

COMMISSION for SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

United Nations Headquarters, New York



Bios of Speakers

High-level Panel Discussion on the Priority Theme

“How can social policies become more effective in achieving inclusive, resilient and equitable societies that leave no one behind?”

Monday, 5 February 2024, 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm, Conference Room 4

Moderator:
Mr. Danilo Türk



Danilo Türk is a former President of Slovenia. He is also currently serving as the President of Club de Madrid.

He graduated from the University of Ljubljana in 1975 with a degree in law and later obtained his PhD with a thesis on the principle of non-intervention in international law in 1982.

President Türk became Director of the Institute on International Law at the University of Ljubljana in 1983. Additionally, he was a member of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, a UN body of independent experts. In that capacity he served, between 1986 and 1992, as the UN Special Rapporteur on the realization of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In 1990-1991, Türk took part in the drafting of the Constitution of Slovenia by preparing the draft chapter related to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

From 1992 to 2000, he became the first Slovene Permanent Representative to the UN in New York, and represented Slovenia on the UN Security Council in 1998 and 1999. In 2000, he was invited by Kofi Annan, then Secretary-General, to serve as UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs (2000-2005). In 2005, he returned to Slovenia as Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Ljubljana.

He was elected as President in 2007 as an independent, being supported by several political parties. Dr. Türk chaired the Global High Level Panel on Water and Peace between 2015 and 2016, which published the report “A Matter of Survival” (2017). In 2016, he was one of the candidates for the post of the Secretary-General of the UN. Since 2013, has been a Member of Club de Madrid and, in October 2019, he was elected by the General Assembly as the organization’s President for the period 2020-2022. In 2022, Türk was named one of the 12 Eminent individuals invited to be part of the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism Comprises, which will be asked to build on the ideas in Our Common Agenda to make concrete suggestions for more effective multilateral arrangements across a range of key global issues.

Ms. Nora Lustig



Nora Lustig is a Samuel Z. Stone Professor of Latin American Economics and the founding Director of the Commitment to Equity Institute (CEQ) at Tulane University and resident fellow with the Georgetown University Americas Institute. She is also a Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, the Center for Global Development, the Inter-American Dialogue, and the Paris School of Economics. Professor Lustig’s research is on economic development, inequality, and social policies with emphasis on Latin America. Her recent publication Commitment to Equity Handbook: Estimating the Impact of Fiscal Policy on Inequality and Poverty is a step-by-step guide to assessing the impact of taxation and social spending on inequality and poverty in developing countries. Prof. Lustig is the President of the Society for the Study of Economic Inequality (ECINEQ) and President Emeritus of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic Association (LACEA). She serves on the editorial board of the Journal of Economic Inequality. In November 2021, she was recognized with the Tulane University Innovation Award. She received her doctorate in Economics from the University of California, Berkeley.

H.E. Ms. Valérie Berset Bircher



Valérie Berset Bircher is the Head of International Labour Affairs, Labour Directorate, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs of Switzerland. She holds a PhD in law from the University of Geneva and from the University of Strasbourg (France). Her PhD focused on the impact of new technologies on labour law (international law – labour law – human rights - comparative law).

Valérie Berset Bircher has in-depth knowledge of international labor law issues. Valérie Berset Bircher deals with issues related to the global supply chain, sustainability, social responsibility of the company, international labor regulations and social partnership. She represents Switzerland in the International Labor Organization and in the United Nations (UNO) with regard to economy, finance and development. She was in charge of the SECO portfolio of Swiss-ILO technical cooperation projects. Valérie Berset Bircher is a member of two federal committees: the Federal Commission for the Advisory Board of the National Contact Point for the OECD and the Tripartite Commission for ILO Affairs.

In January 2019, she was appointed Ambassador by the Federal Council and Head of the International Labor Affairs at SECO. In 2019, she chaired the legal section of the ILO Governing Body. Since 2020, she co-chairs the democratization process at the ILO.

Ms. Eleni Nikolaidou



Since 2015, Eleni Nikolaidou has been the Expert Minister Counselor, Director, Development Cooperation Policy, Hellenic Aid, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece.

She has also served as Special Adviser to various Ministers and Deputy Ministers: Minister of Economy, Transport and Communications, Education, Foreign Affairs (2007-2020). She has been Head of International Relations Department at the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV) and before she was Senior Consultant at the KPMG Peat Marwick, Greece.

Ms. Nikolaidou has been a Financial Economist at Crown Agents for Oversea Governments and Administration in London and participated in the implementation of complex programmes in developing countries. She started her career as Economist at the Bank of Cyprus in Nicosia, advising investors and exporters on export and investment opportunities in the Middle East.

Ms. Nikolaidou studied Economics at the University of London and holds an M.A. Degree on International Business and Economic Development from the University of Reading, as well as an M.A. Degree in Accounting and Finance from the London School of Economics, University of London.

Ms. Gloria Reyes



Ms. Gloria Reyes is a lawyer and the General Director of Supérate Programme, Dominican Republic.

She pursued postgraduate studies in Political Science at the Catholic University of Santo Domingo. Additionally, she holds master's degrees in International Law from Complutense University of Madrid, and in Microfinance and Social Development from the University of Alcalá and the ClIFF Foundation. She was part of the USAID/INTEC Leadership and Political Management Program, 2010 cohort, and has undertaken other studies in Political Communication, Political Advertising and Marketing, and Electoral Campaign Management.

Her academic background includes training in Political Empowerment of Women in Israel. She participated in the FES New York 2018 Fall Academy on 'Transforming Realities: Opportunities and Challenges in the UN Sustainable Development Agenda for Social Progress and Democracy' in New York, as well as in the Ministerial Workshop on China's Development Experience for Developing Countries in China in 2018.

High level engagement at the First Regional Dialogue of Latin America and the Caribbean for a road to equality-30 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

At the Barna Business School, she completed the Public Management Leadership Program (2017-2018) and later, to enhance her global perspective, participated in the International Week at Georgetown University.

Currently, she is the president of the Make a Difference Foundation, a non-profit organization working in areas such as political training, technical training, research, technology, sexual and reproductive education, sports, culture, ecotourism, environmental protection, as well as providing support in financing and guidance to young entrepreneurs.

Ms. Sabina Alkire



Sabina Alkire is the Professor of Poverty and Human Development and directs the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) at the University of Oxford. Previously, she worked at the George Washington University, Harvard University, the Human Security Commission, and the World Bank. She has a DPhil in Economics from the University of Oxford.

Together with Professor James Foster, Sabina developed the Alkire-Foster (AF) method for measuring multidimensional poverty, a flexible technique that can incorporate different dimensions, or aspects of poverty, to create measures tailored to each context. With colleagues at OPHI this has been applied and implemented empirically to produce a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). The MPI offers a tool to identify who is poor by considering the range of deprivations they suffer. It is used to report a headline figure of poverty (the MPI), which can be unpacked to provide a detailed information platform for policy design showing how people are poor nationally, and how they are poor by areas, groups, and by each indicator.

Sabina holds a DPhil in Economics, a MSc in Economics for Development and a MPhil in Christian Political Ethics from University of Oxford, a BA in Sociology Cognate and Pre-Medical Studies from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Her research interests cover topics such as multidimensional poverty measurement and analysis, welfare economics, the capability approach, and the measurement of freedoms and human development. Her most recent publications focus on the multidimensional poverty index and its multifaceted aspects.