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Department of
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Expert Group Meeting
on
“Rethinking social development policies and frameworks”

UNDESA, Division for Inclusive Social Development

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Profiles of Speakers



Haroon Borat is a Professor of Economics at the University of Cape Town (UCT), and the Director of the Development Policy Research Unit (DPRU). He obtained his PhD in Economics through Stellenbosch University, studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and was a Cornell University research fellow.

Professor Borat is currently a member of the Presidential Economic Advisory Council (PEAC), established in 2019 by President Ramaphosa to generate new ideas for economic growth and job creation in South Africa. He served as an economic advisor to former Minister of Finance Pravin Gordhan, and to former Presidents Thabo Mbeki and Kgalema Motlanthe, formally serving on the Presidential Economic Advisory Panel. He was also an advisor on the South African Parliament’s High-Level Panel on Acceleration of Change and Transformation.

In terms of his public policy roles, Professor Borat has been or is currently a member of numerous international committees and panels, including the Advisory Board of the UNDP’s 2020 Human Development Report, and the World Bank’s Advisory Board of the Commission on Global Poverty. He served as a board member for the Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP), and currently sits on the boards of the UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) and the International Economics Association (IEA). He is regularly consulted by Ratings Agencies, as well as local and international investors on both South African and African growth and market dynamics.

Professor Borat is that rare breed of economist who is adept at moving seamlessly between high level engagements with leaders in the private sector, public service, and academia. He has an h-index of 48, ranking him as one of the most cited African economists globally. His work has been hugely influential in policy making in Africa, and he continues to be called on by private and public sector leaders regarding matters of economic growth and development.



Bea Cantillon is an Emeritus Professor at the Herman Deleeck Centre for Social Policy, University of Antwerp with expertise in the collecting and processing of survey data, the development of social indicators, the application of simulation models, and the interpretation of socioeconomic data in temporal and international comparative perspective.

She studied political and social sciences at the University of Antwerp and at the Catholic University of Leuven. In 1979 she became a researcher at the Center for Social Policy Herman Deleeck at the University of Antwerp, of which she has been the director since 1995. She was also Vice Rector of the University of Antwerp from 2004 to 2008. She was

awarded a Doctorate honoris causa by UCLouvain Saint-Louis Brussels and the Van Doorn Chair at the Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences in Rotterdam. She lectures at the University of Antwerp on the welfare state, poverty, social inequality and social policy in Belgium and in Europe. She has published, among other things, on the consequences of socio-demographic changes for social security, on social indicators, on social federalism and on social policy in Europe. She also worked as an advisor to the Belgian government.

Between 1995 and 1999 she served as a co-opted senator in the Senate for the Christian People's Party (CVP). She then served from 2000 to 2002 on the Cantillon Commission on Reforming the Social Security of the Self-Employed. She is full member of the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts and corresponding fellow of the British Academy. In addition, in 1995 she became chairman of the management committee of the Federal Agency for Child Benefits, member of the High Council for Employment, and member of the Expert Committee for the Pension Reform 2020-2040. In January 2018, she became the chairwoman of Dome of International Solidarity (formerly NCOS). Currently she is the chair of the governmental High Expert Committee on Just Transition.



Vidya Diwakar is the Deputy Director of the Chronic Poverty Advisory Network (CPAN) and a Research Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). She is a mixed-methods researcher and policy analyst with over a decade of experience working in international development research at universities and think tanks.

Vidya's work focuses on gender-disaggregated drivers of poverty escapes, including the role of human development as a means of sustained poverty reduction. She also researches the ways in which armed conflict and intersecting crises can drive impoverishment and create poverty traps, as well as policy and programming responses to reduce poverty, inequality and vulnerability in challenging contexts.

Vidya has successfully fundraised for and led a range of large multi-partner, multi-year policy-oriented research projects on poverty dynamics in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia for international organizations and bi-lateral aid agencies. She has authored and reviewed various reports, book chapters and journal articles, including recently as Guest Editor of a special issue on sustained poverty escapes for *World Development*.

Vidya holds an MPhil in Economics and PhD in Education from the University of Cambridge.



Juliana Martínez Franzoni is a full professor of Political Science at the University of Costa Rica and George Foster Awardee from the Humboldt Foundation for outstanding research careers in developing countries.

Her publications have attracted attention from international specialists, are globally included as standard work on the Latin American welfare state and has informed her advisory role to governments and to international organizations. Her latest book is *The Quest for Universal Social Policy in the South: Actors, Ideas and Architectures* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), co-written with Diego Sánchez-Ancochea (University of Oxford). Her most recent work investigates whether responses to the pandemic have entailed opportunities for social policy change in Central America. She is also researching public opinion towards social protection in Latin American, based on field work in seven countries (with Merike Blofield, U. of Hamburg).

The recognition of her work is also reflected in the prizes and fellowships awarded, including by Fulbright, the Kellogg Institute of International Studies, DesiguALdades-net (Germany), CIEPP (Argentina), and the University of Austin (US).

Juliana's research focuses on welfare regimes, social policy and inequality in Latin America and provides a comprehensive view of the welfare state – including the role of families – in Latin America. She has also focused on the interaction of labor and social policies and closely examined the feedback between women's labor force participation and childcare and developed policy recommendations to reorganize carework in the context of welfare regimes in Latin America. She presides the research work on Poverty, Social Welfare and Social Policy (RC!9) at the International Sociological Association (ISA), is editor of *Social Politics* and undertakes regular consultancies with different international institutions like UNDP and UN-Women.



Santosh Mehrotra is a human development economist, whose research and writings have had most influence in the areas of labour/ employment, skill development, child poverty, and the economics of education. He brings a combination of professional experience: with the Indian government as a policy maker and adviser, with international organisations as a technical expert, having lived on three continents and travelled to 63 countries providing technical advice to governments; and with universities as an academic whose research work has been highly quoted.

He was head of UNICEF's global research programme at Innocenti Research Centre in Florence, Italy (1999-2002) and Chief economist of UNDP's global Human Development Report (2002-2005), New York. Other roles include: Head of the Development Policy Division of India's Planning Commission and Director General of the National Institute of Labour Economics Research (2006-14). Santosh was a Visiting Professor at the Centre for Development, Bath University in the UK and is a Professorial Senior Fellow, Nehru Memorial Museum & Library. Previously he was a Visiting Professor of Economics at the Centre for Labour, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and a Research Fellow, IZA Institute of Labour Economics in Bonn.

Dr. Santosh Mehrotra has an MA in Economics from the New School for Social Research, New School University, New York (1981), and a Phd in Economics from Cambridge University (1985).

He has published 13 books (including 3 with Cambridge University Press, 4 with Oxford University Press, other by Sage, Routledge, Zed Press, Penguin). His books have been translated into French, Spanish and Hindi, and his research paper into Portuguese, German, and Italian.



Despoina Afroditi Milaki is the NGO Representative at the UN for the International Presentation Association (IPA); a Non-Governmental Organization with presence in 20 countries focusing on the rights of women and children, care of the earth and indigenous and tribal peoples and embracing the Sustainable Development Goals.

She earned her Ph.D. in Germany in International Politics. For over ten years she provided policy advice to senior government officials in Greece on International Relations topics. She was also an external consultant at a Law Firm in Uganda, monitoring and keeping ahead of UN advocacy opportunities.

Dr. Milaki is the co-founder of the PraxisBonum global database on good practices, which provides an easily-searchable repository of projects, policies, and activities that have been effectively implemented in various areas at the local, national and international levels.

As the current Chair of the 2024 Civil Society Forum, she works with UN departments, agencies and UN Member States, along with civil society stakeholders to bring the voices of civil society to the UN Commission for Social Development. The Forum sets the tone for a productive, enriching and collaborative dialogue between civil society actors, Governments and UN system organizations.



Shahra Razavi is the Director of the Social Protection Department at the International Labour Organization (since February 2020).

She is a development economist, with more than 25 years of experience working on social policy, social protection, gender and development. Before joining the ILO she was Chief of the Research and Data Section at UN Women, where she directed the research for the entity's major flagship reports, oversaw the gender statistics programme and provided technical support to intergovernmental negotiations.

As Senior Researcher at the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) she coordinated cross-country comparative research programmes at the interface of social policy, social protection, labour markets and the care economy. She obtained her Bsc. from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), and her Msc. and D.Phil/PhD from Oxford University.

She has published extensively on social policy, social protection, gender and work in a development context.



Steven Rood is Fellow-in-Residence at Social Weather Stations (Philippines) and Visiting Fellow at the Australian National University. Rood, an expert on local government, decentralization, and public opinion polling, served as professor of Political Science at the University of the Philippines Baguio from 1981 until joining The Asia Foundation in 1999 as its country representative for the Philippines and Pacific Island Nations until his retirement in 2018. He served as expert and peer reviewer for ESCAP’s 2022 Social Outlook for Asia and the Pacific, “The Workforce We Need.”

Steven Rood is the author of a number of works on the Philippines. He most recently was a co-author of “Sociodemographic Factors, Policy Satisfaction, Perceived Character: What Factors Explain President Duterte’s Popularity?” *Philippine Political Science Journal* (44 (2023) and “Philippine Citizen Attitudes toward Democracy” in Yun-Han Chan, Yu-Tzung Chang, Min-Hua Huang, and Kai-Ping Huang (eds.) *How Asians View Democratic Legitimacy* (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2023). His book, *The Philippines: What Everyone Needs to Know*,“ was published by Oxford University Press in 2019. His work on Muslim Mindanao includes the “Mindanao Case Study” in the Permanent Mission of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the United Nations publication *Self-Determination Handbook on the Prevention and Resolution of Self-Determination Conflicts* (March 2021) and “The Role of International Actors in the Search for Peace in Mindanao,” in Paul D. Hutchcroft, (ed.) *Mindanao: The Long Journey to Peace and Prosperity* (Manila: Anvil Press, 2016).

Rood holds a bachelor’s degree in Political Science from University of Washington and a master’s and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Political Science from Boston University.