

Older Persons & COVID-19

Strengthening health &
rights through collective
action



World Health
Organization



United Nations
Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

HelpAge
International

Older Persons & COVID-19: Strengthening health & rights through collective action

Speakers & Bios

Tuesday, 28 July 2020

16:30-17:30 CET (Geneva), 10:30-11:30 EDT (New York)

Livestream: unfpa.org/olderpersonscovid19

Dr Natalia Kanem, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UNFPA



Dr. Kanem joined UNFPA in 2014 as the Country Representative in the United Republic of Tanzania and in 2016 was named Deputy Executive Director in charge of programmes. Previously Dr. Kanem served as founding president of ELMA Philanthropies, Inc., a private funding institution focusing on Africa's children and youth, as a senior associate of the Lloyd Best Institute of the West Indies, and as Ford Foundation Deputy Vice-President for its peace and social justice programmes in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and North America.

Dr. Kanem holds a medical degree from Columbia University in New York, a Master's degree in Public Health with specializations in epidemiology and preventive medicine from the University of Washington in Seattle, and is a magna cum laude graduate of Harvard University in history and science. She started her research career in academia with the Johns Hopkins and Columbia University schools of medicine and public health.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, WHO



Dr Tedros is the first WHO Director-General to have been elected from multiple candidates by the World Health Assembly, and is the first person from the WHO African Region to serve as WHO's chief technical and administrative officer. Prior to his election as WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros served as Ethiopia's Minister of Health and then as Ethiopia's Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Prior to this, Dr Tedros was elected as Chair of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Board in 2009, and previously served as Chair of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership Board, and Co-chair of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Board.

Dr Tedros holds a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) in Community Health from the University of Nottingham and a Master of Science (MSc) in Immunology of Infectious Diseases from the University of London.

Raj Kumar, Moderator, Founding President and Editor-in-Chief, DEVEX



Raj Kumar is the founding President & Editor-in-Chief of Devex, the media platform for the global development community and a social enterprise dedicated to ensuring global development efforts do more good for more people. Beginning as a child in Kerala, India, Raj has witnessed firsthand determined and courageous development work in over 50 countries. It's what drives the Devex mission to "Do Good. Do It Well."

Raj is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, a media leader and former humanitarian council chair for the World Economic Forum, and has interviewed on-camera and on-stage hundreds of global luminaries on the most important challenges of our time. He is the author of the book "The Business of Changing the World," a go-to primer on the ideas, people, and technology disrupting the aid industry.

Arun Maira, Chair of the Board, HelpAge International



Arun Maira has an unusual combination of experience as a hands-on leader, a consultant to leaders, and a thought-leader on subjects of leadership and institution transformation, in the private, public, and social sectors. He has written several books on institutional transformation. The most recent are *Transforming Systems: Why the World needs a New Ethical Toolkit* and *Listening for Well-Being: Conversations with People Not Like Us*. Arun was a Member of India's Planning Commission from 2009-14, prior to which he was Chairman of

the Boston Consulting Group India, and previously had worked with the Tata Group in India and abroad for 25 years.

Dr Alex Kalache President of the International Longevity Center Brazil, HelpAge International Global Ambassador



Dr. Alex Kalache is President of the International Longevity Center Brazil, HelpAge International Global Ambassador. Formerly he was a lecturer in the Department of Community Health at University of Oxford, Director of Epidemiology of Ageing Unit at University of London, and Director of WHO Department of Ageing and Life Course.

Dr. Kalache acts as an international consultant on ageing for public, civil society organizations and teaches at universities across the world.

Ms Christine Umutoni, Resident Coordinator Mauritius and Seychelles (UN collective action at country level)



Ms. Christine Umutoni currently serves as UN Resident Coordinator in Mauritius and Seychelles. Previously she served as the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Mauritius and Seychelles, and prior that to she was UN RC, Humanitarian Coordinator and UNDP RR in Asmara, Eritrea, and UNDP Country Director in Harare, Zimbabwe from July 2009 to 2012.

Christine was also previously the UNDP Head of Governance, Justice, Gender & HIV Units in the Rwanda Country Office, and prior to joining the UN system, she was Rwandan Ambassador to Uganda and to Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, European Union and the Vatican.

Dr Naeema Al Gasseer, Senior Advisor to World Health Organization Regional Director at Eastern Mediterranean Region (incoming WHO Representative in Egypt, outgoing WHO Representative in Sudan)



Bahraini national, Dr. Naeema Al Gasseer has over thirty years' experience at country, regional and international level in the areas of health systems, humanitarian and development work. She has previously held the positions of Assistant Regional Director for WHO, WHO Representative in Iraq, Egypt and Libya, Iraq UN Humanitarian Coordinator and Acting Resident Coordinator/HC in Sudan. Prior to this, Dr. Al Gasseer was WHO Senior Scientist for Nursing and Midwifery (Chief Nurse Scientist).

As a professional woman and the second doctorate degree holder in her field in the six Gulf countries, Dr. Al Gasseer was instrumental in positioning her country in adopting innovative solutions advocating to improve health care systems and services and organized the First Global WHO Collaborating Centers for Nursing and Midwifery conference.

Octavio Vergara, Director, National Services for Elderly (SENAMA), Government of Chile



Octavio is a lawyer from Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile and a Master in Public Administration & Management from the University College of London. In addition, he has a diploma in Social Gerontology and in Prevention and Approach to Abuse in Older People.

Octavio's career has developed in matters related with ageing, both in the public and private sectors. During the first government of President Sebastián Piñera, he served as chief of staff at the National Service for Elderly (SENAMA). At this period, important public policies were developed to improve the older person's quality of life.

Octavio was previously the Executive Director of Fundación Oportunidad Mayor, whose objective is to develop and coordinate initiatives that promote active aging and comprehensive care for the elderly in Chile.

Ms Laila Baker, UN Regional Director, Arab States, Development Coordination Office



Laila Baker, an American of Arab origin, comes from a background in health policy from Cardiff University and 25 years of international experience in global humanitarian and development settings primarily in the Arab region. Her career also includes work with major non-UN organizations such as the International Planned Parenthood Federation's Regional Office in Tunisia, OXFAM UK and as the Director of Strategic Planning of the national branch of the IFRC in Palestine. In her position as Director for UNRWA's Relief and Services Program at HQ in Amman, Jordan from 2014-2016, she instituted a series of reforms to the poverty and social inclusion programs.

A member of the RC/HC pool, Laila comes from a long history of service with the United Nations, most notably, UNDP, UNRWA and a twenty-year career with UNFPA, where she served in Palestine, Geneva and as Representative in Syria from 2012-2014 and Jordan from 2016 until the present.

Claudia Mahler, Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of all Human Rights by Older Persons



Ms. Claudia Mahler, an Austrian national, is the new Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons. She has been working for the German Institute for Human Rights as a senior researcher in the field of economic, social and cultural rights since 2010. She is also a visiting professor at the Alice Salomon Hochschule. 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.