

Panelist Biographies

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for Displaced and Migrant Populations during the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond

Co-hosted by the International Organization for Migration and the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands



Sigrid Kaag - Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

On 26 October 2017, Sigrid Kaag was appointed Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation in the third Rutte government. Through her policy document “Investing in Global Prospects”, published in May 2018, Minister Kaag reoriented Dutch aid and trade towards in particular conflict prevention, humanitarian diplomacy, climate action, education, digitalization and gender equality, with the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals as the overarching

framework.

Before taking political office in the Netherlands, Ms. Sigrid Kaag served as Under-Secretary-General and the Special Coordinator for Lebanon and prior to that as Under-Secretary-General and Special Coordinator of the United Nations – Office for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (UN-OPCW) Joint Mission to eliminate the declared chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Ms. Kaag has gathered a wealth of experience in political, humanitarian and development affairs during her career in the Middle East, Africa, Geneva and New York. Ms. Kaag also served as Assistant Secretary-General with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and as Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) for several years. In addition, Ms. Kaag obtained extensive experience on refugee and migration issues serving with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNWRA). Before joining the United Nations, she served with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a civil servant and with Shell International.

Ms. Kaag holds an MA in Middle East Studies (University of Exeter), an MPhil in International Relations (Oxford University) and a BA in Middle East Studies (American University in Cairo). She was awarded the Carnegie Water Peace Prize in November 2016 and received an honorary doctorate from the University of Exeter in 2015. Ms. Kaag is fluent in Dutch, English, French and German, and proficient in Arabic and Spanish. She is married with four children.



Ergogie Tesfaye Woldemeskel - Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of the Government of Ethiopia

Ergogie Tesfaye is the Minister for Labor and Social Affairs of Ethiopia. Prior to her current posting, she served as Board Chair at Wolo University, at the Public Servants Social Security Agency and at Hadiyya Development Association (2018-2020).

From 2016 to 2018, she served as Vice President of the Research and Community Service at Wachemo University (Ministry of Education, Ethiopia). She previously served in various organizations, including Ethiopian Broadcast Corporation, Wolayita Sodo University, Red Cross Association and Hadiyya Zone, as board member.

Ergogie holds a BA in Foreign Languages and Literature (English) and a MA degree in Gender Studies (Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia). She started her career at St. Mary University (Ethiopia) in 2004, as the Director of Gender and HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office. She assumed her next position in 2008, in senior professional capacity at the National Policy Making in education, gender, HIV/AIDSs and SRH.

Ergogie has obtained a PhD in Anthropology, with specialization in Conflict Resolution (Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, India) in 2013; whereby she had conducted various researches and produced several publications. Ergogie is a native of Ethiopia.



Melissa Fleming - Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications, UNSG (Moderator)

Melissa Fleming is Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications at the United Nations, having taken up the post in September 2019. Ms. Fleming previously served the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) as its Head of Global Communications and Spokesperson for the High Commissioner for 10 years, and before that worked in senior communications roles for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). She is author of the book, *A Hope More Powerful than the Sea*, and host of the award-winning podcast, *Awake at Night*.



António Vitorino - Director General of the International Organization for Migration

António Vitorino has over 27 years of international and national political and academic experience, which brought him consistently in touch with the migration context.

He served as European Commissioner for Justice and Home Affairs, from 1999 to 2004. Prior to joining the European Commission, António Vitorino served as Deputy Prime Minister of Portugal, from 1995 to 1997.

His solid political background includes tenures as Portugal's State Secretary for Parliamentary Affairs (from 1983 to 1985), member of the Government of Macau in charge of Administration and Justice (from 1986 to 1987), member of the Portuguese Parliament (from 1980 to 2007), member of the European Parliament (from 1994 to 1995), where he chaired the

Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs Committee in charge of Migration, Asylum, Justice and Fundamental Rights. During these years António Vitorino crafted leadership, management and negotiations skills at the highest level and developed in-depth knowledge of global and national migration contexts and related policy challenges.

He served as Judge of the Portuguese Constitutional Court from 1989 to 1994.

Aside from the extensive political and public service experience, António Vitorino is also an experienced lawyer and a renowned academic. For more than 25 years he served as Assistant Professor and Professor of Constitutional Law, International Human Rights Law, European Union Law on Justice and Home Affairs at the Lisbon Law School and Lisbon Nova University.

António Vitorino was born in Lisbon, Portugal, in 1957 and holds a Master degree in Law and Political Science from the Lisbon Law School (1986). He is a member of the Portuguese Bar Association since 1982 and is fluent in Portuguese, English, French and Spanish. António Vitorino is married and has two sons.



Filippo Grandi - U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees

Filippo Grandi became the 11th United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on 1 January 2016. He was elected by the UN General Assembly to serve a five-year term, until 31 December 2020.

As High Commissioner, he heads one of the world's largest humanitarian organizations. UNHCR has twice won the Nobel Peace Prize. Its 15,000-strong workforce spans 128 countries providing protection and assistance to nearly 60 million refugees, returnees, internally displaced people and stateless persons. Some 88 per cent of UNHCR staff work in the field, often in difficult and dangerous duty stations. The organization's needs-based budget for 2019 is US\$8.7 billion.

Before being elected High Commissioner, Grandi had been engaged in international cooperation for over 30 years, focusing on refugee and humanitarian work. He served as Commissioner-General of the UN Agency for Palestine refugees, UNRWA, from 2010 to 2014, after having been the organization's Deputy Commissioner-General since 2005. Prior to that, Grandi served as Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Afghanistan, following a long career first with NGOs and later with UNHCR in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and at the organization's Geneva headquarters.

Grandi was born in Milan in 1957. He holds a degree in modern history from the State University in Milan, a BA in Philosophy from the Gregorian University in Rome, as well as an honorary doctorate from the University of Coventry.



Sarah Harrison - IFRC Co-Chairperson of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on MHPSS

Sarah Harrison, is a Technical Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Advisor at the International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) - the world's largest humanitarian organization. She is also the Co-Chair of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings (IASC MHPSS) - a position she has held on behalf of the IFRC since February 2016.

Sarah is responsible for providing country level support to MHPSS working groups in over 25 humanitarian settings, coordinating the workplan and inputs from the 57 IASC MHPSS group member agencies, disseminating the IASC MHPSS Guidelines in humanitarian contexts, developing new operational guidance (such as the IASC Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for MHPSS Programmes) and representing the group in international fora - with donors, Governments in emergency-affected States, UN agencies and within the humanitarian cluster system. Sarah also sits on the Steering Committee and Advisory Boards for a number of inter-agency initiatives such as the creation of a Minimum Service Package for MHPSS in humanitarian settings, a Joint Operational Framework between global health and protection clusters and a project to provide better victim support and assistance for children affected by explosive remnants of war. She also sits on the Advisory Board of two research projects related to MHPSS in emergency settings.

Sarah has worked for multiple humanitarian organizations, including the IFRC, UN Agencies, Action Aid International, International Medical Corps and the ACT Alliance network in various emergency, refugee and migration contexts since 2007. She is based in Copenhagen, Denmark.



Nancy Baron - Director and Founder of the Psycho-Social Services and Training Institute in Cairo (PSTIC)

Nancy Baron is the Director / Founder of the Psycho-Social Services and Training Institute in Cairo (a programme of Terre des hommes). This community and family focused program offers 24/7 mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to refugees by a team of refugees in the urban context in Egypt. She is also Director of Urban Life, a global MHPSS training institute. Baron received her Doctorate in Education at the University of Massachusetts with a concentration in Family Therapy and Counseling Psychology. Since 1989, she has lived and worked with emergency and conflict affected populations in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Europe, South America, and the South Pacific where she trained teams, assessed populations, designed innovative programs, offered consultation and leadership, completed research and program evaluation for UN organizations, Governments and international and local NGOs.



Mariam AlSalahat - Syria Response MHPSS Coordinator, World Vision International

Mariam AlSalahat is a licensed clinical psychologist with a MA degree in Clinical Psychology (University of Jordan). Mariam has more than 10 years' experience in the field of MHPSS and protection. Mariam is currently working at World Vision International, as MHPSS and Protection Coordinator for the Syria Response (based in Jordan). Mariam is certified as a master trainer on mhGAP. She worked with several international humanitarian organizations, such as the Center for Victims of Torture, Jordan River Foundation, Oxfam, CARE international, NICOOD and Swedish

Organization for Individual Relief.

She was a presenter at the 2nd Global Mental Health conference, held in Amman in October 2017 and participated as a speaker at the global Mind the Mind Now International Conference in Amsterdam, October 2019. Mariam is a coauthor of "From private pain toward public speech: Poetry therapy with Iraqi survivors of torture and war. In E. G. Levine & S. K. Levine (Editors), Art in action: Expressive arts therapy and social change" and published a learning paper with the Irish consortium on Gender Based Violence in 2019, with title "World Vision International's Syria Response implements PM+ and GBV case management in North-West of Syria".



Dmytro Nersisian - Inter-Agency MHPSS Working Group Co-Chairs in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Dmytro Nersisian is a MHPSS Project Officer at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Dmytro is a psychologist with more than ten years' experience in management and implementation of mental health and psychosocial support programs in various contexts and countries. He has been engaged in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating humanitarian projects for people deprived of

freedom, people leaving with TB and HIV, migrants and refugees, including internally displaced people, and the host communities. He has been working in MHPSS programming with government organizations, INGOs, the Red Cross Movement and UN agencies in diverse countries, such as Ukraine, South Sudan, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Philippines and Bangladesh. Some of his accomplishments encompass: MHPSS programming in prisons and hospitals in TB and HIV projects, multidisciplinary community-based responses for migrants and displaced populations, leading MHPSS Working Group of Upper Nile State and co-chairing national MHPSS WG of South Sudan and Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

Or



Salek Ahmed - Inter-Agency MHPSS Working Group Co-Chairs in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Salek Ahmed is a psychologist from Bangladesh with more than 8 years' experience in community based mental health and psychosocial services, capacity building, and humanitarian MHPSS programmes in different areas of Bangladesh. Since September 2018, he has been working in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, as the mental health and psychosocial support Field Operations Officer at IOM. In this role, Salek is responsible

to lead his team implementing community-based MHPSS programs, integrate MHPSS into other programs (especially health and protection), mainstream MHPSS interventions within the humanitarian response and scaling up the presence of MHPSS interventions in government facilities. He is also a co-chair of the MHPSS Working group in Cox's Bazar. Before joining IOM, Salek worked with Oxfam in the Teknaf Region of Cox's Bazar in 2018, and with Action Against Hunger (ACF) in Cox's Bazar, Barguna, Sirajganj and Satkhira (2009-2018).



ANM Mahmudul Alam - Inter-Agency MHPSS Working Group Co-Chairs in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

ANM Mahmudul Alam (Mahmud) is a psychologist from Bangladesh who works in the mental health and psychosocial support program for Rohingya refugees at UNHCR (Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh). He provides capacity building for national staff, partner organizations and refugee volunteers. He is a co-chair of the Inter-Agency MHPSS Working Group in Cox's Bazar. Mahmud holds master's degrees in Psychology (Rajshahi University, Bangladesh) and in Counselling and Clinical Psychology (National Dong Hwa University, Taiwan).