

e-APP Forum 2024 SPEAKERS & MODERATORS

21-22 October 2024 | Astana, Kazakhstan



**Carmen Rosa
Abarca Poblete**

Carmen Rosa Abarca Poblete is a lawyer currently serving at the General Directorate of Consular Affairs, Immigration and Chileans Abroad, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile. She has been undertaking various positions within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile since 2002. From 2016 to 2020 she served as the Head of Local Contracts Department, Head of Social Welfare and Social Security Department from 2020 to 2022, and Head of Document Validation and Analysis Department from 2022 to 2024.



Itai Apter

Itai Apter serves as Director, International Civil Affairs, in the Office of the Deputy Attorney-General (International Law) at the Ministry of Justice of Israel. His work focuses on public, private and commercial international law, including the Apostille Convention and the e-APP. He is a delegate of Israel to UN and HCCH forums.

Mr. Apter received an LL.B. from Haifa University in 2006, and an LL.M (International Legal Studies) from NYU in 2008. He was a visiting scholar at WCL (American University) between 2021-2022 and an Adjunct Lecturer at Reichman University between 2022-2023.

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**Héctor Isidro
Arenas Neira**

H.E. Héctor Isidro Arenas Neira is the current Ambassador of Colombia to Russia, based in Moscow, serving concurrently as Ambassador to Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. A legal expert in international law, he holds postgraduate qualifications in the analysis of contemporary political, economic, and international issues, as well as human rights, European affairs, and public international law. Ambassador Arenas Neira has served in the Colombian Foreign Service since 1990 and has worked in the Embassies in Japan, Belgium, Ecuador and the Holy See. He served as Consul-General in Brussels and Luxembourg and was responsible for consular affairs in Tokyo. He also served as Director of the Department for Consular Affairs, Migration and Citizen Services at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bogota.



**Manuel C.
Ayap**

Manuel C. Ayap is a lawyer and currently the Acting Director of the Authentication Division at the Office of Consular Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). He served as Consul at the Philippine Consulate General in Manado, Indonesia, from 2018 to 2024. Before this role, he was a Principal Assistant at the Maritime and Ocean Affairs Office of the DFA.

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Chng Ken-Wei

Chng Ken-Wei has over 30 years of diverse infocomm management experience spanning both private and public sectors. He was appointed as the Deputy Director of the Digital Utilities Program Office, Infocomm Media Development Authority of Singapore (IMDA) in September 2023, and is responsible for the development and promotion of digital utilities which are foundation services and tools that enable participants to engage in today's digital economy. Examples of digital utilities include Digital Identity, Digital Payments, Document Attestation and Data Exchange.

Prior to his current appointment, he was based in China as the First Secretary (Infocomm) of the Embassy of the Republic of Singapore in Beijing and the Chief Representative for IMDA in China and was responsible for driving bi-lateral collaborations between China and Singapore in the infocomm and media sectors, facilitating bi-lateral partnerships as well as spearheading investment opportunities between the industries in both countries.



**Christophe
Blanchi**

Christophe Blanchi is the Executive Director of the DONA Foundation in Geneva. He is responsible for the foundation's day-to-day operations and ensures the proper technical operations of the Global Handle Registry in collaboration with Multi-Primary Administrators around the world. As part of his responsibilities, he is tasked with promoting and evolving the Digital Object Architecture and its open protocol standards in collaborations with MPAs and other interested organizations.

Christophe has decades of experience as a research scientist in computer science, computer security, network protocol development, distributed system architecture, information management, Digital Object Architecture and its related technologies. Christophe is currently leading efforts within the FDO Forum to promote the use of DONA's technologies within scientific and industrial domains as a solution to implementing FAIR DO principles recognized under the EOSC efforts as a core approach to make data be findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable.

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Marcos De Paola

Marcos De Paola has been the IT Director of the Notarial College of Brazil (CNB-CF) since 2017. He is responsible for IT projects related to the digital transformation of Brazilian notary services, including the Apostille system. Before joining CNB-CF, Marcos worked as an IT Manager in industrial and service companies, managing development teams and ERP implementations. He also coordinated nearshore and offshore teams to deliver IT solutions for large enterprises.

Marcos has a degree in Business Administration from Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, an MBA from Insper with an extension at the University of Virginia Darden School of Business, specialized in Industrial Administration from Fundação Vanzolini - POLI-USP, and specialized in Business for Executives from Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV-SP).



Andreas Dimitriou

Andreas Dimitriou works for the Ministry of Digital Governance in Greece and is the Director of Gov.gr Coordination Agency. He holds a degree in Computer Science from the Athens University of Economics and a postgraduate degree in Information Systems Engineering from UMIST. He was employed for 10 years in the private sector and has been working in Greek Public Administration since 2009.

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Melissa Ford

Melissa Ford is the Secretary of the Transnational Litigation and Apostille Division at the Permanent Bureau of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH). Melissa has primary responsibility at the Permanent Bureau for the 1961 Apostille Convention, 1965 Service Convention, 1970 Evidence Convention, 1980 Access to Justice Convention, 2005 Choice of Court Convention, and 2019 Judgments Convention. Melissa also has responsibility for the ongoing work of the Jurisdiction Project.

Prior to joining the Permanent Bureau, Melissa worked in the Australian Government across a range of policy and legal areas. Melissa was the Director of the Private International & Commercial Law Section of the Attorney-General's Department. This Section is the National Organ to the HCCH and the Central Authority for the 1965 Service and 1970 Evidence Conventions.



Melissa Goh

Melissa Goh is the Director of Trust Services at the Singapore Academy of Law (SAL). Over the past six years, she oversaw the establishment and growth of SAL's Trust Services, which include legalisation services for documents bound overseas, the stakeholding of moneys in conveyancing transactions, and the National Wills Registry. She also serves as secretary on the Board of Commissioners for Oaths and Notaries Public, the appointing body for commissioners for oaths and notaries public in Singapore.

In 2021, Melissa managed the operationalisation of the Apostille Convention in Singapore when SAL was appointed the sole competent authority in Singapore to certify public documents and worked on the development of the e-Register. In today's fast-changing, global environment, Melissa is also responsible for the digital transformation of SAL's trust services.

Melissa holds a bachelor's degree in law from the National University of Singapore and is an advocate and solicitor of the Supreme Court of Singapore.

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**Caio Gomes de
Freitas**

Caio Gomes de Freitas is a Legal Officer in the Transnational Litigation and Apostille Division at the Permanent Bureau of the HCCH. Together with Secretary Melissa Ford, he has responsibility for the 1961 Apostille Convention and related matters, including the e-APP, as well as the 1965 Service, 1970 Evidence, and 1980 Access to Justice Conventions.

Prior to joining the Permanent Bureau, Caio worked at law firms in Brazil and France on cases involving private law, private international law, and international commercial and investment arbitration.

Caio holds an LL.M. in Business Law from the University of Paris 1 (Panthéon-Sorbonne) and a bachelor's degree in law from the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



Lori Hamm

Lori Hamm is a Notary & Certifications Administrator at the Montana Secretary of State's Office. She has been with the Montana Secretary of State's Office for 20 years and leads the education, outreach, compliance, and administrative functions of the Notary & Certifications Division. She develops the state's live and online notary education programs and produces the biennial statewide notary conferences. Recognized nationally as a trailblazer, Lori was an advocate for remote online notarization (RON) early on, and was instrumental in the drafting, enactment, and implementation of the 2015 and 2019 remote notarization statutes in Montana. Her interest in online notarizations evolved into her commitment to implementing e-Apostilles in Montana as a means of better serving the needs of the public involved in international transactions. In 2023, in partnership with the amazing people at Paradigm, Inc., now @Gov and Apostille Xpress, Montana began a pilot program that has led to the issuance of over 750 e-Apostilles to more than 55 different countries. She serves on the Executive Board of the Notary Public Administrator's Section of the National Association of Secretaries of State and in 2021 she was the recipient of the National Notary Association's March Fong Eu award, given to an individual who seeks to improve the standards, professionalism, and effectiveness of the Notary Public office in the United States.

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**Christopher
Jackson**

Christopher Jackson is the CEO and Co-founder of Paradigm, Inc. and @Gov, Inc. Over 33 years, Paradigm became the largest provider of paper and digital credentials for U.S. higher education and serves institutions globally having issued millions of secure credentials. Jackson and his team at @Gov identified the benefit for government to transition its documents to digital, leading to the first U.S. pilot for digital apostilles. This pilot is now used in seven states and is expanding to vital records. Jackson focuses on integrating technology with existing workflows to ensure practical solutions. His leadership has created impactful changes in both education and government sectors.



**Venera Kalimova
Kamysbayevna**

Venera Kalimova Kamysbayevna is the Director of the Department of Registration Service and Organization of Legal Services at the Ministry of Justice of Kazakhstan since June 2023. Prior to this, she worked at the non-commercial joint-stock company State Corporation Government for Citizens as Director of the Real Estate Department of the Administration Office, Director of the Astana branch, and Director of the Department of Registration Services, from 2017 to 2023, and held various other positions within the Ministry of Justice of Kazakhstan. Venera Kalimova Kamysbayevna has a degree from Kazakhstan State Law Academy.

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**Ana Lucia
Andrade de
Aguiar**

Ana Lucia Andrade de Aguiar is a Federal Judge and Assistant Judge at the Brazilian National Council of Justice. She holds a Master in Law and Data Management.



**Michael
Lightowler**

Michael Lightowler is a Public Notary since 1990. Between 1975 and 2010, he worked as a solicitor specialised in corporate and business law (primarily mergers and acquisitions). In 1997, he was elected Council Member of The Notaries Society of England & Wales. More recently, in 2023, he was re-elected for a further term of three years to continue (among other things) to promote the Digital Agenda of the Society and International relations. Between 2010 and 2013, Mr Lightowler also served as President of The Notaries Society of England & Wales. In 2016, he was appointed Honorary Fellow of the Australian and New Zealand College of Notaries; in 2021, he was appointed to the Advisory Board of the Master of the Faculties; and in 2022, he was appointed to UK Government Industry Working Group on Electronic Execution of Documents which issued its final report in February 2023.

Michael has also spoken at various conferences around the world on digital themes connected to the profession of Notary (including events organised by the Hague Conference on Private International Law) and contributed articles to several legal journals (including in France, Germany, The Netherlands and the UK) and to the leading textbook on Notarial practice in England and Wales. Mr Lightowler has produced and published online guidance for Notaries on the subject of Data Protection and has developed projects for Notaries to sign digitally (NotarySign) and to store their documents in an electronic database (NotarySAFE). He has also worked with stakeholders on digital matters including the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office which is the UK Competent Authority for issue of Apostilles and e-Apostilles.

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Joe Lim

Joe Lim is the Deputy Director (Project Management) at LawNet Technology Services, the technology arm of the Singapore Academy of Law (SAL) Group. As Deputy Director, he oversees the design, development, and implementation of critical business applications, driving innovation and efficiency in SAL.

Equipped with over 20 years of wide experience in both private and public sectors across industries such as airline, automotive, education, and government, he is an experienced technology leader with a strong background in managing end-to-end application lifecycles, ensuring alignment between IT initiatives and business goals. His key expertise includes application lifecycle strategy, agile project management, and stakeholder collaboration, with a focus on digital transformation and continuous improvement.



**Cindy Mariella
Portal**

Cindy Mariella Portal is the Vice-Minister of Diaspora and Human Mobility of El Salvador. She is a career diplomat, communicator, internationalist and non-lawyer. She holds a Postgraduate Degree in Public Policy, a Postgraduate Degree in Security and National Development, a Master's Degree in Communication and Political Consulting, a Master's Degree in Human Resources Management, and is a student of the First Cohort of the Master's Degree in Human Mobility of the Diplomatic Institute Doctor José Gustavo Guerrero.

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**Julie Remy
Spiltoir**

Julie Remy Spiltoir is attaché to the Directorate-General for Consular Affairs of the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of Belgium. She is the Head of the Legalisation and Fight against Document Fraud Department. She also manages the “eLegalisation” project.



Danial Smith

Danial Smith has worked within the Legalisation Department of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom since 2016 and in that time has been delighted to work closely on its e-APP project. He believes that the UK’s attendance at these fora has been vital in increasing their understanding and developing their knowledge about the e-APP. Danial looks forward to now sharing the UK’s experiences with interested Competent Authorities and supporting them in return. According to Danial, to be able to help deliver an e-Apostille service and enable citizens to obtain apostilles digitally is a career highlight and he looks forward to continuing to support its wider growth.

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**Sergio Andrés
Solís Soto**

Sergio Andrés Solís Soto is the Head of the Legal Consular Advisory Department of the General Directorate of Consular Affairs, Immigration and Chileans Abroad, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile since 2011. He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile in 1996 where he served at the Environment Department, then Antarctic Affairs Department in 1997, and Legal Direction in 1998. Since 2000, Sergio has been serving at the above-mentioned Directorate.



**Michael Rollin
Wilson**

Michael Rollin Wilson is a practicing attorney from Louisville, Kentucky with over 15 years of experience in areas of commercial litigation, including corporate governance, bankruptcy, and insurance regulation.

He has successfully argued cases before the Kentucky Supreme Court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Centre College and a Juris Doctor from the University of Kentucky. He is a husband, father, and an active member of his parish where he volunteers, coaches soccer, and is a scout leader.

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**Hyoung-Goo
Kang**

Hyoung-Goo Kang is currently a professor at the Department of Finance and the Department of Computational Engineering at the Hanyang University and is the President of the Korean Financial Management Association in 2024. He is also an entrepreneur who founded and exited a machine learning-based TechFin company (Handa Partners). He is also a professor at the Graduate School of Blockchain Convergence and Blockchain Research (Head of Center). He also serves as an advisor to the Financial Supervisory Service Commission (General Division, Financial IT Division) and the Digital Asset eXchange Alliance (DAXA).

He graduated from Seoul National University with a B.A. in Economics, completed a Ph.D. in Economics at the University of Virginia, and holds a Ph.D. from Duke University's Fuqua School of Business. After serving as an Air Force officer, he worked in finance and banking at Lehman Brothers Asia, Quantitative Strategy, and Accenture. He was also a research fellow at the Edmond J. Safra Centre for Ethics at Harvard University. He serves on various finance-related committees and consulting engagements. His research interests include innovation and technology finance, including machine learning (econometrics), financial innovation, processes of resource allocation and strategy, and big data-based behavioural finance. He teaches courses on cultural content finance, start-up finance, artificial intelligence, fixed income, and financial engineering.