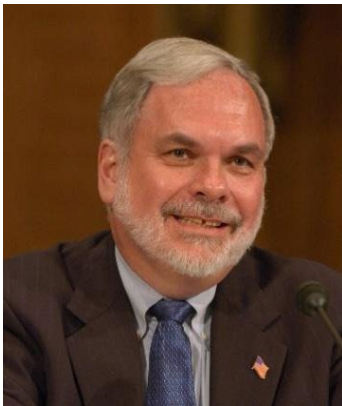


36th United Nations International Day of Older Persons The Age of Longevity: Rethinking Systems for Longer Lives

Thursday, 8 October 2026 | 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
ECOSOC Chamber (tbc), United Nations Headquarters, New York

Meet the Speakers



William Smith

Chair NGO Committee on Ageing in New York

William T. Smith, Ph.D., is the Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing and is President/Chief Executive Officer of Aging in America, Inc. Dr. Smith has been in the field of social work since 1971, with the last forty-eight years dedicated to the field of gerontology. Nationally recognised as an expert on gerontological issues, Dr. Smith was formerly the Executive Director of St. Cabrini Nursing Home in Dobbs Ferry, New York, for thirteen years. He has served as an Assistant Professor of Public Health Administration at Pace University and an Adjunct Professor in the School of Social Services at Fordham University. Dr. Smith, whose doctorate in Social Work with a concentration in Gerontology is from Fordham University, has also earned a Master's in Social Work in

Administration/Case Work from Hunter College and a Bachelor of Science in Family and Child Welfare Services from the University of Wisconsin. He is a member of the National Association of Social Workers, the Gerontological Society of America, and the American College of Health Care Administrators. He served as a member of the Federal Advisory Committee on the Future of VA Long Term Care. He was a member of the Board of Directors and Past Chair of LeadingAge in Washington, D.C. and serves as their liaison to the United Nations. He chairs the Board of Directors of Cardinal McCloskey Community Services and continues to serve as a long-standing board member of the Westchester Public and Private Partnership.



Arjanita Elezaj

Executive Board Member, UN NGO Committee on Ageing, New York Chair, UNIDOP Programme Subcommittee

Arjanita Elezaj is a former journalist, leader, and advocate with over 30 years of experience in programme development, human rights, and nonprofit leadership. She began her career as a journalist in Tirana, Albania, where she conducted investigative reporting and advocated for democratic change. Her career has centered on advancing equity through older adult services, youth engagement, and women's empowerment within immigrant and multicultural communities.

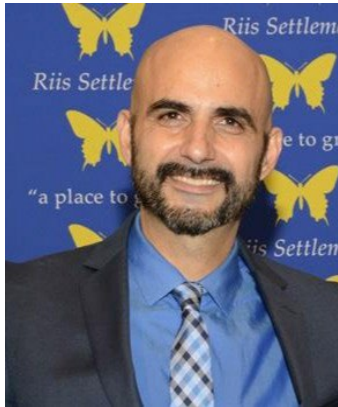
Currently, she serves as Director of Direct Service Programs at the New York City Department for the Aging, where she manages complex, cross-bureau initiatives and coordinates home-based service contracts. Previously, she served as Deputy Director of Older Adult Services at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, one of the oldest Settlement Houses and social services organisation in New York city.

As an Executive Board Member of both the NGO Committee on Ageing and the NGO Committee on Human Rights at the United Nations, Arjanita actively promotes global inclusion and social justice. She serves as Chair of the UN International Day of Older Persons (UNIDOP) Programme Subcommittee and as UN representative of the International Federation of Ageing (IFA) and the International Settlement Houses and Neighborhood Centers (IFS), both organisations with ECOSOC consultative status.

A frequent speaker on the role of civil society in ageing policy, human rights, and community engagement, Arjanita has presented at national and international conferences including National Conference for the Aging (USA), the Live-On New York Conference, the UN Commission on the Status of Women, various High Level

Political Forums (HLPF) at the UN and has made interventions on behalf of civil society in several stakeholder engagements with the president of the General Assembly at the UN.

Arjanita holds an MPA from John Jay College and a BA in Economics and Business Reporting from Tirana State University. She is a Board Member of the Community Research Fellowship programme at New York University School of Global Public Health and continues to champion civic engagement, women's rights, and intergenerational community building in New York City. Additionally, as a Board Member of the US Center for Workforce Inclusion (CWI), she promotes active, strength based, healthy ageing and positive impact for older persons nationwide.



Christopher Hanway

Vice-Chair of the UNIDOP 2026 Programme Sub-Committee, NGO Committee on Ageing New York

Since 2014, Christopher Hanway has served as the Executive Director of Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement, a community-based social service organization in Long Island City, Queens, which annually serves thousands of public housing residents and their families, including hundreds of older adults. Before that, he served as the organisation's Director of Development and communications for five years. Mr. Hanway has over 23 years of professional experience in the not-for-profit sector, most notably at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center, the Institute for Classical Architecture, and the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. He received his B.A. from Hunter College of the City University of New York and his Master's degree in Public Administration from Baruch College, where he currently serves as an Adjunct Instructor. He sits on several boards,

including United Neighborhood Houses of New York, the Chhaya Community Development Corporation, and the International Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers, a worldwide organisation with full ECOSOC consultative status. Mr. Hanway is the immediate past Chair of the NGO Committee on Migration, which advocates at the United Nations and other international organisations on behalf of migrants, refugees, and asylees worldwide, and serves on the Executive Committee of the NGO Committee on Ageing in New York. He is also the Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing's Programme Committee.



H.E. Mr. Francisco Fabian Tropepi

Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations

Ambassador Francisco Fabián Tropepi was born on 23 October 1974 in Olavarría, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina. A career diplomat, he holds a Bachelor's Degree in International Relations from the Universidad del Salvador (1999). He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina in 2007, serving in a range of senior positions both at headquarters and abroad. Early in his career, he worked in the Directorate for Bordering Countries, covering Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay, and later in the General Directorate of Bilateral Latin American Policy. He subsequently held postings at the Argentine Embassy in Mexico, where he served as Head of the Political Section (2010–2014), and at the Embassy of Argentina in the Russian Federation, where he was Head of the Political Section from 2014 to 2018. Following his return to Buenos Aires, he served in the Cabinet of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs (2018) and

as Director of Intermediate Organizations and Public Diplomacy (2019). He was later posted to the Embassy of Argentina in the State of Israel, where he served as Deputy Chief of Mission (2020–2022) and Chargé d'Affaires a.i. (2022–2024). In 2024, he was appointed Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Argentina in the United States. Ambassador Tropepi's academic work includes a promotion thesis titled *"The Control System of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and Argentina's Foreign Policy"*, for which he received the highest grade (2018). He is fluent in English and Portuguese, has working knowledge of Italian, and a basic level of Russian. He is married and has two children.



H.E. Mr. Roberto Ampuero Espinoza

Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations and Chair of the Group of Friends of Older Persons

Roberto Ampuero Espinoza currently serves as Chile's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, a position to which he was appointed in March 2026. He is a writer, diplomat, journalist, academic, and former foreign minister. Ampuero is widely regarded as one of Chile's most prominent contemporary authors. He spent more than two decades living in Cuba and both East and West Germany, experiences that shaped his literary focus on migration, identity, political conflict, exile, and cultural differences. His writing frequently explores justice, displacement, and the human impact of political change. Beyond literature, Ampuero has served as Chile's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Culture, and Ambassador to Mexico and Spain. He is the author of more than twenty books

translated into numerous languages and remains an influential voice in both Chilean public life and international literature.



H.E. Mr. Abdulaziz M. Alwasil

Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations and Chair of the Group of Friends on Ageing and Sustainable Development

H.E. Ambassador Abdulaziz Alwasil assumed the role of Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations Headquarters in New York in July 2022, following his tenure as Ambassador & Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office in Geneva since November 2016. Prior to joining the diplomatic service, Ambassador Alwasil held diverse positions in both the public and private sectors. His career commenced as a college lecturer in Riyadh and an assistant lecturer in the United States of America.

In 1999, Ambassador Alwasil embarked on his diplomatic journey, focusing extensively on multilateral and human rights affairs. He served as Deputy Head of Mission at Saudi Arabia's Embassy in London for over three years and undertook assignments in Australia, London, and Geneva. Ambassador Alwasil has an extensive educational background, holding a PhD in International Relations, a Master's Degree in Political Science, and a Bachelor's Degree in Arabic language and literature.



Haleh Nazeri

Lead, Longevity Economy, World Economic Forum

Haleh Nazeri leads the World Economic Forum's Global Longevity Initiative and its work on individual financial resilience within the Centre for Financial and Monetary Systems. Her work brings together leaders from business, government, academia and civil society to address the financial, economic and societal implications of longer lives, with a focus on building more resilient, inclusive and sustainable financial systems.

She has led the Forum's work on the Longevity Economy since its inception, advancing a cross-sector agenda that connects health, wealth, work and care across the life course. Through research, public-private collaboration and global partnerships, her work explores how demographic change is reshaping financial

services, labour markets, healthcare and retirement systems, while identifying innovative solutions to improve financial resilience and healthy ageing.

Haleh has written and spoken extensively on the need for coordinated, multistakeholder approaches to longevity and demographic transformation and has represented the Forum on Bloomberg podcasts, the Wall Street Journal's *Future of Everything* event, and convenings at the United Nations.

In addition, Haleh leads the Forum's Women in Finance community, a global network of more than 75 senior executives from financial services, investment, real estate and government. The community convenes leaders to

examine emerging challenges shaping the financial system and to develop collaborative, action-oriented solutions that can be advanced through the World Economic Forum.



Amal Abou Rafeh

Chief, Programme on Ageing, Social Development Division, UN DESA

Amal Abou Rafeh works on population ageing and the situation of older persons, with a focus on the economic, social and human rights dimensions of ageing. Her work brings together data, policy analysis and multi-stakeholder engagement to support the anticipation of and adaptation to demographic change. She is the Head of the Programme on Ageing at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and serves as the permanent Co-Chair of the United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Ageing (IAGA). She is also a member of the United Nations Task Team on Demographic Change and the Steering Committee of the World Economic Forum's Longevity Economy Initiative. In 2025, she contributed to the organization of the Second World Summit for Social Development in Doha as part of

the Secretariat. Amal has over 25 years of experience working at regional and international levels, engaging with governments, academia, the private sector and civil society. Her work has included policy development, demographic analysis and capacity-building. She has also taught demographic data analysis and continues to collaborate with research communities.

Her work has been recognized with the Rosalie Wolf Memorial Award for advancing the protection of older persons. She holds a Master of Science in Population Studies from the American University of Beirut and received the Penrose Award for scholarship, character and leadership. Originally from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, she is a proud mother to her son.



Briana Gilmore

Head of Global Accessibility Policy, Uber Technologies Inc.

Briana Gilmore works as the Head of Global Accessibility Policy at Uber, where she guides the company's vision and strategy to be the world's most accessible mobility and delivery platform. She's spent the past 20 years working at the intersections of disability advocacy, healthcare policy, user-led design, and geography and planning that supports community integration. She holds a Research Master's Degree from the University of Amsterdam in International Development and Urban Planning.



Jonathan Perry

Social Affairs Officer, Social Development Division, UN DESA

At the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in New York, Jonathan is a lead author of the UN's annual flagship World Social Report. He started his career in Bangladesh with the UK Government, before joining UNICEF to work in both Jordan and Iraq during the Syrian refugee crisis. Today he is part of a team conducting research and analysis on emerging issues in social development and providing policy advice to UN Member States in the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.



Chris Durrance

Filmmaker, Well Beings/WETA, Well Beings/WETA

Chris Durrance is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, and director of the forthcoming PBS series “Defeating Dementia.” Previously, Durrance directed “Caregiving” for PBS and worked on more than a dozen films for FRONTLINE, three presidential biographies and an independent documentary on gerrymandering – *Slay the Dragon* – which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival. He is the winner of a Peabody, two Emmys, a duPont-Columbia silver baton and an Overseas Press Club award. Recently, Durrance directed two major PBS series on science and medicine – *Cancer: The Emperor of All Maladies* and *The Gene*. He is the founder of Seven One Eight Studios.



Linde Lee Jacobs

MAPT Mutation Carrier, RN, Patient Advocate and Co-Founder, Cure MAPT Frontotemporal Dementia

Linde is a Registered Nurse, wife, and mother to two beautiful daughters. She has become an outspoken advocate for FTD as a multigenerational caregiver, starting in adolescence with her grandmother. Linde then became a primary caregiver at the age of 22, when her mother subsequently developed symptoms of genetic FTD caused by a MAPT mutation.

Fuelled by failures of her family’s past while also fearing for the years ahead, Linde decided to take control of her future. She co-founded a non-profit organisation, Cure MAPT FTD, engaging in research studies, serving on governmental committees, and has been a featured guest and keynote speaker at multiple conferences, podcasts, newscasts and research institutes. In December 2024, she was featured in a cover

story in The New York Times and will be featured in an upcoming PBS documentary.

Everything is done in honour of her mother in the pursuit of a better future for her daughters. Forever fighting.



Gregor Sneddon

Secretary General, International Federation on Ageing

Gregor Sneddon is Secretary General of the International Federation on Ageing (IFA), where he leads global efforts to advance healthy ageing and longevity ready societies through policy, partnerships, and advocacy. With a background spanning humanitarian response, ordained ministry, and civil society leadership—including as former Executive Director of HelpAge Canada—he brings a deep commitment to justice, equity, and the rights of older persons.

The IFA is a global civil society organisation dedicated to advancing healthy ageing and longevity through intersectoral collaboration. With general consultative status with the United Nations and formal relations with the World Health Organization, the IFA acts as a trusted, neutral convener bringing together diverse sectors to

build shared understanding, bridge silos, and explore how policies, systems and investment can better adapt to longer lives.



Emilio Umeoka

Stanford Center on Longevity Ambassador, The New Map of Life Initiative

Emilio Umeoka is a global leader driving conversations and initiatives on longevity, diversity, and inclusive leadership. As an ambassador for the Stanford Center on Longevity’s “*New Map of Life*,” he champions innovative strategies to harness the potential of an ageing population and foster a thriving multigenerational workforce.

Emilio’s work bridges continents, and he actively promotes the growth of emerging minority leaders through initiatives like Ascend, the world’s largest network for Pan-Asian professionals, and the Brazil at Silicon Valley Organization, which supports Brazil’s growth through innovation.

His previous executive experience includes leading Microsoft Brazil, Microsoft Asia-Pacific in Singapore, and Apple's Global Enterprise Business in Silicon Valley.

Emilio is a Fellow at Stanford's Distinguished Careers Institute (DCI) and co-leads the Longevity Learning and Impact Group, driving initiatives that shape workforce dynamics and the future of society.



Dr. Linda P. Fried

**Dean Emerita, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health,
Director, Robert N. Butler Columbia Aging Center**

Linda P. Fried, MD, MPH, is Director of the Robert N. Butler Columbia Aging Center, Butler Professor of Healthy Longevity, and Dean Emerita (from 2008 to 2025) of the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. Prior to 2008 she was the Director of Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology and founding Director of the Center on Aging and Health at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. A geriatrician and epidemiologist, Dr. Fried is an international leader in the potential opportunities of longevity, including the creation of health across long lives and the untapped social capital of older people; in combination, there is potential to create a Third Demographic Dividend in which all ages can thrive due

to longevity. Dr. Fried is a population scientist who has created knowledge that frailty in ageing is a clinical syndrome and its physiologic and biologic bases, the opportunities for prevention of ill health into old age, and is the co-creator of Experience Corps, a novel model of senior service designed to enable the social capital of older people to help solve social challenges while also promoting health. She is an elected member and served as President of the Association of American Physicians (2016-17) and on the Executive Council of the National Academy of Medicine and co-chaired the NAM Global Roadmap for Healthy Longevity (2022). She is the recipient of numerous honours and awards, including the Welch-Rose Award of the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health, the Kober Medal of AAP, and the Rall Award of the National Academy of Medicine, and was named a Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur of France.

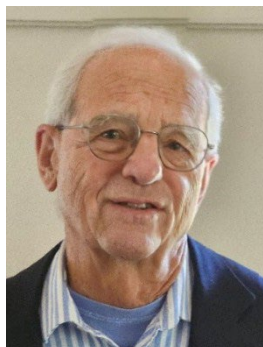


Dr. Olubusayo Akinola

Head of Social Welfare, Drug Control, and Crime Prevention Division, African Union

Dr. Olubusayo Akinola is the Head of the Social Welfare, Drug Control, and Crime Prevention Division, Department of Humanitarian Affairs, Health and Social Development at the African Union Commission (AUC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She leads continental policies on social protection, ageing and disability inclusion, crime prevention, and public health responses to drug trafficking. Dr. Akinola directs the African Union Commission division responsible for continental welfare frameworks, rights-based, age-responsive, and gender-sensitive frameworks concerning social vulnerability, ageing, family strengthening, and substance use. She leads high-level delegations and assessments with

regional bodies and national institutions, such as reviewing African Union Common Positions on long-term care, Social protection frameworks and AU Policy and plan of action on Ageing and the implementation of regional and global commitments. She is the focal person anchoring the AUC strategic partnership with the Pan-Africa Dialogue Series on Ageing and Development providing direct-link to feed ageing policy outcomes: to the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Social Development Labour and Employment.



Ronald D. Lee, PhD

Founding Director, National Transfer Accounts Network, Professor Emeritus of Demography and Economics, University of California, Berkeley

Ronald Lee is a demographer and economist, with an MA in Demography from Berkeley and a Ph.D. in Economics from Harvard. Since 1979 he has been at the University of California at Berkeley, currently as a Professor of the Graduate School in Demography and Economics. He is the founding Director of the Center for the Economics and Demography of Aging at Berkeley, now Associate Director. Throughout his career, he has taught economic demography. His current research focuses on the macroeconomic consequences of changing population age distributions and on intergenerational transfers and population ageing. He and Andrew Mason co-founded the National Transfer Accounts project and for 20 years co-directed it. It now includes collaborating research teams in

more than 80 countries and estimates intergenerational flows of resources through the public and private sectors (NTAccounts.org). He continues to work on modelling and forecasting demographic variables including mortality. He also works on evolutionary biodemography, the role of intergenerational transfers in evolutionary life history theory. From 2010-2015 he co-chaired a National Academy of Sciences Committee on the Long-run Macroeconomic Effects of the Aging U.S. Population and the effects of socioeconomic differences in life expectancy on distributional aspects of federal transfer programmes like Social Security. He is an elected member of the US National Academy of Sciences, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, and a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy; he is a former President of the Population Association of America and a Laureate of the international population association (IUSSP). He holds honorary doctorates from the universities of Lund and Montreal.



Masumi Ono

Chief of Service, Social Development Division, UN DESA

As Chief of Service in the Social Development Division (UN DESA), Masumi continues to lead a team of specialists on issues related to older persons, youth, persons with disabilities, and family. Masumi's career in the UN spans over 25 years of experience including working as part of the Secretary-General's office, pioneering the work in Sustainable Development Goals, mobilizing high-level advocacy work on education finance and preparing numerous reports for the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. Masumi continues to work on cross-sectoral themes such as gender, poverty eradication, and UN system coherence, and has managed a wide scope of trade facilitation programmes in the Asia Pacific region. Before joining the UN through the National Competitive Exam (NCE/YPP), she worked in Finance, having obtained an MBA and a BA (Economics) from Cornell University (USA).

#OlderPersonsDay2026

Defeating Dementia: A PBS Well Beings Documentary

Every 3 seconds someone in the world develops dementia. 65% of people with Alzheimer's are women. Black men and women over 65 are twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's or other dementias as white men and women. Every year, 350,000 people under age 65 develop Alzheimer's or another dementia

Defeating Dementia is a 2-hour PBS primetime broadcast (television and streaming) documentary, accompanied by a series of original digital short films for WellBeings.org and other platforms, that will help bring Alzheimer's and other related dementias out of the shadows, and spotlight novel research in early detection, care, treatments, and innovation.

The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer's, but there are also many rare related dementias and neurological conditions, including FTD, PSP, and ALS. The fight against all dementias is on the verge of dramatic breakthroughs. Defeating Dementia is the story of the scientists and families leading the effort, and features stories from around the world, including the largest global Alzheimer's conference, held in London, a roster of international experts and the story of a leading "dementia village" in France where residents with Alzheimer's receive the kind of professional care that resembles life at home.

This documentary will shine a light on age and ethnic disparities, among others, in the fight to conquer these diseases. The voices of people with Alzheimer's and other dementias today are not the ones you expect. A disproportionate number are women, and a disproportionate number are people of color. Ten percent are in the prime of life.

Dementias are not a natural part of aging. All are complex, devastating diseases that are costly to diagnose. With inadequate support from insurance, families frequently exhaust their life savings in the diagnosis process and in caring for their loved ones. Collectively, Alzheimer's and related dementias are the most expensive of the leading causes of death. Costing over \$350 billion a year, these diseases threaten to bankrupt nations.