



**United Nations**

Department of  
Economic and  
Social Affairs



UNITED NATIONS  
**HUMAN RIGHTS**  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



Permanent Mission of the  
**Argentine Republic**  
**United Nations**  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship

33rd UN International Day of Older Persons

## **“Fulfilling the Promises of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for Older Persons: Across Generations.”**

Monday, 2 October 2023 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM  
ECOSOC Chamber, UN Headquarters, New York

### **Theme:**

This year's overarching theme for the United Nations International Day of Older Persons in 2023 focuses on “Fulfilling the Promises of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Across Generations.” The commemoration will be celebrated by the NGO Committees on Ageing in New York, Geneva and Vienna – each with a unique and complementary approach to the overall theme.

The New York commemoration of the #OlderPersonsDay will highlight the unique needs and experiences of older persons globally in the enjoyment of their rights and in addressing violations. It will also emphasize how fostering equitable reciprocity and solidarity between generations can provide sustainable solutions to fulfill the aspirations of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The outcomes of the 4<sup>th</sup> review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing underscore that age-based discrimination in institutions, attitudes and practices remain rampant. In the absence of human rights norms and standards, particularly to the situation of older persons at the international level, the ability to unpack the complexities and changing nature of discrimination and intersecting forms of inequality across the life course is limited. The work of the International Community around intergenerational solidarity has demonstrated, time and again, through various fora that intergenerational solutions, which are guided by the human rights principles of participation, accountability, non-discrimination and equality, empowerment and legality, can contribute to rekindling the legacy, relevance and activism of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by empowering both youth and older persons to shift the needle of political will towards fulfilling the promises of the Declaration for all people across generations.

**#UNIDOP2023 #OlderPersonsDay**

## Objectives:

The United Nations International Day of Older Persons 2023 is a call to action and opportunity, with globally representative experts offering a multi-stakeholder dialogue on a range of human rights of older persons and as well as on examples of policies that facilitate intergenerational solutions, taking into account a life course approach to equality, freedom and justice for all. Panelists will highlight the importance of intergenerational solidarity guided by the human rights principles in various contexts towards fulfilling the promises of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for people across generations.

### Objectives of UNIDOP 2023 New York Commemoration:

- To increase global knowledge and awareness of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and generate commitments among all stakeholders to strengthen the protection of the human rights of current and future generations of older persons around the world;
- To share and learn from intergenerational models for the protection of human rights around the world; and
- To call on Governments and UN entities to review their current practices with a view to better integrate a life course approach to human rights in their work, and to ensure the active and meaningful participation of all stakeholders, including civil society, national human rights institutions and older persons themselves, in the work on strengthening solidarity among generations and intergenerational partnerships.

## The Programme

Opening Session	<p><b>William Smith</b>, Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing in New York</p> <p><b>Christopher Hanway</b>, Chair of the UNIDOP 2023 Programme sub-Committee in the NGO Committee on Ageing in New York</p>
Welcome Remarks	<p><b>H.E. Paula Narvaez Ojeda</b>, Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, Chair of the Group of Friends of Older Persons in New York</p> <p><b>H.E. Fabián Oddone</b>, Deputy Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations</p> <p><b>Volker Türk</b>, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (Video)</p>
Update from the Co-facilitators	<p><b>H.E. Anna Paula Zacarias</b>, Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations</p> <p><b>H.E. Sérgio França Danese</b>, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations</p>
Panel Discussion	<p><b>Claudia Mahler</b>, Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons (Video)</p> <p><b>Ernesto Gonzales</b>, New York University (NYU) James Weldon Johnson Professor of Social Work, Associate Professor of Social Work, Director of the MSW Program, and Director of The Center for Health and Aging Innovation at NYU Silver School of Social Work</p> <p><b>Liliane Nkunzimana</b>, Representative to the United Nations for the Baha'i International Community's New York Office</p> <p><b>Stephanie Firestone</b>, Senior Strategic Policy Advisor with AARP International</p> <p><b>Dr. Emi Kiyota</b>, Associate Professor at the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and College of Design and Engineering, and Deputy Executive Director, Centre for Population Health at the National University of Singapore</p> <p><i>Moderated by</i> <b>Rio Hada</b>, Chief, Equality, Development and Rule of Law Section, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, New York</p>
Q&A	
Closing Remarks	<p><b>Masumi Ono</b>, Chief of the Social Inclusion and Participation Branch, DISD/ DESA</p>

## Get to know the speakers:



**William T. Smith, Ph.D.**  
**Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing**

William T. Smith, Ph.D., the newly-elected Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing, 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 issue, Dr. Smith was formerly the Executive Director St. Cabrini Nursing Home in Dobbs Ferry, New York for thirteen years. He has also been 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 currently serves as their liaison to the United Nations. He now 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.



**Christopher Hanway**  
**Chair of the UNIDOP 2023 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 that serves thousands of public housing residents and their families per year, including hundreds of older adults. Prior to that, he was 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 Masters in Public Administration from Baruch College, where he now serves as 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 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. In addition to serving as Chair of this year's UNIDOP, he is now 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 non-profits like Riis Settlement with international social justice and solidarity

movements. A lifelong New Yorker, Chris resides in Manhattan with his partner and 9-year old son.



**H.E. Paula Narvaez Ojeda**  
**Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, Chair of the Group of Friends of Older Persons in New York**

Ambassador Narvaez has recently been appointed as Vice-Chair of the ECOSOC. Before this latest appointment, Ms. Narváez was 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 Regional Adviser for Governance and Political Participation in the same office, from 2018 to 2020. Between 2016 and 2018, Ms. Narváez was Minister Secretary General of Government, and she served as a Presidential Adviser from 2014 to 2016. From 2012 until 2014, she was a Latin America and Caribbean Section Program Specialist 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 a number of 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.



**Volker Türk**  
**United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

Mr. Türk is the current United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. He took up his official functions as High Commissioner on 17 October 2022. He has devoted his long and distinguished career to advancing universal human rights, notably the international protection of some of the world's most vulnerable people - refugees and stateless persons.

Prior to this, Mr. Türk was the Under-Secretary-General for Policy in the Executive Office of the United Nations Secretary-General where he coordinated global policy work. He also ensured UN system-wide coordination in the follow-up to the Secretary-General's "Call to Action for Human Rights" and his report, Our Common Agenda, which sets out a vision to tackle the world's interconnected challenges on foundations of trust, solidarity and human rights. He previously served as Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (2019-2021). As Assistant High Commissioner for Protection in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva (2015-2019), Mr. Türk played a key role in the development of the landmark Global Compact on Refugees.

Over the course of his career, he held a number of key positions including at UNHCR headquarters where he served as Director of the Division of International Protection (2009-2015);



Director of Organizational Development and Management (2008-2009); and Chief of Section, Protection Policy and Legal Advice (2000-2004). Mr. Türk also served UNHCR around the world, including as Representative in Malaysia; Assistant Chief of Mission in Kosovo and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, respectively; Regional Protection Coordinator in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and in Kuwait.

Mr. Türk holds a doctorate in international law from the University of Vienna and a Master of Laws degree from the University of Linz, Austria. He has published widely on international refugee law and international human rights law. He is fluent in English and French and has a working knowledge of Spanish.



**Arjanita (Ariana) Elezaj**  
**Co-Chair of the UNIDOP 2023 Programme sub-Committee in the**  
**NGO Committee on Ageing in New York**

Arjanita (Ariana) Elezaj is a former journalist and a community activist with 30+ years of professional 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, as well as the NGO Committee on Human Rights, and Women's Guild Secretarial Chapter. She is a very active member of the International Federation of Settlement Houses and Neighborhood Centers. For several years she has been a board member of the Albanian American Women's Organization "Motrat Qiriazhi," which is one of the oldest organizations serving Albanian Women in the US. She is a former journalist of the People's Voice Newspaper, based in Tirana, Albania and continues her freelance writing in the US highlighting issues that impact the Albanian-American community, as well as the NYC population she serves. Currently she is the Deputy Director of Older Adult Services at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House in New York City. Ariana is a public speaker and through her charitable work she continues to work with all Albanian American organizations based in New York to empower people to run for political positions and build community healthy relationships. Ariana is a researcher providing tremendous support on a groundbreaking study addressing intimate partner relationship experiences amongst Albanian Women in the US.

She 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, and certificates (1) Non-Profit Leadership Certificates from Baruch College and (2) Empowered Aging Certificate from Columbia Law School Advocacy Institute. Ariana is a fellow of New York University's Center for Anti-Racism, Social Justice and Public Health. She 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. Along with Christopher Hanway she is co-chairing United Nations International Day of Older Persons (UNIDOP 2023).



**H.E. Sérgio França Danese**  
**Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations**

In 2023, H.E. Sérgio França Danese was appointed as the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations. Prior to his latest position, Mr. França Danese served as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary in Lima, Peru, from 2022 to 2023; in Pretoria, South Africa, from 2020 to 2022; in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 2016 to 2020; and in Algiers, Algeria, from 2005 to 2009. A career diplomat, he has undertaken various domestic assignments. He was Vice-Minister and Secretary-General of Foreign Affairs from 2015 to 2016, acting as his country's Foreign Minister during the absences of the incumbent.

Between 2012 and 2015, Mr. França Danese served as Undersecretary General for Brazilian Communities Abroad in the Ministry of External Relations, in charge of consular affairs, international legal cooperation, immigration and international treaties, and from 2009 to 2012, as Director of the Bureau for Congressional and Federative Affairs in the Ministry of External Relations. He was Secretary-General for the Brazilian delegation to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio in 1992.

He was professor of Brazilian diplomatic history between 1982 and 1987 and from 1994 to 1996, and of Brazilian contemporary foreign policy from 1993 to 1996 at the Rio Branco Institute. He graduated from the University of Sao Paulo in 1976 with a major in modern languages and was a graduate student in Hispanic American literature at the National Autonomous University of Mexico from 1977 to 1979.



**H.E. Anna Paula Zacarias**  
**Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations**

In 2022, H.E. Anna Paula Zacarias was appointed as the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations in New York. Prior to her latest position, she served as her country's Secretary of State for European Affairs, a post she has held since July 2017 until March 2022. Ms. Zacarias has served in a range of Government positions, both in Portugal and abroad. From 2015 to 2017, she was Head of Delegation of the European Union delegation to Colombia and Ecuador, and from 2011 to 2015 she was Head of the bloc's delegation to Brazil. She served as Deputy Permanent Representative of Portugal to the European Union (2009-2011), first resident Ambassador of Portugal to Estonia (2005-2008) and Deputy Permanent Representative in Portugal's delegation to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris (2000-2005). In addition, she was Consul in Curitiba, Brazil (1993-1996) and the Political Officer at her country's Embassy in the United States (1988-1993). Prior to that, she served as Vice-President of Instituto Camões and as Counsellor for International Relations at the Office of the President of the Republic (1986-1988). Ms. Zacarias holds a degree in cultural anthropology from the University of Lisbon.



**Rio Hada**

**Chief, Equality, Development and Rule of Law Section, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), New York**

Mr. Hada currently leads OHCHR's thematic engagement in New York on equality and non-discrimination, sustainable development and the rule of law to mainstream human rights in interagency and intergovernmental discussions at the UN Headquarters.

Mr. Hada serves as the joint secretariat with DESA for the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing established by the General Assembly with the mandate to strengthen the protection of human rights of older persons. Prior to his current appointment in 2022, he coordinated the OHCHR's global thematic work on economic, social and cultural rights and the human rights of older persons. In 2020, he coordinated the drafting of the Secretary-General's Policy Brief on the impact of COVID-19 on older persons. During 2006-2017, he led OHCHR's human rights mainstreaming agenda in the UN system and coordinated UN interagency efforts to integrate human rights in the policies and programmes of the UN development system and to promote human rights-based implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Prior to OHCHR, he served at the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs in New York, the UN Office at Vienna, UNDP in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, on a wide range of issues including poverty and social development, administration of justice, post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation, international trade and South-South cooperation. He holds a Master of International Affairs on economic development and human rights from Columbia University in New York.



**Claudia Mahler**

**Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons**

Ms. Claudia Mahler (Austria) assumed her role as Independent Expert in May 2020. She is a senior researcher in the field of economic, social and cultural rights for the German Institute for Human Rights since 2010. She was also a visiting professor at the Alice Salomon Hochschule in 2020-2021.

From 2001 to 2009, Ms. Mahler conducted research at the Human Rights Centre of the University of Potsdam where her main fields were in human rights education, minority rights and the law of asylum. In 2000, she was appointed as Vice President of the Human Rights Commission for Tyrol and Vorarlberg.

She has also worked as a lecturer in the field of human rights law and as a consultant to OHCHR in Geneva. From 1997-2001, she held the position of an assistant at the Leopold-Franzens-University Innsbruck, Austria in the field of Criminal Law and Criminal Procedures. Ms. Mahler received her doctoral degree in 2000





### **Ernest Gonzales**

**New York University James Weldon Johnson Professor of Social Work, Associate Professor of Social Work, Director of the MSW Program, and Director of The Center for Health and Aging Innovation at NYU Silver School of Social Work**

Ernest Gonzales is New York University's James Weldon Johnson Professor of Social Work, Associate Professor of Social Work, Director of the MSW Program, and Director of The Center for Health and Aging Innovation at NYU Silver School of Social Work. He is a scholar in the areas of productive aging (employment, volunteering, and caregiving), equity, discrimination, intergenerational scholarship, and social policy. His research advances our understanding of social structures that optimize the ability to live a long, healthy, and meaningful life.

The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, National Institute on Aging, U.S. Social Security Administration, AARP Foundation, The Eisner Foundation, Fan Fox and Samuels Foundation, and other public and private funders have supported his research. Dr. Gonzales publishes in leading scientific journals and serves on several editorial boards. He reviews grants for the National Institute on Aging, as well as other international federal agencies and foundations.

By invitation, Dr. Gonzales has served as content expert for the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM), Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (DBASSE) and National Science Foundation. He has provided testimony on productive aging to the United States Senate, debated paradigms on aging at The World Bank, and given talks at leading institutions such as The United Nations, Harvard University, Stanford University, MIT, among others. He received his PhD, MSSW, and BA from the Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis, Columbia University's School of Social Work, and Hunter College at the City University of New York, respectively.



### **Liliane Nkuzimana**

**Representative to the United Nations for the Baha'i International Community's New York Office**

Liliane Nkuzimana is a Representative to the United Nations for the Baha'i International Community's New York Office. Her areas of work include youth, intergenerational cooperation, social development, and peace and security. Liliane has a background researching and writing issues on related to diversity and inclusion. Liliane currently serves as secretary of the NGO CSocD Committee and co-chairs the Communication Task Force of the Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security. Liliane holds a Master in Public and International Affairs degree and a Bachelor of Social Science degree specializing in African Studies and Political Science.



**Stephanie K. Firestone**  
**Senior Strategic Advisor of AARP International**

Stephanie K. Firestone is a global thought leader in the area of livable communities for all people of all ages and abilities. She is a Senior Strategic Policy Advisor with AARP International, where she leads Equity by Design, engaging built environment professionals from around the world to incorporate aging and equity considerations in their work, as well as other global initiatives to advance the planning, design and development of enabling & equitable housing and multigenerational communities. Stephanie collaborates with international partners such as the World Health Organization, and leads AARP's engagement around the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030). As a 2015-2016 Health & Aging Policy Fellow, Stephanie worked with the American Planning Association and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, helping local leaders think regionally about how to create more inclusive communities and expand affordable housing opportunities for vulnerable residents in particular. Previously, Stephanie led social and environmental justice efforts in Israel, founding the country's first Jewish-Arab environmental nonprofit organization, as well as coordinating Israel's sustainability agenda and representing the country's efforts toward the World Summit on Sustainable Development at the United Nations General Assembly. Stephanie holds a Master of Urban & Environmental Planning degree from the University of Virginia.



**Emi Kiyota, Ph.D.**  
**Associate Professor at the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and College of Design and Engineering, and Deputy Executive Director, Centre for Population Health at the National University of Singapore**

Dr. Emi Kiyota is an Associate Professor at the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and College of Design and Engineering, and Deputy Executive Director, Centre for Population Health at the National University of Singapore. She is also a founder of *Ibasho*, a not for profit organization that strives to co-create intergenerational community hubs that value their elders. An environmental gerontologist, consultant and organisational culture change specialist with over 20 years of experience, she holds much expertise and contributed significantly in the design and implementation of person-centred care practice in long-term care facilities and hospitals and quality improvement in the built environment for ageing services. Dr. Kiyota is currently based in Singapore and looking into incorporating the concept of *Ibasho* into the Health District@Queenstown. The pilot programme aims to design an age-friendly community by creating integrated solutions to enhance the health and well-being of residents across their life stages.



**Masumi Ono**

**Chief of Social Inclusion and Participation Branch, United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs**

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 BA (Economics) both from Cornell University (USA).

## **Acknowledgements:**

### **UN International Day of Older Persons Planning Committee:**

Christopher Hanway, Chair  
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