

Expert Group Meeting

UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women: Report on rape as a grave and systematic human rights violation and gender-based violence against women

27 May 2020

Participants

Dubravka Šimonović **UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences (SR VAW)**

Ms. Dubravka Šimonović was appointed as United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences in June 2015 by the UN Human Rights Council. She is mandated by the Human Rights Council to seek and receive information on violence against women, its causes and consequences and to respond effectively to such information, to recommend measures for the elimination of violence against women and to remedy its consequences, to work closely with other mechanisms, and to adopt a comprehensive and universal approach to the elimination violence against women, its causes and consequences.

Ms. Šimonović was a member of the CEDAW Committee between 2002 and 2014, and served as its Chairperson in 2007 and 2008, its follow-up Rapporteur from 2009 to 2011 and as the Chairperson of the Optional Protocol Working Group in 2011. She has served in the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a diplomat with the rank of Ambassador, and in a number of positions at the Council of Europe including co-chairing negotiation of the Istanbul convention on violence against women. She held academic roles at several universities and is also the author of a number of books and articles on women's rights and violence against women.

Yasmeen Hassan **Global Executive Director, Equality Now**

Yasmeen became the Global Executive Director of Equality Now in 2011 after serving as Deputy Executive Director and Director of Programs for three years. Previously, she was with the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women where she worked on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Secretary-General's study on violence against women. Yasmeen clerked on the D.C. Court of Appeals (1994-1995) and practiced corporate law at Davis Polk & Wardwell in New York and California (1995-2003). In 1999, Yasmeen edited Equality Now's first report on discriminatory laws. She has served on the Council on Foreign Relations' Advisory Board on Child Marriage, provided expert guidance to the U.N. Trust to End Violence Against Women, and advocates for women's rights through appearances in numerous media outlets, including [CNN](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [the Huffington Post](#), [the New York Times](#) and the [Washington Post](#). Yasmeen holds a J.D., *magna cum laude*, from Harvard Law School where, among other subjects, she studied Islamic law and women's rights. She also holds a B.A., *magna cum laude*, in Political Science from Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, USA.

For Yasmeen, the law makes a critical difference; it is a statement of your worth as a citizen and influences the direction your life will take. Growing up in Pakistan, her defining moment came at age 10 when her country's laws were 'Islamacized' treating women as second class citizens. Advocating for women's rights became a major part of Yasmeen's education and career, ultimately leading her to author the first study of domestic violence in Pakistan which became the nation's submission to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

Jacqui Hunt

Director Europe Office, Equality Now

Jacqui launched the Europe office in 2005. She has spearheaded several of Equality Now's successful campaigns, including for creation of a United Nations Working Group to focus on ending discrimination against women in law and in practice. While working for Equality Now, Jacqui was seconded to UNIFEM on a part-time basis for two years to support the International Women's Commission for a Just and Sustainable Middle East Peace. Prior to joining Equality Now, Jacqui practised law at Linklaters and for a development finance institution which invests in building businesses and creating jobs in some of the world's poorest countries. She started her professional career with Amnesty International, working in campaigning and research; at Amnesty's United Nations' office; and in press and special projects at AIUSA. Jacqui holds an MSc in International Relations from the London School of Economics and has some proficiency in French, German and Spanish.

Jacqui has always felt strongly that justice and fairness are something we should all work together to fight for so everyone has a chance at a happy and fulfilled life. She believes that the law is a powerful objective tool to hold people accountable to achieve this. Jacqui's heroes are people who are thoughtful, kind, generous, engaged and quietly go about being wonderful.

Antonia Kirkland

Global Lead, Legal Equality & Access to Justice, Equality Now

Prior to becoming the Global Lead for Legal Equality & Access to Justice, Antonia Kirkland was Equality Now's Legal Equality Program Manager, the Legal Advisor, and a Program Officer. Antonia has over 15 years of experience working across all of Equality Now's program areas, contributing to many of its major advocacy reports and campaigns and leading its work at the United Nations, including by serving on the Global Programme Advisory Committee of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women Antonia has spoken on high-level panels with government and UN officials and been quoted in leading outlets such as The Guardian, Reuters, Inter-Press Service, and The New York Times as well as on radio and TV.

Previously, Antonia was the coordinator of the Next Generation Leadership program at the Rockefeller Foundation; a consultant for Equality Now on an amicus brief for a case before the US Supreme Court; and an intern at Shearman & Sterling, LLP in Paris. Antonia holds a J.D. from Rutgers University School of Law, an M.Sc. in Gender Studies from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and a B.A. in International Relations from Brown University, USA. Growing up, Antonia was inspired by a poster in her fifth-grade classroom, which showed people from all over the world and the United Nations with an inscription of the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Antonia views international law as an example of countries aspiring and committing to do their best, and our job is holding them accountable for promoting and protecting all women's and girls' rights including through legal reform, the foundation for equality.

Christine Chinkin

London School of Economics and Political Science

Hilary Gbedemah,	Chair, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee)
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Marceline Naudi	President, Group of experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)
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Dr Marceline Naudi (B.A.,M.A.(Bradford),Ph.D.(Manchester)) is a social worker by profession and a Senior Lecturer and Head of Department of Gender and Sexualities, at the University of Malta. She contributes to teaching and supervision of student research on gender issues, violence against women and other anti-oppressive issues at Diploma, Bachelor, Master and Doctoral level. She acts as Regional Editor of the Journal on Gender Based Violence and a member of both the Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE) and the European Observatory of Femicide (EOF) Advisory Boards. Marceline is active on the issues of gender equality and violence against women, LGBTIQ, as well as wider human rights issues, both in Malta and in Europe.

Tatiana Rein	Chair, Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI)
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Tatiana Rein is the Chair of the Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention. She is Assistant Professor at the Institute of International Studies, University of Chile. She is a lawyer, with an MA in International Studies and a PhD in Government. Her research interests include gender, women's movements, violence against women, women's political participation and human rights.

Ivana Radačić	Member, UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women (WGDAW)
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Margarette May Macaulay	Rapporteur on the Rights of Women of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)
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Amanda Dale	International human rights scholar and activist
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Jane Connors	UN Victims' Rights Advocate
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Jane Connors is the Victims' Rights Advocate for the United Nations, a post at Assistant Secretary-General level, to which she was appointed in August 2017. Immediately prior to this appointment, Jane was Amnesty International's Director of International Advocacy. From 1996 to 2015, she held increasingly responsible posts in the United Nations, including as Chief of the Women's Rights Section in the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs at United Nations Headquarters; Chief of the Special Procedures Branch and Director of the Research and Right to Development Division at the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Before joining the United Nations, she was a law teacher at the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London, the Universities of Lancaster and Nottingham, in the United Kingdom, and the University of Canberra and the Australian National University in Australia.

She has written on United Nations human rights mechanisms, in particular human rights treaty bodies

and the Human Rights Council's special procedures, the human rights of women, and violence against women and children. Ms. Connors holds a Masters of Laws, Bachelor of Laws (Honours) and Bachelor of Arts from the Australian National University. In July 2019, she was awarded a doctorate in laws honoris causa by the Australian National University.

Amarsanaa Darisuren **Senior Adviser on Gender Issues, Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE)**

A gender equality advocate with extensive expertise on the implementation of international human rights norms and standards, in particular CEDAW. She specializes in the areas of law and policy reform, access to justice, gender-based violence, the economic and political empowerment of marginalized groups, and practical strategies for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. She has a strong background in capacity development for gender mainstreaming in various areas. Prior to OSCE, she worked with UN Women, international and national non-governmental organisations that promote gender equality and women's empowerment, where she provided technical expertise to governments, intergovernmental organisations, and UN agencies.

Genoveva Tisheva **Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee)**

Member from Bulgaria of the UN CEDAW Committee for the period 2019- 2022.
Chair of the most recently established Working group on GBV against women.

Managing Director of the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, Chair of the Alliance for Protection from Gender- Based Violence.

Genoveva is a lawyer, researcher and advocate, Expert in the field of Gender Equality and Women's Rights; extensive experience in legal reform- participation in drafting of the Bulgarian Law for Protection against Domestic violence, of legislation on gender equality and anti- discrimination; experience in representing women victims in national and international litigation- *Bevacqua and S. v. Bulgaria* before the ECtHR in Strasbourg and assisting the victim in *V.P.P. v. Bulgaria* under the OP CEDAW.

Genoveva is Director and lecturer in the Women's Human Rights Training Institute – an international educational programme established since 2004 in Bulgaria. Over 120 lawyers from Europe and also several lawyers from Africa and Asia were trained in English in the Institute and taught on all international mechanisms for protection of women's rights against violence, discrimination in employment and in their reproductive and health rights. The relevant UN and European standards and mechanisms, including EU standards, make part of the programme.

Genoveva Tisheva is member of the European Network of Legal Experts in Gender Equality and Non- Discrimination and was Vice- Chair of the European Women Lawyers' Association/EWLA/ until the end of 2019.

Holds the 2017 Special Human Rights Defender's Award of the Advocates for Human Rights from Minnesota.

Anna Błus **Amnesty International**

Anna Błus is a Researcher on Western Europe and Women's Rights at Amnesty International's

Europe Regional Office based at the International Secretariat in London. She has been researching women's access to justice for rape in Europe for the past 3 years as part of Amnesty's Let's Talk About Yes project.

She previously worked with the AIRE Centre in the UK and NASC, the Migrant and Refugee Rights Centre in Ireland and is an alumna of the University of Warsaw and the Irish Centre for Human Rights.

Olivia Björklund Dahlgren **FATTA**

Anna Zobnina **European Women's Lobby**

Anna Zobnina is a member of the Executive Committee of the European Women's Lobby (EWL). Born in Russia, she is a feminist activist and researcher and has over ten years of experience analysing male violence against women, specifically focusing on migrant and refugee women and sexual and reproductive rights. She is the coordinator of the European Network of Migrant Women (ENOMW), a migrant women led feminist Europe-wide platform that advocates for the rights, freedom and dignity of migrant and refugee women and girls European and international level. She is a selected expert with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and a former Research Analyst with the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS).

Nisha Varian **Human Rights Watch**

Cheryl Thomas **Global Rights for Women**

Cheryl Thomas is the founding Director of Global Rights for Women. Since 1993, Cheryl has worked with partners around the world to promote women's human rights and achieve effective legal reform to end violence against women. She has participated in the drafting of new laws on violence against women and girls in over 20 countries and trained legal and community professionals to enforce such laws in dozens of countries. She has worked closely with the United Nations to develop model standards on legal reform on violence against women leading a global consultation on the enforcement of laws in Spain in 2015. She has participated in numerous UN Expert Group Meetings on violence against women including in 2008 when she co-chaired the meeting to draft UN *Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women*. In 2011, she was recognized by *Newsweek* magazine as one of 150 "Women Who Shake the World". Former positions include Director of the Women's Rights Program at The Advocates for Human Rights, Executive Director at WATCH, partner and Shareholder at Briggs and Morgan Law Firm, Special Assistant Attorney General and the Minnesota Attorney General's Office and Adjunct Professor at the University of Minnesota Law School.

Sara Hossain **BLAST**

Sara Hossain is a barrister practicing in the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, mainly in the areas of constitutional, public interest and family law. She is a partner at the law firm of Dr. Kamal Hossain and Associates, and serves pro bono as the Honorary Executive Director of the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust. She is a member of the Board of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, and associated with several international civil society initiatives (the Advisory Board of the Open Society Justice Initiative, the Advisory Committee of the Women's International Coalition on Gender Justice (WICG) the Bureau of South Asians for Human Rights, as and the International Commission on the Chittagong Hill Tracts).

In 2016, Sara was appointed by the President of the UN Human Rights Council to serve as a member

of the Group of Experts on Accountability in the DPRK, and from July 2018 to March 2019 as a member of the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Gaza Protests of 2018. Sara also participated in the Task Force on Justice, convened by Pathfinders International, focusing on SDG 16.

Sara ran the South Asia Programme at INTERIGHTS from 1997 to 2003. She was a founding board member of the South Asia Women's Fund (now the Women's Fund Asia) and served as a Commissioner of the International Commission of Jurists.

Sara's casework on women's rights before the Supreme Court of Bangladesh has included among others, representing public interest petitioners, including BLAST, in writs challenging 'fatwa' violence (degrading punishments being imposed on women and girls accused of violating community norms on sexuality), 'forced veiling' and the use of the 'two finger test' as a form of medical evidence collection. She had also been involved in amicus/ third party briefs including in relation to constitutional litigation before the Supreme Court of Nepal in a case challenging marital rape as discrimination, before the European Court of Human Rights challenging the requirement of proof of force to establish rape (*MC v Bulgaria*), and to the ICC an amicus brief, with WICGJ and Naripokkho, on the issue of the deportation of Rohingyas from Myanmar.

Sara writes and speaks on public interest law, human rights and women's rights and access to justice. Her publications include "Confronting Constitutional Curtailments: Attempts to Rebuild Independence of the Judiciary in Bangladesh," in Paul Brass (ed) *Handbook of Politics in South Asia* (Routledge, 2010), 'Wayward Girls and Well-Wisher Parents: Habeas Corpus, Women's Rights to Consent and the Bangladesh Courts' in Aisha Gill (ed) *Forced Marriage* (Zed, London 2010); (with Bina de Costa) "Redress for Sexual Violence Before the International Crimes Tribunal in Bangladesh: Lessons from History, and Hopes for the Future" in *Criminal Law Forum*, Volume 21, Number 2, 331-359; (Co-edited with Lynn Welchman) "*Honour*": *Crimes, Paradigms and Violence against Women* (Zed Books, London, 2005), (co-edited with Dina M. Siddiqi) *Human Rights in Bangladesh 2007* (ASK, Dhaka, 2008), (with Sajeda Amin), : "Rohingya Refugee Women and Girls: Remedies and Responses to Sexual and Gender based Violence in Bangladesh" in Imtiaz Ahmed (ed) *The Rohingya Refugee Crisis: Towards Sustainable Solutions*, (Dhaka 2019).

Sara was educated at Wadham College, Oxford (MA (Hons) 1988), called to the Bar from Middle Temple (1989), enrolled in the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh (1992) and then in the Appellate Division in 2008.

She has received awards from the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (now Human Rights First), the US State Department (Women of Courage), 'Ananya' magazine and been selected as a World Economic Forum Fellow and an Asia 21 Fellow.

Rosalyn Park

The Advocates for Human Rights

Rosalyn Park is the Director of the Women's Human Rights Program at The Advocates for Human Rights. She is an internationally recognized expert on violence against women issues. Rosalyn has served as an expert for multiple NGOs, the UN, OSCE, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union on women's human rights. She conducts written and in-person advocacy before charter- and treaty-based bodies at the United Nations on issues related to women's rights, safety of human rights defenders, as well as "gender ideology" and other backlash to human rights matters. She was a core member of the international UN Gender Network, a coalition established to examine gender equality policies within the UN and their impact on the UN's approach to the Sustainable Development Goals. She has led fact-finding missions in several countries and frequently develops and conducts trainings for lawyers,

human rights defenders, and systems actors locally and internationally.

Mary Ellsberg

George Washington University

Dr. Mary Ellsberg is the Founding Director of the Global Women's Institute at the George Washington University. Dr. Ellsberg has more than 30 years of experience in international research and programs to prevent violence against women and girls. Before joining the university in August 2012, Dr. Ellsberg served as Vice President for Research and Programs at the International Center for Research on Women. Dr. Ellsberg's deep connection to global gender issues stems not only from her academic work, but also from living in Nicaragua for nearly 20 years, leading public health and women's rights advocacy. She was a member of the core research team of the World Health Organization's Multi-Country Study on Domestic Violence and Women's Health, and she has authored more than 50 books and articles on violence against women and girls. Dr. Ellsberg earned a doctorate in epidemiology and public health from Umea University in Sweden and a bachelor's degree in Latin American studies from Yale University.

Sylvia Walby

City University of London

Sylvia Walby OBE is Director of the Violence and Society Centre and Professor of Sociology, at City, University of London. She is Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, UK; Chair of the Sociology Sub-Panel for the UK's Research Excellence Framework 2021; recipient of an OBE for services to equal opportunities and diversity; and the recipient of the Anneliese Maier Research Award from the Humboldt Foundation, 2018-2023. She has researched and published on violence, especially the measurement of gender-based violence, including with colleagues, *The Concept and Measurement of Violence against Women and Men* (Policy Press, 2017) and *Stopping Rape: Towards a Comprehensive Policy* (Policy Press, 2015). Other books include: *Crisis* (Polity Press 2015), *The Future of Feminism* (Polity Press 2011) and *Globalization and Inequalities* (Sage 2009). She has advised the UK government, the Council of Europe, the EU, and UN Women on gender-based violence. Centre website: www.city.ac.uk/violence-society; personal website: www.city.ac.uk/people/academics/sylvia-walby

Vrinda Grover

Lawyer and activist

Vrinda Grover is a lawyer, researcher and human rights activist based in New Delhi, India. She obtained her law degree from Delhi University and her Masters in Law from New York University, School of Law. She actively engages with the women's rights and human rights movements.

As a lawyer she specialises in constitutional law, criminal law and human rights and has appeared in landmark cases representing victims and survivors of, sexual violence, communal conflict, extra-judicial executions, sexual minorities, human rights defenders and media practitioners.

Vrinda has contributed to the drafting of laws to protect women and children from domestic violence and sexual violence including, The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005; The Prevention of Torture Bill 2010; The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012; The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. She played a key role in 2012 in campaigning for amendment of criminal laws relating to sexual violence against women, which led to the passing of The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013 and the model medical protocol for examination of rape victims.

In 2018 she was a member Independent Expert Panel on Prevention of and Response to Harassment,

including Sexual Harassment, Bullying and Abuse of Power at UNAIDS Secretariat. Vrinda has been a member of the UN Women – Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG). She has actively engaged with UN human rights mechanisms, including submitting shadow reports to the CEDAW Committee and the Universal Periodic Review Process.

Vrinda's research and writing probes the role of law in the subordination of women. Impunity for targeted violence against religious minorities and human rights violations in areas of conflict, has been a focus area of her research.

In 2018, she was conferred an Honorary Degree by SOAS, University of London, in recognition of her contribution to the area of human rights and civil liberties.

Brisa De Angulo **CEO & Founder, A Breeze of Hope**

Brisa De Angulo, Esq., MA is a human right activist dedicated to improving access to justice and healing for child and adolescent survivors of sexual violence. As a survivor of childhood sexual violence, Brisa uses her experience and expertise to challenge the status quo and improve social conditions for children. Brisa is founder of A Breeze of Hope Foundation, which has operated Bolivia's most advanced center for child victims of sexual violence since 2004. Brisa holds a Juris Doctorate, a Master of Arts in Experimental Psychology with a specialization in Neuropsychology, and a Bachelor of Science in Psychology.

In addition, Brisa is a public speaker, researcher, and co-author of many books on sexual violence, the neurobiological impact of trauma, trauma recovery, human rights, and early childhood development. Brisa is also author of a landmark study on the prevalence and dynamics of sexual violence in Bolivia. Brisa's outstanding accomplishments have garnered recognition from around the world. She is winner of the following international awards and prizes:

- The Compass of Consciousness, 2020
- World of Children Award, 2019
- CNN Heroes, 2018
- BBC Outlook Inspirations Award, 2018
- With and For Girls Award, 2017
- Eastern University Distinguished Alumni Award, 2017
- Together for Girls, 16 Heroes, 2016
- Premio Vidanta—1st Prize, 2016
- Futures Without Violence Global Impact Award, 2015

Barbara Jiménez-Santiago **Equality Now (Americas)**

Barbara Jimenez Santiago, a feminist and human rights lawyer, joined Equality Now in 2018. She has 10 years of experience advocating for access to justice, gender equality and the elimination of discrimination and violence against girls and women in Puerto Rico and in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

Her favorite quote is from Nilita Vientós Gastón, a Puerto Rican lawyer, writer, journalist and professor. She said that she was moved by three principles: "Unconformity with everything that needs to be improved. Dissent with everything that offends human dignity and should be changed. Unlimited enthusiasm to fight for dissenters and dissidents. "

She firmly believes in a world where women and girls can live and walk free and safe. She gets up

daily with the commitment to leave behind a more just and equitable world for her daughter and other girls in the world. She lives feminism and through the law she advocates for real changes.

Tamar Dekanosidze **Equality Now (Eurasia)**

Tamar Dekanosidze joined Equality Now in April 2018. Tamar is a human rights lawyer with ten years of experience in law and advocacy. Her work has brought her around the world from Georgia and Kosovo, as well as the UK and the US. Before joining Equality Now, Tamar did strategic human rights litigation focusing on women's rights in Georgia, non-discrimination, health rights, as well as on Georgia-Russia conflict-related cases. She has brought cases of femicide and gender-based violence before the European Court of Human Rights and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. She has also done research on sexual and reproductive health and rights, feminist critiques of law and the response of justice systems and crimes against women. Tamar has a B.A. in Law from Tbilisi State University (Georgia) and obtained her LLM in International Human Rights Law at the University of Essex (UK).

Asma Khader **SIGI (MENA Region)**

Judy Gitau **Equality Now (Africa)**

Judy Gitau is the Regional Coordinator, Africa for Equality Now. Previously, she consulted with Equality Now Africa Office, specifically working on the domestication and implementation of African Union Instruments in Africa, on the Rights of women. She has previously worked as a Technical Advisor on Transitional Justice for a Justice Sector Development Project in post-conflict Somaliland specializing in access to justice for victims of sexual and gender based violence. She has also worked as a Programme Officer with the Kenyan Section of the International Commission of Jurists managing projects that promoted accountability through prosecution of international crimes in Kenya and the Eastern Africa region (Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania and Sudan). Some of her key achievements include being part of Equality Now core team in filing a suit against the Sierra Leonean government at the ECOWAS court of justice for denying pregnant school girls the right to education. Judy is also a published author in the field of transitional justice and international criminal law.

She is an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya and a member of the Kenyan Chartered institute of Arbitrators. She read Law at the University of Nairobi and mastered in International Human Rights Law at the University of Oxford.

For Judy, the thought that injustice can be visited on someone and that person will have no recourse in law is unfathomable. She is driven to act for women who have been on the receiving end of injustice. Her favourite quote is by Theodore Roosevelt, "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming"

Alexandra Patsalides **Equality Now (Meeting Rapporteur)**

Alexandra Patsalides joined Equality Now in March 2018. Alexandra is a lawyer and most recently worked on the promotion of women's rights in Cyprus as a researcher at the Mediterranean Institute of

Gender Studies (MIGS). She has experience in human rights field work in Kosovo with the OSCE and participated in the drafting working groups of the Kosovo National Action Plan on Domestic Violence 2017-2020. Alexandra also worked at the European Commission and the Permanent Representation of Cyprus to the EU. Alexandra studied Law at the London School of Economics and Political Science (UK) and earned a Masters in Law in Public Law and Human Rights at University College London.

It was through her work in Kosovo that she became more aware of the patriarchal obstacles and challenges facing women. This experience motivated her to advocate for the elimination of structural gender discrimination and work towards ensuring that there are strong laws in place guaranteeing gender equality. Alexandra draws inspiration from her mother, a true feminist who taught her the importance of treating others with compassion, respect and patience. Her favorite quote is by Malala Yousafzai: “We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back.”

Divya Srinivasan

Equality Now (Meeting Rapporteur)

Divya Srinivasan joined Equality Now in August 2017. Divya is a licensed attorney in India with a background in women's rights, including work on sexual harassment in the workplace and sexual violence against women. She was an associate in labor and employment law at Trilegal, one of India's leading law firms, prior to obtaining her LLM degree from Harvard Law School (US).

Divya is inspired to advocate for women's and girls' rights based on the hope that she can bring about positive change in at least one person's life. She believes that good laws are indispensable in the fight for gender equality and is inspired by the countless women all over the world who manage to succeed against impossible odds. Her favorite quote is by Mahatma Gandhi: “In a gentle way, you can shake the world.”

Suad Abu-Dayyeh

Equality Now

Suad joined Equality Now in 2008. Prior to joining the organization, she worked 10 years with the Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC) in Jerusalem, a Palestinian feminist NGO that addresses gender-based violence in Palestinian Society within the private and public spheres. Suad holds an M.A. in Women and Development from the Institute of Social Studies in the Netherlands, a Bachelor's in Social Work from Bethlehem University and a Bachelor's in Law from Al Ahliyya Amman University in Jordan. She is currently pursuing a Master's in Public Law at Middle East University Jordan.

Living in a patriarchal society that discriminates against women and girls inspires Suad to advocate for the rights of women and girls. Her inspiration in life is Maha Abu-Dayyeh Shamas, who passed away in 2015.

Maike van Adrichem

Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE)

Maike van Adrichem took up her present function as Adviser on Gender Issues in the Gender Section of the Office of the Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in January 2016.

Before joining OSCE, Ms. Van Adrichem worked with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the Middle East between 2010 – 2015. As a Gender & Rights Officer, she supported the

implementation of the Gender Action Plan and gender mainstreaming in the Country Offices in the UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office in Amman, Jordan. From 2014-2015 she was responsible for the design and implementation of the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) prevention and response programme as part of the Syria refugee response and the regular development programme, in the Child Protection team of the UNICEF Jordan Country Office. Ms. Van Adrichem started her career working for NGOs in the Netherlands on human rights, democratization and gender issues and also gained experience with the Netherlands Red Cross supporting the humanitarian response at the Southern Africa and Middle East desk.

Ms. Van Adrichem studied International Relations at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen in the Netherlands, obtaining her masters in 2008, followed by an Advanced Master in International Development at the Center for International Development Issues in Nijmegen (CIDIN).

Luz Patricia Mejia	Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI)
Eva Villareal	Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI)
Federica Donati	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
Georgina Mendoza Solorio	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
Orlagh McCann	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
Renata Preturlan	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
Hannah Wu	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights