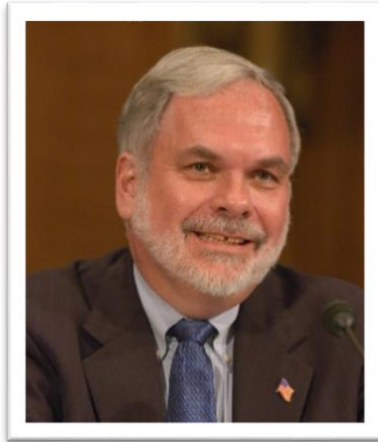


Get to know the speakers:

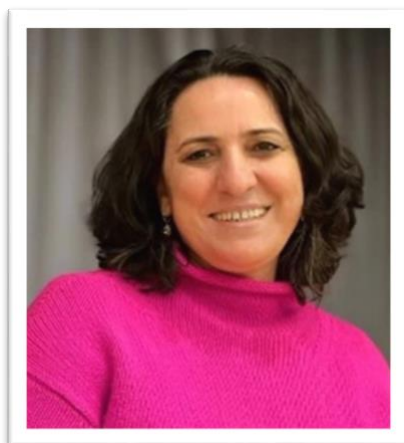


William T. Smith, Ph.D.

Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing

William T. Smith, Ph.D., is the Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing and is President/Chief Executive Officer of Aging in America, Inc. Dr. Smith has been in the field of social work since 1971, with the last forty-eight years dedicated to the field of gerontology. Nationally recognized as an expert on gerontological issues, Dr. Smith was formerly the Executive Director of St. Cabrini Nursing Home in Dobbs Ferry, New York, for thirteen years. He has served as an Assistant Professor of Public Health Administration at Pace University and an Adjunct Professor in the School of Social Services at Fordham University. Dr. Smith, whose doctorate in Social Work with a concentration in

Gerontology is from Fordham University, has also earned a Master's in Social Work in Administration/Case Work from Hunter College and a Bachelor of Science in Family and Child Welfare Services from the University of Wisconsin. He is a member of the National Association of Social Workers, the Gerontological Society of America, and the American College of Health Care Administrators. He served as a member of the Federal Advisory Committee on the Future of VA Long Term Care. He was a member of the Board of Directors and Past Chair of LeadingAge in Washington, D.C. and serves as their liaison to the United Nations. He chairs the Board of Directors of Cardinal McCloskey Community Services and continues to serve as a long-standing board member of the Westchester Public and Private Partnership.



Arjanita (Ariana) Elezaj

Chair of the UNIDOP 2025 Programme sub-Committee in the NGO Committee on Ageing in New York

Arjanita (Ariana) Elezaj is a former journalist and community activist with 30+ years of experience in program development, advocacy, diversity and inclusion, and community building. Ariana's expertise includes human rights, women's and children's rights, geriatric care, and nonprofit leadership. She is a pioneer of innovating new programming for New York City older adult centers and Albanian American women's organizations. At the United Nations, Ariana serves on the

board of directors for the NGO Committee on Ageing and the NGO Committee on Human Rights. She has been an active member of the Women's Guild Secretarial Chapter for many years. She is the leading UN representative of the International Federation of Settlement Houses and Neighborhood Centers, a global organization with full ECOSOC consultative status. For several years, she has served as a board member of the Albanian American Women's Organization "Motrat Qiriazhi," one of the oldest organizations serving Albanian Women in the U.S. Additionally, she is a Board Member of the Community Research Fellowship Training Program at the NYU School of Global Public Health. She is a former journalist of the People's Voice Newspaper, based in Tirana, Albania, and continues her freelance writing in the U.S., highlighting issues that impact

the community, as well as the NYC population she serves. Arjanita possesses extensive experience in fostering community partnerships that enhance civic engagement and elevate the visibility of initiatives aimed at improving the lives of youth and older adults. Currently, Arjanita works at the New York City Department for the Aging in the position of Director of Direct Services after serving for several years as Deputy Director of Older Adult Services at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, a Settlement House serving New Yorkers in need. Arjanita is a public speaker, and through her charitable work, she continues to work with Albanian American organizations based in New York to empower people to run for political positions and build community relationships. She is a researcher providing support on a groundbreaking study addressing intimate partner relationship experiences amongst Albanian Women in the US. Arjanita holds a *Master of Public Policy Administration (MPA)* degree from John Jay College of Criminal Justice, a bachelor's degree from Tirana State University in Economics and Business Reporting, including certificates in Nonprofit Leadership from Baruch College and Empowered Aging from Columbia Law School Advocacy Institute. She is a fellow of New York University's Center for Anti-Racism, Social Justice, and Public Health. Arjanita resides in Manhattan with her two children and mother, and through her activism and charitable work, she continues the legacy of her late husband Deda. For the second consecutive year, she is chairing the United Nations International Day of Older Persons (UNIDOP 2025), following her previous role as co-chair.



Christopher Hanway

Co-Chair of the UNIDOP 2025 Programme sub-Committee in the NGO Committee on Ageing in New York

Since 2014, Christopher Hanway has served as the Executive Director of Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement, a community-based social service organization in Long Island City, Queens, which annually serves thousands of public housing residents and their families, including hundreds of older adults. Before that, he served as the organization's Director of Development & Communications for five years. Mr. Hanway has over 23 years of professional experience in the not-for-profit sector, most notably at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center, the Institute for Classical Architecture,

and the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. He received his B.A. from Hunter College of the City University of New York and his Master's degree in Public Administration from Baruch College, where he currently serves as an Adjunct Instructor. He sits on several boards, including United Neighborhood Houses of New York, the Chhaya Community Development Corporation, and the International Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers, a worldwide organization with full ECOSOC consultative status. Mr. Hanway is the immediate past Chair of the NGO Committee on Migration, which advocates at the United Nations and other international organizations on behalf of migrants, refugees, and asylees worldwide, and serves on the Executive Committee of the NGO Committee on Aging in New York. He is also the Chair of the NGO Committee on Aging's Global Alliances subcommittee. Chris has a particular interest in connecting the work of local, place-based nonprofits, such as Riis Settlement, with international social justice and solidarity movements. A lifelong New Yorker, Chris resides in Manhattan with his partner and 10-year-old son.



Wendy Gerbier
Mezzo Soprano | Classical Singer & National Anthem
Ambassador

Wendy Gerbier, a United States National Anthem Ambassador, is a mezzo-soprano with a captivating three-octave range. She has performed across the United States and internationally, with highlights including former President of the United States Barack Obama's "Moving America Forward" rally, the inauguration of the Governor of the State of Connecticut, Dannel Malloy, and solo concerts in London, United Kingdom, and Paris, France. Renowned for her rich, expressive voice and commanding stage presence, Ms. Gerbier continues to inspire audiences worldwide.



H.E. Mr. Francisco Fabián Tropepi
Permanent Representative of the Argentina to the
United Nations

Ambassador Francisco Fabián Tropepi was born on 23 October 1974 in Olavarría, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina. A career diplomat, he holds a Bachelor's Degree in International Relations from the Universidad del Salvador (1999). He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina in 2007, serving in a range of senior positions both at headquarters and abroad. Early in his career, he worked in the Directorate for Bordering Countries, covering Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay, and later in the General Directorate of Bilateral Latin American Policy. He subsequently held postings at the Argentine Embassy in Mexico, where he served as Head of the Political Section (2010–2014), and at the Embassy of Argentina in the Russian Federation, where he was Head of the Political Section from 2014 to 2018. Following his return to Buenos Aires, he

served in the Cabinet of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs (2018) and as Director of Intermediate Organizations and Public Diplomacy (2019). He was later posted to the Embassy of Argentina in the State of Israel, where he served as Deputy Chief of Mission (2020–2022) and Chargé d'Affaires a.i. (2022–2024). In 2024, he was appointed Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Argentina in the United States. Ambassador Tropepi's academic work includes a promotion thesis titled "*The Control System of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and Argentina's Foreign Policy*", for which he received the highest grade (2018). He is fluent in English and Portuguese, has working knowledge of Italian, and a basic level of Russian. He is married and has two children.



H.E. Ms. Paula Narvaez Ojeda

Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, Chair of the Group of Friends of Older Persons in New York

Before her latest appointment, Ms. Narváez served as the Officer-in-Charge at the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in Guatemala from February to May 2022. She also served as Socio-Political Adviser at the UN Women Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean from October 2021 to February 2022 and as Regional Adviser for Governance and Political Participation in the same office from 2018 to 2020.

Between 2016 and 2018, Ms. Narváez served as Minister Secretary General of Government, and she had also been a Presidential Adviser from 2014 to 2016. From 2012 to 2014, she served as a Program Specialist for the Latin America and Caribbean Section at UN Women, based in New York. Following the eruption of the Chaitén Volcano in Chile in May 2008, Ms. Narváez served as the delegate of then-President Michelle Bachelet to the Chaitén Volcano Emergency from 2008 to 2009. She has also held several other Government positions. Ms. Narváez earned a master's degree in Latin American Studies from Georgetown University in the United States; a master's degree in economics and regional management from the Universidad Austral de Chile; and a degree in psychology from the Universidad Nacional Andrés Bello, also in Chile.



H.E. Mr. Abdulaziz Alwasil

Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations, Chair of the Group of Friends on Ageing and Sustainable Development

H.E. Ambassador Abdulaziz Alwasil assumed the role of Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations Headquarters in New York in July 2022, following his tenure as Ambassador & Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office in Geneva since November 2016. Prior to joining the diplomatic service, Ambassador Alwasil held diverse positions in both the public and private sectors. His career commenced as a

college lecturer in Riyadh and an assistant lecturer in the United States of America. In 1999, Ambassador Alwasil embarked on his diplomatic journey, focusing extensively on multilateral and human rights affairs. He served as Deputy Head of Mission at Saudi Arabia's Embassy in London for over three years and undertook assignments in Australia, London, and Geneva. Ambassador Alwasil has an extensive educational background, holding a PhD in International Relations, a Master's Degree in Political Science, and a Bachelor's Degree in Arabic language and literature.



Amal Abou Rafeh

Chief of the Programme on Ageing Section, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York

Amal Abou Rafeh serves as the Chief of the Programme on Ageing Section at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in New York. In this role, she oversees the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing, including coordinating the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Amal served on the Secretariat of the General Assembly Open-ended Working Group on Ageing from 2018 to 2024 and is currently a member of the Steering Group for the Titchfield City Group on Ageing-related Statistics and Age-disaggregated Data. She facilitates the work of the United Nations Inter-Agency Group on

Ageing as its permanent co-Chair. She contributes to the "Duties to the Future" Inter-Agency Group, which examines the concepts of future generations and intergenerational equity within the United Nations system. Since joining the United Nations in 2001, Amal has worked in social policy, sustainable development, and demography. Her notable roles include serving on the Secretariats of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002) and the High-level Meeting on Youth (2011). Beyond the United Nations, she was a member of the World Economic Forum Global Future Council on Healthy Ageing and Longevity from 2020 to 2021. Before her career at the United Nations, Amal lectured on social and demographic data analysis at the American University of Beirut. Amal's contributions have been recognized with the 2022 Rosalie Wolf Memorial Award from the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse. She holds a Master of Science in Population Studies from the American University of Beirut and has received the prestigious Penrose Award. Originally from Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Amal is a proud mother to a son.

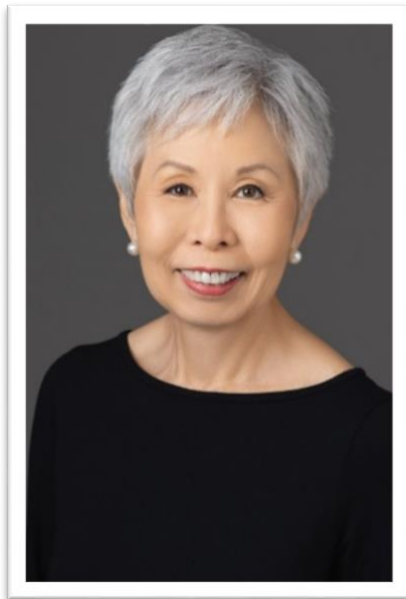


Serge Kapto

Policy Specialist for South-South and Triangular Cooperation, UNDP

Serge Kapto currently serves as a Policy Specialist for South-South and Triangular Cooperation at the UNDP. Prior to that, Serge worked on inter-agency collaboration to strengthen the UN System's capacities for integrated policy approaches, thereby accelerating the achievement of the SDGs. Before the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, Serge played an active role in supporting worldwide consultations on what would become the new global priorities for sustainable development, particularly in governance and institutional capacity (SDG16). Subsequently, he covered issues related to data and indicators for implementing and measuring the SDGs, including support for data and statistics on ageing. Earlier in his career with UNDESA

and UNDP, Serge focused on providing technical assistance and policy support in the field of information and communication technologies for development, with a particular emphasis on strengthening e-governance and enhancing parliamentary ICT capacity.

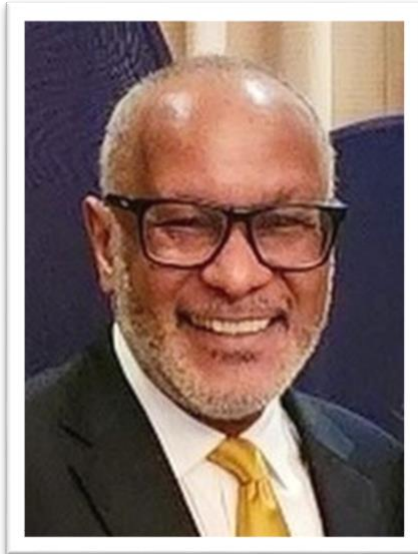


Jeanette C. Takamura, Ph.D., MSW

Professor of Social Work; Dean Emerita of the Faculty of Social Work

Jeanette C. Takamura, PhD, MSW, is Professor of Leadership, Management, and Social Entrepreneurship (Division Chair), Social Policy, and Gerontology at Columbia University School of Social Work, and a senior associate at the Columbia Workplace Center. She was Dean of the Faculty of the Columbia School of Social Work for 15 years. A U.S. Senate-confirmed Assistant Secretary for Aging in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) from 1997-2001, Dr. Takamura has served on numerous international, national, and state boards and commissions and has been a member of the faculties of three U.S. universities. She has also served in executive positions in state health and aging departments and for a nonprofit organization. Commendations and awards

received by Dr. Takamura include the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbons from the Government of Japan, the Lucy Stone Achievement Award from the White House for her advocacy and policy work related to women, the U.S. DHHS Secretary's Distinguished Service Award, and the University of Hawaii's Distinguished Alumna Award. She is an elected Fellow of the National Academy of Social Insurance, the National Academy of Public Administration, and the New York Academy of Medicine, and was named a Pioneer by the National Association of Social Workers. Dr. Takamura has led or co-led initiatives in the Middle East and Asia and has been an invited keynote speaker at national and international conferences. The ADvancing States Association, which represents the nation's state departments and agencies on aging and disabilities, annually bestows an award named in her honor to an exemplary national leader in long term care and caregiving policies. Her commitment is to preparing and supporting promising next generation leaders who will work with dedication to bring forth humane, just communities and organizations for persons of all ages within our diverse global societies.



Edwin L. Walker

Former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Aging U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

With a career spanning over 40 years, Edwin L. Walker has advocated for older Americans, leading the Administration on Aging within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. He guided the development of home and community-based long-term care and elder justice programs, enabling older adults and their caregivers to age with dignity and independence and be free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Prior to his federal service, Walker directed the Missouri Division of Aging, overseeing comprehensive services for older adults and individuals with disabilities. In March 2024, Walker retired from federal service, leaving a legacy of leadership in aging policy and program development. Currently, Walker serves in advisory capacities with numerous organizations, including the board of trustees of the Next50

Foundation; representative of the National Council on Aging to the Executive Committee of the NGO Committee on Ageing to the United Nations, New York; the advisory boards of Cumulus, Care, Inc., and the Gerontological Society of Aging's National Center to Reframe Aging Growth and Sustainability; and the boards of directors of NCBA, Inc., the Alliance for Aging Research, and Aging While Black. He holds a Juris Doctor from the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Law and a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Media Arts from Hampton University.



Edilia Camargo Villarreal, Ph.D

Former UNESCO Population Education Programme Specialist in Africa, Latin America and the Arab States, and Master Athlete Women 85-89 Category

Edilia Villarreal was born in Panama on July 11, 1938. She holds a Doctorate in Philosophy from the University of Bordeaux-Montaigne in France. She has served as a Philosophy Professor at the University of Panama and has been a visiting professor in the Sociology Department at the University of Antananarivo in Madagascar. Additionally, Dr. Villarreal, worked as a Programme Specialist at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris, focusing on Philosophy and Culture, and acted as a Liaison Officer for the Social Sciences at the UNESCO Liaison Office to the UN in New York. Her leadership includes involvement in UNESCO's Operational Programme in collaboration with UNFPA, where he supervised 17 Population Education Programs in Africa, the

Arab States, and Latin America. She also served as the Principal Technical Advisor for a National

Project on Population Education in partnership with UNESCO, UNFPA, and the Malagasy Government, based in Antananarivo. She is also associated with the Academy of Philosophy of Panama and is a published author with works available on Amazon Kindle, including the book "Violencia Dulce," and is revered as a Master Athlete



Gary A. Officer

Founder and CEO of CWI Labs, President and CEO of CWI Works, and Board Member of the Milken Institute Center for the Future of Aging

Gary A. Officer is a seasoned social entrepreneur and Chief Executive. He is known for innovative, value-driven public-private partnerships that remove barriers to community development. Gary is currently the President and CEO of the Center for Workforce Inclusion, the largest and most experienced nonprofit dedicated exclusively to workplace inclusion and economic opportunity for low-income, older job seekers. Gary previously served in senior executive positions at the Newseum and the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars in Washington DC. From 2006-2013, he served as the President and Chief Executive Officer at Rebuilding Together, Inc., the nation's largest volunteer-based homeownership preservation non-profit, and fourth-largest remodeler. Under his leadership, Rebuilding Together grew its operating income sevenfold and created award-winning partnerships with blue-chip corporate brands in support of the organization's mission. Gary has served as President of the National Credit Union Foundation (NCUF), the national foundation supporting credit union development in the United States. As an affiliate of the Credit Union National Association, NCUF promotes and manages credit union development and consumer savings programs on behalf of CUNA and the US credit union movement. The Foundation also manages the National Development Education Volunteer Program. During his tenure at NCU, Mr. Officer successfully grew a community investment fund to provide grants, loans and, secondary capital, to credit unions and related organizations throughout the United States. Gary earned a Bachelor of Arts (Hon) in Political Science from the Manchester Metropolitan University and a Master of Science MSc (Econ) in International Relations from the London School of Economics. In 2012, he completed the Advanced Management and Leadership Program (OAMLP) at the Said Business School at Oxford University.

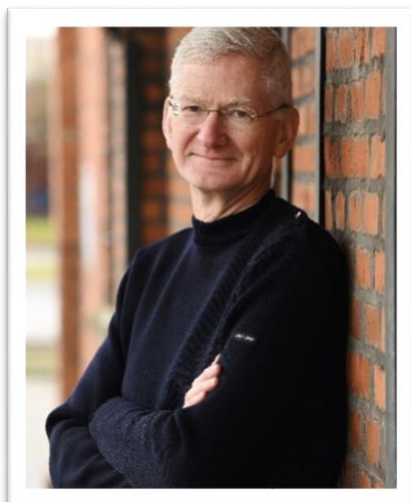


Dr. Howard Tucker

Neurologist and Adjunct Professor at Case Western University

Dr. Howard Tucker, a neurologist from Cleveland, Ohio, celebrated his 103rd birthday in July 2025. Recently named the “Oldest Practicing Doctor” by Guinness World Records, Dr. Tucker was teaching medical residents and treating patients throughout the pandemic at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center. Dr. Tucker currently teaches medical and law students at Case Western Reserve University. Prior to Case Western Reserve and St. Vincent, Dr. Tucker practiced neurology for many decades at University Hospitals and served as Chief of Neurology at Hillcrest Hospital. Dr. Tucker

is also a Fellow of the American Academy of Neurology. In addition to practicing medicine for over 75 years, Dr. Tucker was one of the oldest individuals to receive a law degree and pass the Ohio Bar Exam in his late 60s. Having served in the U.S. Navy during World War II, Dr. Tucker would later serve as Chief of Neurology for the Atlantic Fleet during the Korean War. Dr. Tucker attended The Ohio State University for his undergraduate studies, where he was named Phi Beta Kappa, and received his M.D. from The Ohio State University College of Medicine. When not working, Dr. Tucker enjoys spending time with his wife, Sue, a 92-year-old psychiatrist, their four children, and ten grandchildren, as well as snowshoeing, exercising, and watching Cleveland sports. After turning 100, Dr. Tucker became a viral social media sensation and a Webby Award-winner with over 70 million views, sharing his thoughts on neurology, longevity, aging, and retirement. He is also the star of the feature documentary “*What’s Next?*” Produced by his grandson, Austin Tucker, and directed and produced by Taylor Taglianetti.



Jürgen Gafke

Senior Programme Management Officer, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York

Mr. Jürgen Gafke is responsible for providing capacity-building support to Member States to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into national strategies and plans, as well as for SDG localization, including Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs). Mr. Jürgen Gafke has worked since 1996 for the United Nations in the areas of capacity development, programme planning, budget and finance, and ICT in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in Thailand, the United Nations Assistance to the Khmer Rouge Trials in Cambodia, and the Department of Management in New York.

Previously, Mr. Jürgen Gafke worked in the private sector, developing ICT solutions at Siemens in Germany. Mr. Jürgen Gafke holds a master's in mathematics.



Tanvi Patel
Global Gender Policy Adviser at HelpAge International

Tanvi is the Global Gender and Inclusion Policy Adviser at HelpAge International, with over a decade of experience in programme and advocacy across development and humanitarian contexts. She collaborates with colleagues and HelpAge global network members to mainstream gender and inclusion in their programmes and advocacy, amplifying the voices of older people, particularly older women, and promoting a gender-responsive and intersectional approach to inclusion. Her work focuses on advancing gender equality, rights, health, income security, and protection from discrimination. Tanvi recently co-authored HelpAge's Investing in Equality report, which quantified the lack of funding for older women

in international development. She holds a Law degree and a master's in international relations and diplomacy, specialising in African politics and international law, and is deeply committed to advancing equality and human rights for all.



Masumi Ono
**Chief of Social Inclusion and Participation Branch,
 United Nations Department for Economic and Social
 Affairs, New York**

As Chief of the Social Inclusion and Participation Branch (SIPB) 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 an MBA and a BA (Economics) from Cornell University (USA).