
2020 VISION: Mobilizing for Women's Rights and Eliminating Violence against Women

Speakers

Amal Abdel Hadi (Egypt), feminist and human rights activist, is a member of the Steering Committee of the Arab regional coalition "Equality without Reservation" on CEDAW and the planning Committee of Musawah (Equality and Justice in the Muslim Family). She has published and conducted extensive research and advocacy in the field of women's rights, particularly with regard to reproductive health, violence against women, and female genital mutilation. She served on a number of international and regional boards and coalitions, and is a founding member of the New Woman Foundation, the Task Force Against Female Genital Mutilation, and the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights.

Lina Abou Habib (Lebanon) is Executive Director of the Collective for Research and Training on Development–Action (CRTD-A), an organization that works in Lebanon and the MENA region on gender and citizenship, gender and economic rights, and women's leadership and public participation. CRTD-A is a partner of the Women's Learning Partnership International. It seeks to create opportunities for women to learn and exchange information about women's rights through networks of grassroots NGOs across the Middle East and North Africa. CRTD-A works collaboratively to develop communication and capacity building material and resources in Arabic and other regional languages that focus on women's human rights, gender, and development. CRTD-A also serves as the Middle East antenna of the International Gender and Trade Network. Ms. Abou-Habib serves on the Boards of the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) and Gender and Development and is a MENA advisor for the Global Fund for Women.

Mahnaz Afkhami (Iran/USA) is Founder and President of Women's Learning Partnership, Executive Director of the Foundation for Iranian Studies, and former Minister for Women's Affairs in Iran. She serves on advisory boards for Ethical Globalization Initiative, International Museum of Women, World Movement for Democracy, and the Women's Division of Human Rights Watch, among a number of other national and international organizations. Ms. Afkhami has been a leading advocate of women's rights internationally for more than three decades, and has written and lectured extensively on women's human rights, women in leadership, and women, civil society, and democracy. Her numerous publications have been widely translated and distributed internationally. She has authored numerous publications, among them *Muslim Women and the Politics of Participation* (1997), *Faith and Freedom: Women's Human Rights in the Muslim World* (1995), *Women in Exile* (1994), and *Women and the Law in Iran* (1993). Among the training manuals she has co-authored are *Claiming Our Rights: A Manual for Women's Human Rights Education in Muslim Societies*

(1996), *Safe and Secure: Eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls in Muslim Societies* (1998), and *Leading to Choices: A Leadership Training Handbook for Women* (2001).

Parvin Ardalan (Iran) is a leading Iranian women's rights activist, writer, and journalist. She has written extensively on the status of Iranian women. Among her publications is a major biography of Senator Mehrangiz Manouchehrian, a pioneer of human rights in Iran. Ms. Ardalan co-founded the One Million Signatures Campaign, and she was awarded the Olof Palme Prize in 2007 for her struggle for women's human rights in Iran. Now living in Sweden, Ms. Ardalan has worked with a group of activists inside and outside Iran to begin a call for a month of activism beginning March 8th in solidarity with the plight of Iranian women.

Shirin Ebadi (Iran), an Iranian lawyer and human rights activist, became the first Muslim woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003. She is the founder and head of the Association for Support of Children's Rights in Iran. For more than three decades she has steadfastly worked to improve Iranian women's legal rights and to protect the rights of the child. In Iran, Ms. Ebadi has been an advocate for an interpretation of Islamic law that upholds human rights, gender equality, freedom of religion, and freedom of speech. She has been involved in a number of high profile cases, including representing the families of writers and intellectuals who were victims of serial murders in 1999-2000. Ms. Ebadi received her law degree from the University of Tehran and in 1975 became one of the first female judges in Iran. She was forced to resign from the post following the revolution in 1979. She has written widely on children's rights and human rights conventions and declarations. Among her books translated into English are *The Rights of the Child: A Study of Legal Aspects of Children's Rights in Iran and History* and *Documentation of Human Rights in Iran*. She currently works as a lawyer and teaches courses at the University of Tehran.

Asma Khader (Jordan), a lawyer and human rights activist, is General Coordinator of Sisterhood Is Global Institute/Jordan (SIGI/J) and Secretary General of the Jordanian National Commission for Women. She is former Minister of Culture & Government Spokesperson for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and former President of the Jordanian Women's Union. A member of the Arab Lawyer's Union, the Arab Organization for Human Rights, the Executive Committee of the International Commission of Jurists, and the Advisory Committee of the Women's Division of Human Rights Watch, she has received numerous awards and honors for her work. Ms. Khader has written and spoken widely on the topics of women, children's rights, and human rights.

Arien Mack is the Alfred and Monette Marrow Professor of Psychology at The New School for Social Research, where she has edited *Social Research: An International Quarterly* since 1970. In 1988 she established the *Social Research* conference series, which she continues to direct and now includes twenty-one conferences. Professor Mack is also the founder and director of the Journal Donation Project, which assists in rebuilding major research and teaching libraries in countries that have fallen victim to political or economic deprivation, and often both, through the provision of current subscriptions and back volume sets of English-language scholarly, professional and current events journals. In 2007 she launched the Endangered Scholars Worldwide initiative, which is dedicated to raising public awareness of the plight of researchers, teachers, and writers who have been threatened, silenced or imprisoned. As a research psychologist, Professor Mack's current interests focus on perception, cognition, and attention. She teaches graduate-level psychology courses and

oversees a research lab at the New School for Social Research. Her publications include more than 60 articles, and the coauthored volume *Inattentional Blindness* (MIT Press, 1998).

Sindi Médar-Gould (Nigeria) is Executive Director of BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights. Previously, she was the Executive Director of WISSEA, Kano and the Coordinator of the Women and Law Program for Kano State. Ms. Médar-Gould is a life long activist and feminist with a record of 30 years standing in women's human rights work. She is an experienced trainer in gender, leadership, feminism, conflict resolution, gender budget analysis, human rights, and ethics. Ms. Médar-Gould serves as Chairperson of the Nigeria Coalition on the International Criminal Court.

Thoraya Obaid (Saudi Arabia) was appointed as Executive Director of UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, effective 1 January 2001, making her the first Saudi Arabian to head a United Nations agency. She has the rank of Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations. Ms. Obaid has a long and distinguished career at the United Nations. She has worked for the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) from 1975 to 1998, where she rose to the rank of Deputy Executive Secretary. In 1998, she moved to UNFPA as Director of the then-Division for Arab States and Europe, occupying that position until 2001, when she assumed her current post. Ms. Obaid is the first Saudi Arabian woman to receive a government scholarship to a university in the United States, in 1963. She has a doctorate degree in English Literature and Cultural Anthropology from Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. Ms. Obaid has received many awards and honours. She was ranked among the 50 Most Powerful Arab Women by *Forbes* magazine in 2004. She is also profiled as one of 100 Muslim Builders of World Civilization and Culture in *Notable Muslims*, a book published in Oxford, England, in 2006. Throughout her career, Ms. Obaid has championed the causes of women's and young people's health and empowerment. Her work focuses on supporting governments to establish programmes to empower women and develop their capacities as citizens with rights and responsibilities. She has also emphasized the importance of promoting development through a culturally sensitive approach, working within the context of each society, and taking into consideration cultural values and religious beliefs that shape people and affect their actions. As UNFPA Executive Director, she has introduced a focus on culture to the Fund's development work, linking gender, universal values of human rights and values of the human worth promoted by all religions and found in all cultures.

Jacqueline Pitanguy (Brazil), a sociologist and political scientist, is Founder and Director of Cidadania, Estudo, Pesquisa, Informação e Ação (Cepia), a non-governmental organization based in Rio de Janeiro. At Cepia, Ms. Pitanguy coordinates research on gender issues, and facilitates advocacy and educational programs relating to violence against women and reproductive health. She has held a cabinet position as President of the National Council for Women's Rights (1986-1989) where she designed and implemented public policies to improve women's condition in Brazil. Ms. Pitanguy serves on a number of international boards including as President of the Brazil Fund for Human Rights, Chair of the Board of Women's Learning Partnership, and as member of the Steering Committee of the World Movement for Democracy and of the Commission on Citizenship and Reproduction. In the past, she was Chair of the Board of the Global Fund for Women and has served on the boards of UNESCO, Carter Center's International Human Rights Council, the Society for International Development, Inter-American Dialogue, and CARE/Brasil. She has been awarded the Medal of Rio Branco, the highest decoration of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mary Robison (Ireland) is the President of Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative. She served as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights from 1997 to 2002 and as President of Ireland from 1990-1997. In 1988 Ms. Robison and her husband founded the Irish Centre for European Law at the Trinity College. Ten years later she was elected Chancellor of the University. She is a member of the Elders. As an academic (Trinity College Law Faculty 1968-90), legislator (Senator 1969-89) and barrister (1967-90. Senior Counsel 1980, English Bar 1973) she has always sought to use law as an instrument for social change, arguing landmark cases before the European Court of Human Rights as well as in the Irish courts and the European Court in Luxembourg. She serves as Honorary President of Oxfam International, chair of the GAVI Alliance Board and President of the International Commission of Jurists. She is a former chair of the Council of Women World Leaders and a member of the Club of Madrid. The recipient of numerous honours and awards throughout the world including the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Obama, she serves on several boards including the Mo Ibrahim Foundation and the Global Compact. She is a professor of practice at the University of Pretoria in South Africa and serves as Chancellor of Dublin University.

Melanne Verveer is the United States Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, where she coordinates foreign policy issues and activities relating to the political, economic, and social advancement of women around the world. She mobilizes concrete support for women's rights and political and economic empowerment through initiatives and programs designed to increase women's and girls' access to education and health care, to combat violence against women and girls in all its forms, and to ensure that women's rights are fully integrated with human rights in the development of U.S. foreign policy. Ambassador Verveer most recently served as Chair and Co-CEO of Vital Voices Global Partnership, an international nonprofit she co-founded. Vital Voices invests in emerging women leaders and works to expand women's roles in generating economic opportunity, promoting political participation, and safeguarding human rights. Prior to her work with Vital Voices, Ambassador Verveer served as Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to the First Lady in the Clinton Administration and was chief assistant to then-First Lady Hillary Clinton in all her wide-ranging international activities to advance women's rights and further social development, democracy and peace-building initiatives. She also led the effort to establish the President's Interagency Council on Women. Prior to her time in the White House, Ambassador Verveer served in a number of leadership roles in public policy organizations and as legislative staff. Ambassador Verveer has a B.A. and M.A. from Georgetown University. She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, Women's Foreign Policy Group, and numerous other organizations.