

SEVENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Gender Equality, the Empowerment of All Women and Girls and Their Human Rights Across the Sustainable Development Goals: Assessing Progress towards the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda

Expert Group Meeting, 30 June–2 July 2026

PARTICIPANTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

(Click on an expert's name to view their bio)

Expert participants

Bemnet Agata

Tax Justice Network

Esther Waweru

Equality Now

Foteini Papagiotti

International Center for Research on Women –
Americas

Francesca Perucci

Open Data Watch

Gisela Zaremborg

Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales –
Mexico

Gita Sen

Development Alternatives with Women
for a New Era

Gloria Novović

King's College London

İpek İlkkaracan

Istanbul Technical University

Joy Belmonte

Quezon City

Khalida Azhigulova

International PSEAH consultant and investigator
of GBV incidents

Lina Abou-Habib

American University of Beirut

Melissa Upreti

Formerly, United Nations Working Group
on discrimination against women and girls

Naila Kabeer

The London School of Economics and Political
Science

Norah Madaya

Civil Society for Budget Advocacy Group –
Uganda

Rabeb Aloui

Women's Major Group to UNEP – Africa Focal
Point

Rebecca Sanders

University of Cincinnati

Rosalee Gonzalez

Continental Network of Indigenous Women
of the Americas – North America

Salma Nims

Formerly, Economic and Social Commission
for Western Asia

Saowalak Thongkuay

ASEAN Disability Forum

Sharon Bhagwan Rolls

Pacific Women Mediators Network

Sivananthi Thanenthiran

Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre
for Women

Solange L. Baptiste

ITPC Global

V. Eudine Barriteau

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women

United Nations Observers

Aroa Santiago

United Nations Development Programme
(UNDP)

Asako Hattori

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Aylin Taftali

United Nations Educational, Scientific
and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Carolina Rivera

UNDP

Caroline Ngonze

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
(UNAIDS)

Cécile Mazzacurati

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Clara Park

Food and Agriculture Organization of
the United Nations (FAO)

Dayan Farias Picon

United Nations Office on Drugs
and Crime (UNODC)

Hajnalka Petrics

FAO

Hanna Sands

UNODC

Javiera Andrea Ravest Tropa

ECLAC

Leyla Sharafi

UNFPA

Maria Begona Lasagabaster

UNESCO

Marian Salema

UNODC

Nerine Guinee

UNDP

Nozomi Ide

FAO

Rebekka Katharina Von Thadden

OHCHR

Seema Gaikwad

United Nations Office for Project Services
(UNOPS)

Tacko Ndiaye

FAO

Yumiko Kamiya

Department of Economic and Social Affairs
(DESA)

UN Women observers

Aina Liyambo

Policy Advisor, Intergovernmental Support
Section

Akilah Dorris

Planning and Coordination Specialist,
UN Women Guyana

Alice Shackelford

Coordination Advisor, UN System Coordination
Division

Amber Parkes

Policy and Knowledge Management Specialist,
Economic Empowerment Section

Antra Bhatt

Statistics Specialist, Research and Data Section

Asha Meagher

Data Analyst, Research and Data Section

Brenda K. Kombo

Substantive Rapporteur, Research and Data
Section

Brianna Howell

Research Analyst, Research and Data Section

Bárbara Ortiz

Programme Specialist, Regional Office for the
Americas and the Caribbean

Catarina Carvalho

Director, Intergovernmental Support Section

Constanza Tabbush

Research Specialist, Research and Data Section

Diana Lutta

Policy Specialist, Human Rights and Non-Discrimination Section

Elisa Acevedo Hernández

Publications Coordinator, Research and Data Section

Fafali Alai

Programme Analyst, Peace and Security, Peace, Security and Resilience Section

Firdha Anisa Najiya Merdeka Sari

Data and Statistics Intern, Research and Data Section

Gerald Cabildo

IST Associate, Information Systems and Telecommunications Section

Iman Sayed Taha

Policy Specialist Counter Terrorism, Peace, Security and Resilience Section

Jessamyn Encarnacion

Statistics Specialist and Deputy Chief a.i., Research and Data Section

Kalliopi Mingeirou

Chief, Ending Violence Against Women Section

Katarina Salmela

Programme Specialist Peace and Security, Peace, Security and Resilience Section

Kebedech Ambaye

Regional Coordination and Normative Specialist, Regional Office for East and Southern Africa

Khamsavath Chanthavysouk

Programme Specialist, Civil Society Division

Lana Ackar

Policy Specialist (Political Participation), Leadership and Decision-Making Section

Laura Turquet

Policy Advisor and Chief a.i., Research and Data Section

Lopa Banerjee

Director, Civil Society Division

Loui Williams

Programme Analyst, Research and Data Section

Maja Nihlmark

Programme Analyst, Intergovernmental Support Section

Maria Alejandra Scampini

Civil Society Support Consultant, Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean

Mause-Darline Francois

Policy Specialist, Protection and Transitional Justice, Peace, Security and Resilience Section

Maxime Houinato

Representative and Director, Regional Office for West and Central Africa

Muyang Wang

Research Assistant, Research and Data Section

Paivi Kaarina Kannisto

Chief, Peace, Security and Resilience Section

Papa Alioune Seck

Deputy Chief a.i., Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Division

Paro Chaujar

Policy Advisor Social Norms, Research and Data Section

Priya Álvarez

Coordination Advisor, UN System Coordination Division

Ramya Emandi

Statistics Consultant, Research and Data Section

Safa Salim

Data and Statistics Intern, Research and Data Section

Sarah Hendriks

Director, Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Division

Shofie Alya Qodriani

Data and Statistics Intern, Research and Data Section

Simone Briony Louise Oluoch-Olunya

Political Participation Advisor, Regional Office for the Arab States

Somali Cerise

Substantive editor, Research and Data Section

Stefania Doebbel

Policy Specialist for Peace Building, Peace, Security and Resilience Section

Tatyana Jiteneva

Policy Specialist for Sustaining Peace, Peace, Security and Resilience Section

Victoria Araoz

Programmatic and Operational Coordination Consultant, Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean

Victoria Díaz García

Inter-Agency Coordination Specialist, UN System Coordination Division

Vivek Rai

Deputy Director, Civil Society Division

Yolanda Iriarte

Programme Specialist, Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

BIOGRAPHIES

(Click on an expert's name to return to the list of expert participants)

Bemnet Agata

Bemnet Agata is a Pan-African researcher and campaigner based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Her work focuses on the intersections of gender, debt, tax and climate justice, applying a feminist political economy lens to advance alternatives to austerity. She has collaborated with organisations including the Tax Justice Network, the Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative, FEMNET, Amnesty International and the African Union to bring frontline perspectives into global policy spaces and strengthen cross-movement solidarity. She holds an MSc in Human Rights from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Esther Waweru

Esther Waweru is Associate Director, Legal Equality, at Equality Now, where she has worked since 2017. With nearly two decades of experience, she is a leading advocate for human rights and social justice across international and regional platforms. A lawyer by training, she has worked with the Center for Reproductive Rights, the Kenya Human Rights Commission and in private legal practice. Her work focuses on advancing the rights of women, girls and marginalized communities, including ethnic minorities, sexual and gender minorities and persons with disabilities. She is a published author on human rights, gender equality and international law, and is also an advocate of the High Court of Kenya. Esther is deeply committed to advancing a society where the rights of girls and women are recognized and respected. She draws inspiration from Wangari Maathai's words: "It's the little things citizens do. That's what will make the difference."

Foteini Papagiotti

Foteini Papagiotti (she/her) is the Director, Policy & Advocacy, based at ICRW's Americas office. She is responsible for conducting research and analysis and providing evidence-based strategic guidance to governments, international organizations and ICRW's policy and advocacy team, with a focus on feminist foreign policy, financing for development and global gender architecture/institutions.

Francesca Perucci

Francesca Perucci is currently the Director of Policy and Partnerships at Open Data Watch. An expert on development data, she began her career in the United Nations in gender and social statistics and held various key positions until she became Assistant Director of the United Nations Statistics Division where she led, among other things, the development of the SDG indicator framework. Throughout her career, she has been a trailblazer in innovating data tools, focusing on data as a powerful tool for development. Her influential contributions extend to shaping global data initiatives and advocating for better development data and stronger inclusive data systems.

Gisela Zaremborg

Gisela Zaremborg holds a PhD in Social Science Research with a specialization in Political Science from the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO, Mexico). She also earned a Master's in Social Policy and a Bachelor's degree in Sociology from the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina. She is currently a full-time professor-researcher at FLACSO Mexico, where she also serves as Academic Coordinator of the Master's Program in Public

<p>Policy and Gender. She is Vice President and President-Elect of the Latin American Studies Association and a member of the Mexican Academy of Sciences, and holds Level III distinction in Mexico's National System of Researchers. Beginning on 19 July 2026, she started serving as General Director of FLACSO Mexico through July 2030. She has published widely in leading journals and is co-author of <i>Feminisms in Latin America: Pro-Choice Nested Networks in Mexico and Brazil</i>, which received an Honourable Mention for Best Book in Political Science in 2024.</p>
<p>Gita Sen</p> <p>Gita Sen is Honorary Distinguished Professor of the Ramalingaswami Centre on Equity and Social Determinants of Health at the Public Health Foundation of India. She has been a professor at the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore and visiting professor at Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health. She is a cofounder and Executive Committee member of the South feminist network, DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era). She holds a PhD in Economics from Stanford University. She has worked as a researcher, teacher, and policy advocate over many decades to promote gender equality and women's human rights.</p>
<p>Gloria Novović</p> <p>Gloria Novović is a lecturer in public policy at King's College London. She holds a PhD in political science and international development (University of Guelph, Canada) and specializes in feminist and ecological critique of global governance. Her systems-level analysis on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is grounded in feminist and development theory, her own practitioner experience and the insight of 200 experts from the United Nations, national governments, civil society, media, academia, and private sector associations. Her scholarly articles and technical reports have informed policy discussions within the United Nations, the Canadian Senate, OECD-DAC, and global civil society forums.</p>
<p>İpek İlkkaracan</p> <p>İpek İlkkaracan is Professor of Economics at the Istanbul Technical University, Faculty of Management. She served as President of the International Association for Feminist Economics IAFPE in 2023–23 and a board member of IAFPE in 2015–2017 and 2021–2024. İlkkaracan is a Research Associate with the Levy Economics Institute in New York and the Economic Research Forum ERF in Cairo, and an Associate Editor of the <i>Feminist Economics</i> journal. İlkkaracan's areas of research entail the care economy, gender and macroeconomics, political economy of gender, labour and development economics. Her 'Purple Economy' model, which depicts a gender-equal and caring economic order, has been adopted as an advocacy and training tool by women's organizations, including the European Women's Lobby (Belgium), the International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia-Pacific (Malaysia) and Women for Women's Human Rights (Türkiye) and served as a conceptual reference in research and policy.</p>
<p>Joy Belmonte</p> <p>Ma. Josefina "Joy" Belmonte is the first woman elected as Mayor of Quezon City, the largest metropolis in Metro Manila. A champion of inclusive governance, she prioritizes data-driven climate action, green economic empowerment and the protection of vulnerable communities. Under her visionary leadership, Quezon City has earned over</p>

<p>500 local and international accolades for institutional excellence and business-friendliness. Mayor Belmonte’s pioneering dedication to environmental sustainability and human rights has garnered global recognition. She was named a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Champion of the Earth and selected as one of Forbes’ inaugural 50 Sustainability Leaders. A powerful voice for localized development, she currently serves as the National Chairperson of the League of Cities of the Philippines and is a key national convenor of Mayors for Good Governance.</p>
<p>Khalida Azhigulova</p> <p>Dr Khalida Azhigulova is an independent researcher, a human rights lawyer and a licensed barrister in Kazakhstan. She is a member of the Expert Council under the Human Rights Commissioner of Kazakhstan and an expert of the Constitutional Court of Kazakhstan. Since 2020, Khalida has worked as an international consultant and investigator of sexualized exploitation and abuse incidents. Her research and advocacy work made a significant contribution to criminalization of domestic violence, stalking, forced marriage, sexualized harassment against minors and banning bullying at schools in Kazakhstan in 2022–2025.</p>
<p>Lina Abou-Habib</p> <p>Lina Abou-Habib is Director of the Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship at the American University of Beirut, where she leads initiatives on citizenship, civic engagement and democratic governance across the Middle East and North Africa region. A feminist advocate and policy practitioner with more than three decades of experience, she has worked across academia, civil society and international organizations to advance research, policy and social change. Lina currently chairs the Doria Feminist Fund and serves as Secretary of the board of Urgent Action Fund for Feminist Activism. She has written extensively on feminist movements, care economies, inclusive development and public policy and has mentored generations of activists, researchers and civic leaders across the Global South.</p>
<p>Melissa Upreti</p> <p>Melissa Upreti is an internationally recognized human rights lawyer and two-term United Nations Special Procedures Mandate-Holder who served as an expert member of the United Nations Working Group on discrimination against women and girls from 2017–2023. She has held leadership positions at several international organizations including the International Commission of Jurists, Center for Women’s Global Leadership and Center for Reproductive Rights, and is a Fellow in the University of Toronto, Law Faculty’s International Reproductive and Sexual Health Law Program. She holds law degrees from India and the United States and is widely published.</p>
<p>Naila Kabeer</p> <p>Naila Kabeer is Professor Emeritus at the Department of International Development and a Faculty member of the International Inequalities Institute at the London School of Economics. She has engaged in research, teaching and advisory work in the fields of gender, poverty, livelihoods, social protection and inclusive citizenship and published extensively on these issues, most recently ‘Renegotiating patriarchy: gender, agency and the Bangladesh paradox’ (2024 LSE Press Open Access). She is on the editorial board of Feminist Economics and serves in an editorial advisory capacity for Development and Change, Bangladesh Development Studies and European Journal of Development</p>

Research. She has worked in an advisory capacity with various international agencies, including UN Women, and was part of the UN High-Level Expert Group on Beyond GDP. She is currently on the advisory boards of UNRISD and UNU-International Institute for Global Health.

Norah Madaya

Dr. Norah Madaya is an expert in strengthening statistical systems, gender statistics and evidence-based policymaking across Africa, with over two decades of experience. She has supported several countries in the development of national strategies for the development of statistics (NSDSs) and anglophone regional economic communities (RECS) gender statistics strategies, served as a Policy Analyst on Statistical Capacity development with PARIS21 and previously held a Director-level position at the Uganda Bureau of Statistics. She currently leads advancing the production and use of citizen-generated data for inclusive development, social accountability and better decision-making with the Civil Society for Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) and Advisory Gender DataHub Initiative (AGDHI) in Uganda.

Rabeb Aloui

Rabeb Aloui is an environmentalist and environmental law specialist from Tunisia, dedicated to advancing climate justice and sustainable development across Africa. She serves as the Africa Focal Point for the Women's Major Group to UNEP, where she amplifies women's voices in environmental governance and advocates for the integration of gender perspectives in global environmental policy processes. Her work focuses on the intersection of climate action, gender equality, human rights, and the Sustainable Development Goals, with particular attention to climate adaptation and human mobility. She has also worked as a consultant with FEMNET, supporting feminist advocacy and empowering women and youth in environmental decision-making.

Rebecca Sanders

Dr. Rebecca Sanders is a Professor of Political Science and Assistant Director of the School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Cincinnati. Her research agenda addresses pressing global challenges at the intersection of international law and human rights, international security, and public health. She is especially interested in how societies grapple with rights tradeoffs in real and perceived emergencies and the dynamics of rights advancement and retrenchment.

Rosalee Gonzalez

Dr. Rosalee Gonzalez is an Indigenous (Xicana/Kickapoo and Tepehuana) scholar, international human rights advocate and elected Co-Coordinator for North America of the Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas (ECMIA). She is also Co-Founder and Executive Director of PLUME: National Indigenous Women's Rights Alliance and Institute, advancing advocacy, leadership, research and the rights of Indigenous women and girls. She brings more than 25 years of experience engaging United Nations human rights mechanisms and international policy processes. She previously served with the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and as Senior Indigenous Fellow at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and contributed to the adoption of CEDAW General Recommendation No. 39. Her

work focuses on Indigenous Peoples' rights, gender equality, climate and environmental justice, and the protection of lands, territories, and resources.
<p>Salma Nims</p> <p>Dr. Salma Nims is a gender equality, women's rights, women, peace and security (WPS), and gender-climate-conflict nexus expert with over two decades of experience in policy reform, institutional development, and advocacy across the Arab region. She served as Senior Social Affairs Officer at ESCWA (2022–2024) and as Secretary-General of the Jordanian National Commission for Women (2014–2022). During her tenure, she led the development of Jordan's National Action Plans (I & II) on WPS and the National Strategy for Women 2020–2025. Her work focuses on advancing gender-responsive governance, policy implementation, and policy coherence across the gender equality, climate, peace and security, and sustainable development agendas. In 2019, she received the Said Foundation Outstanding Achievement Prize.</p>
<p>Saowalak Thongkuay</p> <p>Saowalak Thongkuay is a senior disability and gender-equality specialist with over 25 years of experience in human rights policy and disability-inclusive governance. She is a founding member and Chairperson of the ASEAN Disability Forum (2026–2029), a former member of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021–2024) and was a regional advocate of Disabled Peoples' International Asia and Pacific (2007–2015). At the national level, she serves on the Committee on the Promotion of Gender Equality and previously served on the Gender Discrimination Ruling Commission. She has advised United Nations agencies, ADB, development partners and organizations of persons with disabilities on CRPD-aligned policy and programming.</p>
<p>Sharon Bhagwan Rolls</p> <p>Sharon Bhagwan Rolls is a Fijian feminist leader with over four decades of experience advancing gender equality, feminist media and peacebuilding across the Pacific and globally. She is co-founder of the Pacific Women Mediators Network and a technical adviser to the Pacific Islands Feminist Alliance for Climate Justice. A pioneer of feminist media, she co-founded femLINKpacific and helped establish community radio as a tool for women's participation, accountability and climate resilience. Sharon has contributed to shaping global peace and security policy, including UN Women's Women, Peace and Security agenda and UN Security Council processes and continues to amplify Pacific feminist perspectives in global decision-making.</p>
<p>Sivananthi Thanenthiran</p> <p>Sivananthi Thanenthiran is the Executive Director of the Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), a regional feminist partnership organization working on sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice (SRHRJ) across 24 priority countries and 90 national partners across Asia, the Pacific and Africa.</p> <p>Under her leadership, ARROW embarked on cross-movement interlinkages of SRHR and critical issues such as climate change, migration and food security. ARROW also incorporated a Reproductive Justice framework and worked with marginalized groups such as adolescent girls, young people, and women and girls with disabilities. Siva also</p>

pioneered the ARROW Changemakers initiative which brought together 200+ young people across the Asia to innovate for SRHR through design thinking and seed funding.

Solange L. Baptiste

Solange L. Baptiste is Executive Director of ITPC Global, a global network working to advance health and social justice through robust community engagement. She serves on the Global Public Investment Steering Committee and co-leads the Health ImPACT Coalition. With more than two decades of experience in community advocacy, global health policy and sustainable development, she is a leading voice on equitable financing, community-led accountability, and access to innovation. Solange has advised multilateral institutions, governments, and civil society organizations on strategies to strengthen health systems, advance equity, and promote inclusive global governance.

V. Eudine Barriteau

Violet Eudine Barriteau is a Caribbean feminist, scholar and activist with extensive experience in research, executive educational administration and regional initiatives. She retired from the University of the West Indies as Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the Cave Hill Campus, becoming the first woman to serve as PVC and Principal of two UWI campuses. An Emerita Professor of Gender and Public Policy, her work focuses on feminist theory, Caribbean political economy, and the intersection of gender analysis and public policy. She has led major regional and international initiatives, including the coordination of the inaugural Gender and Development Forum within the quadrennial UNCTAD ministerial conferences. In 2024, she was elected to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and now serves on the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs' High-Level Advisory Board. She is a recipient of numerous national and regional honours.