holds a Doctorate in Law from Florence University, where she then was an assistant professor in public and constitutional law.

Mr. Linton Mchunu



Mr. Linton Mchunu is currently the Acting Director-General of the National Department of Social Development. He previously served as the Chief of Staff, heading the Ministries of Social Development, as well as the Ministry of Small Business Development, having formed part of the establishment team of the latter. Mr. Mchunu leads the department's Social Security reform and he advises the Minister of Social Development on building partnerships with development partners.

His main responsibilities at the Department of Social Development includes leading the development and implementation of a Developmental Social Policy programme, Promotion of the rights of Children, including overseeing the drafting of the Children's Act Amendment Bill, advising the Minister of Social Development on building partnerships with development partners, private sectors and other public sector entities in the realisation of the mandate of the Department of Social Development. In addition, he manages and oversees the performance and financial management of the Department.

Mr. Mchunu has served in the public sector for more than a decade, at various roles, including in the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, the Department of Trade and Industry, where he was focused on socio-economic development initiatives on the African Continent. This is prior to him forming part of the establishment team of the Department of Small Business Development. Mr. Mchunu's interest lie in the development space, as well as social entrepreneurship. He is currently pursuing is Masters Degree in Development Policy and Practice with the University of Cape Town's Nelson Mandela School.

Ms. Bahira Trask



Ms. Bahira Trask is a Professor 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. Recently, Ms. Trask has worked on issues of urbanization and migration from a global perspective. Ms. Trask has authored and edited several 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), as well as having published over 100 peer reviewed articles, chapters, and reports.

Much of Ms. 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. Ms. Trask is a fellow of NCFR, the National Council on Family Relations, she has won the Jan Trost award for excellence in international scholarship and in 2017 she was awarded the University of Delaware Excellence in Teaching Award. In 2022 she received the prestigious Groves Sussman Award for her work in International Family Studies and Policy.

Ms. Zitha Mokomane



Ms. Zitha Mokomane is Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology at the University of Pretoria. She holds an MA and PhD in Demography from the Australian National University. With a particular focus on the global South, her research focuses on family demography, work-family interface, social protection, and social policy. She has authored more than 50 journal articles and book chapters on these broad issues and has edited two books: *Family Matters: Family Cohesion, Values, and Strengthening in South Africa* (HSRC Press, 2019) and *Work-Family Interface in sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges and Responses* (Springer Publishing, 2014). Over the last 15 years, D Mokomane has worked closely with various United Nations agencies and other international organisations and has been invited to present at a number of Expert Group meetings on family issues around the world. Many of the recommendations of her research and collaboration with international organisations have been incorporated into global, regional, and national policies aimed at enhancing family well-being, work-family reconciliation, and improving access to social protection.

Ms. Susan Walker



Susan 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, education and technology.

In 2021, Ms. Walker prepared a background report and presented on Technology and the Family for the United Nations Year of the Family. While at the University of Minnesota, she created the course, *Critical Perspectives on Technology and the Family*, and launched an open textbook in fall of 2022. Her research on technology integration in parenting education includes professional 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.