

15 Years of the HCCH Washington Declaration

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Progress and Perspectives on International Family Relocation

2-4 April 2025

Embassy of Canada, Washington DC

List of speakers¹

MODERATORS: SESSIONS 1 - 2

DR. NOELLE HUNTER



Dr. Noelle Hunter is a clinical assistant professor of political science at the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) and founding director of the International Child Abduction Prevention and Research Office (ICAPRO). She co-founded iStand Parent Network Inc. after successfully recovering her daughter from abduction to Mali in 2014 and now advises iStand Survivor Network Inc., supporting youth survivors of child abduction.

Dr. Hunter is a founding partner of the Coalition to End International Parental Child Abduction and serves on the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH) Steering Committee Forum on the 1980 Hague Convention

Article 13(1)(b). She is a frequent congressional expert on international child abduction and a contributing author to the U.S. Department of Justice's *When Your Child Is Missing: A Family Survival Guide*.

A Pardee RAND public policy fellow, Dr. Hunter has held distinguished state and federal roles, including a 2018 gubernatorial appointment as executive director of the Kentucky Office of Highway Safety. She previously interned for U.S. Senator John D. Rockefeller IV and was the Walter Rollins Scholar in the West Virginia Legislature.

Dr. Hunter is a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., and founder of Wise Women Wandering, a women-centered travel and charity collective. She earned her Ph.D. from West Virginia University, an MPA, and a BA in journalism from Ohio University. A frequent international traveler for advocacy and leisure, she is often accompanied by her three daughters.

¹ The speakers in this list appear in chronological order according to the Conference agenda.

CAROLINA MARÍN PEDREÑO



Carolina is a cross qualified Spanish Abogado (2003) and Solicitor (2006). She is the Head of the Children's Department at Dawson Cornwell, a leading family law firm based in London.

Her specialisations include all aspect of the international movement of children, child protection, international removal of children, recognition and enforcement of foreign orders, family formation and assisted reproduction rights.

Carolina has been awarded "*International Lawyer of the Year*" and The Times "*Lawyer of the Week*". She was selected by the USA Embassy in London to participate in their world-renowned

International Visitors Leadership Programme. She is consistently ranked by Chambers & Partners and The Legal 500 and is highly sought after as "one of the foremost international children's lawyers".

Carolina has acted in many of the leading cases in the field of international family law, including cases in the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, the European Court of Human Rights, and the Inter-American Courts of Human Rights.

Carolina is also a lecturer and author, contributing many articles on international family law and a manual in Spanish on child abduction. She is co-author of Family Law Children's Right to Identity, Selfhood and International Family Law published by Edward Elgar.

She is the editor of the Anthology on Human Rights from Different Regions published by LexisNexis for UIA.

Carolina is the former President of the Westminster & Holborn Law Society in London and current President Elect of AIJUDEFA.

Carolina speaks Spanish, English and Italian.

SESSION 1

HON. DIANA BRYANT



Diana Bryant was Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia from 2004 to October 2017. Immediately prior to her appointment as Chief Justice of the Family Court, she was the inaugural Chief Federal Magistrate of the Federal Magistrates Court of Australia (now the Federal Circuit Court of Australia) from 2000–2004, having guided the establishment and growth of that court in its first four years.

Before her appointment to the Bench, Chief Justice Bryant practised as a family lawyer with a national firm in Perth and spent 10 years at the Victorian Bar, becoming a Queen's Counsel in 1997.

Her international work includes many appellate decisions regarding Hague Convention cases and she was one of the two International Hague Network Judges for Australia from 2009 to 2017. From 2012 until 2020, she chaired the HCCH Working Group responsible for the development of the Guide to Good Practice in relation to Article 13(1)(b) of the Child Abduction Convention.

In 2018 she was 'Judge in Residence' at Melbourne University Law School and she is a member of the International Association of Child Law Researchers. She is currently the President of the 9th World Congress on Family Law and Children's Rights, Cambridge, United Kingdom, 27-30 July 2025.

DR. RUTH ZITNER



Dr. Ruth Zitner provides a variety of services to families, attorneys, and the court as an expert at the intersection of mental health, child development and family law. She serves as a parenting coordinator and child specialist.

Dr. Zitner has presented and lectured on families and divorce, parenting plans, post-separation contact refusal, interpersonal violence, and teen intimate partner violence. Her practice focuses on empowering parents and families to resolve conflict with creativity, dignity and empathy.

DR. JORGE GUERRA



Jorge Guerra González is a dedicated expert in child protection, known for his commitment to safeguarding children's rights and well-being. With extensive experience in legal and social frameworks, he has worked to develop strategies that prevent child endangerment and enhance protective mechanisms within institutions and communities.

His professional journey includes roles in policy development, advocacy, and intervention programs aimed at supporting vulnerable children. Jorge has contributed to academic discussions on child protection laws and has written extensively on the subject, including in-depth analyses of legal frameworks and their impact on families.

In addition to his professional work, Jorge is an accomplished writer. His articles explore complex social and legal issues, reflecting his deep understanding of justice and human rights. He is currently working on a piece titled "La verdad es soportable para el ser humano", examining philosophical and legal perspectives on truth and resilience.

Jorge is multilingual, with a strong command of German, which he continuously seeks to improve. His international perspective and linguistic skills allow him to engage in cross-cultural discussions and contribute to global conversations on child protection.

A firm believer in both preventive and legal measures, Jorge strives to balance policy effectiveness with ethical considerations, advocating for a justice system that prioritizes the best interests of children while ensuring fairness and due process.

PROF. ROBERT GEORGE KC



Professor Rob George KC is Professor of Law and Policy at University College London, and a Barrister practicing in family law at Harcourt Chambers, London. His work focuses on cross-border children cases, with a particular emphasis on child relocation and child abduction.

Following undergraduate, Masters and Doctoral degrees from the University of Oxford, Professor George has published two books on relocation, "Relocation Disputes: Law and Policy in England and New Zealand" (Hart Publishing, 2014) and "Relocation: A Practical Guide" (Jordan Publishing, 2016).

Professor George has led numerous studies in England and Wales about the way relocation disputes are decided by trial courts and has written leading publications in this area, including "How Do Judges Decide Relocation Cases?" [2015] *Child and Family Law Quarterly* 377 and "How do Parents Experience Relocation Disputes in the Family Courts?" [2016] *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law* 394.

In practice, Professor George is frequently instructed in cases concerning relocation and / or child abduction. He was counsel in the leading English relocation Court of Appeal authorities of *Re C (Internal Relocation)* [2015] EWCA Civ 1305 and *Re L (Relocation: Second Appeal)* [2017] EWCA Civ 1212, as well as in the Supreme Court's latest child abduction decision of *Re NY (Abduction: Inherent Jurisdiction)* [2019] UKSC 49.

SESSION 2

PHILIPPE LORTIE



Philippe Lortie is First Secretary at the HCCH. He joined the Permanent Bureau of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH) in September 2001 as First Secretary. He is co-responsible for the International Family & Child Protection Law Division which includes the 1980 Child Abduction, 1996 Child Protection, 2000 Protection of Adults and 2007 Child Support Conventions and the 2007 Protocol on the Law Applicable to Maintenance Obligations. He is also responsible for the International Hague Network of Judges, the Judges' Newsletter and e-Justice tools supporting HCCH Conventions such as e-Country Profiles, INCADAT and iSupport.

Before joining the HCCH, from 1991 to 2001 Philippe Lortie was Legal Counsel at the Department of Justice of Canada. In that capacity, he acted as Head of Canadian delegations to the HCCH, Unidroit and UNCITRAL. Philippe Lortie is a member of the Québec Bar since 1991 and holds degrees in Civil Law (LL.L.) and Common Law (LL.B.). He also holds an LL.M. in international law.

LAURA MARTINEZ-MORA



Laura Martínez-Mora is First Secretary (Lawyer) at the Permanent Bureau of the HCCH and co-head of Family & Child Protection Law Division. In particular she is responsible for the post-Convention services in relation to the 1993 Adoption Convention as well as the Parentage / Surrogacy legislative project. She is also involved in the work related to the 1980 Child Abduction Convention and the 1996 Child Protection Convention. Such work includes post-Convention services (e.g. meetings of Special Commissions to review the practical operation of the above Conventions, Experts' Groups and Working Groups, seminars and workshops; drafting good practice guides, questionnaires, fact sheets and other documents) and legal

advice, capacity building and training of professionals in different countries in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe (in particular through the Intercountry Adoption Technical Assistance Programme).

Prior to joining the HCCH, Laura worked for the International Social Service in Switzerland, UNICEF in Chile, the European Commission and the Council of Europe. She received her law degree from the University of Valencia (Spain), a Master of Laws (LL.M) in International Law with a specialisation in child's rights and comparative family law from the University of London (UK), and a Diploma in Child Protection and Juvenile Justice from the University Diego Portales in Santiago (Chile).

DR. NISHAT HYDER-RAHMAN



Nishat Hyder-Rahman is currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow based at the Department of Private & Economic Law, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium (Impact Fellowship Programme, funded under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Grant Agreement No. 101034352).

Nishat's areas of expertise are family law, medical law and bioethics. Her current research interests fall within broad theme of 'regulating family relations', specifically in the contexts of assisted reproduction and divorce/separation. She largely focuses on international frameworks and perspectives and comparative law approaches.

Nishat read law at the London School of Economics and went on to complete her Ph.D in Bioethics and Medical Jurisprudence at the University of Manchester. She has subsequently undertaken postdoctoral research within the family law research groups at Utrecht University and Tilburg University in the Netherlands, and now VUB in Belgium.

Alongside her research agenda, Nishat teaches private international family law, health law and ethics, and supervises graduate thesis students researching topics within her fields of expertise.

GENEVÈVE LAURENCE



Genevieve Laurence was called to the bar of the Law Society of Ontario in 2005 and began her legal career as Legal Counsel with the federal Department of Justice Canada in 2008. She joined the Department of Justice in the Family, Children and Youth Policy Section, which is now the Family Law and Youth Justice Policy Section. This section is the centre of expertise for family law in the Federal Government.

In 2009 she obtained her Master's in Law at the University of Ottawa (LLM). In 2018 she completed a graduate diploma through the London School of Economics and Political Science in International Relations. She and her family have been on diplomatic postings to Washington DC, Moscow and Singapore.

MODERATORS: SESSIONS 3 – 4

MELISSA KUCINSKI



Melissa Kucinski is a lawyer and mediator based in Washington, DC and New York. Her practice focuses exclusively on international family law, a large portion of which is the international movement of children. She chaired working groups on international family mediation for International Social Service in Geneva, Switzerland and the American Bar Association.

Ms. Kucinski has trained judges on the 1980 Child Abduction Convention in Maryland, California, Florida, and is designing a year-long training curriculum for the New York State Judicial Institute on international family law. She designed the international family law course at the George Washington University School of Law and has taught it since 2010. She also designed and taught the international cross-border family mediation training for the University of California Law San Francisco.

Ms. Kucinski participated in the HCCH's Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Special Commission meetings on the practical operation of the 1980 Child Abduction and 1996 Child Protection Conventions and in 2013, Ms. Kucinski served as a consultant to the HCCH in relation to its work on these two Conventions.

Ms. Kucinski has authored several publications and scholarly articles pertaining to private family law matters and children. She is a fellow or member of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, the International Academy of Family Lawyers, the American Bar Foundation, and the U.S. Secretary of State's Advisory Committee on Private International Law. She also serves as a member of the Uniform Law Commission's Joint Editorial Board on Uniform Family Law. In September 2024, Ms. Kucinski testified before the U.S. Congress on international parental child abduction legislation.

MICHELLE BERNIER-TOTH



Michelle Bernier-Toth is the Special Advisor for Children's Issues, Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State.

Michelle Bernier-Toth, a member of the Senior Executive Service, has served as Special Advisor for Children's Issues since January 2020. In this capacity, she reports directly to the Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs and works closely with the Bureau's Office of Children's Issues, focusing on international parental child abductions and intercountry adoptions. She engages diplomatically with foreign governments to advocate for accession to, and effective implementation of, the Hague Conventions related to international parental child abductions and intercountry adoptions.

Prior to her current assignment, Michelle served as the Managing Director for Overseas Citizen Services in the Bureau of Consular Affairs (2011-2019), and as Director of the Office of American Citizen Services and Crisis Management (2005-2011). In both positions, she gained extensive experience managing overseas crises impacting U.S. citizens traveling and residing abroad – including the 2006 evacuation of Lebanon, the 2010 Haiti earthquake, among many others.

Michelle also served in the Office of Children's Issues (2002-2005) and, before converting to Civil

Service, as a Foreign Service Officer. As an FSO, Michelle served as a consular officer in Damascus, Syria; Doha, Qatar; and Abu Dhabi, UAE, as well as domestic assignments in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center.

Michelle graduated from Yale University in 1982 with a Bachelor of Arts in Near Eastern Literature and Language (Arabic) and earned a Masters in Arab Studies from Georgetown University in 1985. She has three adult children, of whom she is very proud.

SESSION 3

JUSTICE GWEN B. HATCH



Associate Chief Justice Hatch was appointed to the Manitoba Court of King's Bench (Family Division) in June 2013 and was appointed Associate Chief Justice of the Family Division in May 2020. She is Chair of the Child Protection Oversight and Implementation Committee and the Triage Implementation Committee of the Family Division and is currently Chair of the Statutory Rules Committee of the Court of King's Bench.

Associate Chief Justice Hatch is Chair of the Judicial Committee on Inter-jurisdictional Child Protection of the Canadian Judicial Council. She also serves on the Judicial Independence Committee of the Canadian Judicial Council.

Prior to her appointment to the Bench, Associate Chief Justice Hatch practised family law and wills and estate litigation.

Associate Chief Justice Hatch has presented papers on child protection for the National Judicial Institute, the Canadian Chapter of the International Association of Women Judges, and the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice, and papers on family law and estates and trusts issues in programs that were jointly organized by The Court of King's Bench (Family Division), The Law Society of Manitoba and the Manitoba Bar Association. She is also the author of articles that have been published in the Estates and Trusts Reports and in publications of The Law Society of Manitoba Legal Studies Department.

JAVIERA VERDUGO



Javiera Verdugo Toro is an attorney at the International Cooperation Division of the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She is also a professor of Private Law at Universidad de Chile. Javiera has dedicated most of her career to Family Law, from a local and international perspective; she was the head of the Chilean Central Authority for the 1980 Hague Convention, from 2017 to 2024.

She studied law at Universidad de Chile, where she also obtained her master's degree in private law.

RONALDAH LERATO KARABO OZAH



Karabo Ozah is the Director of the Centre for Child Law, a child rights strategic litigation organisation in South Africa that was established in 1998. Karabo is also a lecturer in the Department of Private Law at the University of Pretoria. She lectures undergraduate and postgraduate courses in child law, social welfare law, education law, children's rights in Africa as well as human rights. She is also a fellow of the IAFL.

She holds an LLB and LLMs in Child Law (cum laude) and Constitutional & Administrative Law, as well as a Certificate in Advanced Labour Law from the University of Pretoria. She started her legal career as a candidate attorney at the University of Pretoria's Law Clinic in 2005 and later joined the Centre for Child Law in 2007.

Karabo has led and contributed to the work of the Centre, including litigation successes in the Constitutional Court, Supreme Court of Appeal and High Courts. Karabo is a member of the Advisory Committee of the South African Law Reform Commission's Project 100D on care and contact with children. She is also a member of the Hague Expert Group on International Parentage and Surrogacy which is tasked with researching the possibility of a Hague treaty to regulate international parentage and surrogacy. Karabo also served as an independent board member and the National Chairperson of Childline South Africa from 2009 until September 2016. She was a member of the Rules Board's Children's Court Task Team whose mandate was to draft court rules for the Children's Courts in South Africa. Karabo has led and also been part of various research projects for the National Department of Social Development, Save the Children South Africa and Regional as well as the United Nations Populations Fund-East and Southern Africa.

AWATIF AL KHOURI



Owner and director of the award-winning law firm Awatif Mohammad Shوقي Advocates and legal consultancy, **Awatif Al Khouri** has over 35 years of experience in the legal field. She is a licensed advocate, representing her clients across UAE, in all courts from the Court of First Instance to the Supreme Court. Her practice areas include UAE Criminal Law and Family Law. Ms. Al Khouri is a multi-linguist, fluent in Arabic, English, and French, enabling her to provide effective legal consultations to a diverse clientele.

Awatif Al Khouri is a member of the Lawyers Union in Dubai Court, the Ministry of Justice, and a Fellow at the IAFL. She has been listed by French, British, and American embassies in the UAE for legal and representation services to their citizens. Her involvement extends to other international organisations, including the International Bar Association and the American Bar Association, wherein she serves as associate member on the Family Law Committees. With over 48 publications in national and international media, Mrs. Awatif has been awarded the Family Lawyer of the Year Award by M&A Today.

As one of the country's leading Emirati female lawyers, Ms. Al Khouri has been a formidable and reliable figure, breaking barriers and setting new standards in the UAE.

DR. HASSAN ELHAIS



Dr. Hassan Elhais has over 19 years of experience as a legal consultant at Awatif Mohammad Shوقي Advocates and Legal Consultancy. Proficient in family law matters in the UAE, his expertise covers divorce, child custody, alimony, child support, and inheritance. He also specialises in drafting legal documents and opinions, including Sharia/ UAE laws compliant post nuptial and divorce settlement agreements. Dr. Elhais regularly advises expatriates living in the UAE, on UAE family law and cross-border issues including the enforceability of foreign financial awards and the international movement of children.

As a prolific author and columnist, Dr. Elhais is a trusted source for expert legal advice and opinion. His insightful articles and legal comments are published in prominent local and international news sites, including Bloomberg, The Associated Press, and U.S. News. Dr. Elhais' commentaries provide a simpler take on UAE's laws making them more accessible and easily understood by a wider audience.

Dr. Elhais has authored over 300 publications dealing with topics regarding parental child abduction, financial rights after divorce, UAE family and inheritance laws and enforcement of foreign judgements. A recipient of multiple awards and accolades, he is the first expat member of IAFL in the UAE jurisdiction, and the elected co-chair of its Relocation of Children Committee.

SESSION 4

HON. DIANA BRYANT

See bio above.

ANIL MALHOTRA



Anil Malhotra is a practicing Advocate in India, having received his Bachelor of Science (1980) & Bachelor of Laws (Professional) (1983) Degrees from India. He obtained a Master of Laws (LL.M) from the University of London in 1985. He studied Comparative Family Law at the London School of Economics (LSE) and Law and Society in South Asia at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London. He is an IAFL Fellow, and Secretary of the IAFL International Child Relocation Committee.

For 40 years, Anil has handled civil, matrimonial, criminal and overseas litigation on behalf of non-resident Indians abroad, representing overseas clients in Indian courts. He has regularly opined on matters of Indian law in cases in foreign jurisdictions

and has conducted matters in Indian Courts regarding the interpretation and application of foreign Court Orders pertaining to divorce decrees, child abduction, custody, maintenance, adoption, surrogacy and property related issues of non-resident Indians.

Anil has conducted and argued about 100 matters to date in different Superior Constitutional Courts in India, most of which are reported Judgments in law journals. He has rendered about 35 Amicus Curiae Assistances in Constitutional Courts in India on aspects of International Family Law and interpretation of statutes involving fundamental rights. He has been instructed by Foreign Courts, Institutions abroad, Barristers, Solicitors and Litigants to give expert evidence on different aspects of Indian Family Law and has rendered about 150 expert reports to date in this regard. He has co-authored 9 books on various aspects of International Family Laws in India and Private International Law from 2005 to 2020. His tenth book titled “Practitioner’s Guide To International Family Law: An Indian Perspective” is in print.

HON. HIRAM E. PUIG-LUGO



Hiram E. Puig-Lugo has served on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia since 1999. He was an Associate Judge until 2023 and presided over criminal, juvenile delinquency, child welfare, domestic relations, domestic violence, and civil calendars. He is now a Senior Judge.

Judge Puig-Lugo was the Presiding Judge for the Family Court from 2014 to 2016. He convened a working group to coordinate inter-agency support for court-involved victims of commercial sexual exploitation. He established an inter-agency committee to address the needs of LGBTQ+ youth in the neglect and juvenile delinquency systems.

Judge Puig-Lugo has collaborated with the U.S. Central Authority since 2004 and been a judicial network judge since 2016. He has contributed to legal education projects in Central America, South America, Puerto Rico, Spain, and the Federated

States of Micronesia. He has taught at the University of Puerto Rico Law School and various law schools in Washington, D.C. He is an adjunct professor at the Georgetown University Law Center.

Judge Puig-Lugo was President of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) from 2021 to 2022. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin Law School, where he was the first Latino member of the Wisconsin Law Review. He has received numerous national and local recognitions.

Judge Puig-Lugo is from San Germán, Puerto Rico. He is equally fluent in English and Spanish and conversant in Portuguese.

JUSTICE STEPHEN COBB



Mr. Justice Stephen Cobb was appointed to the High Court Bench in January 2013 and was assigned to the Family Division. He sits also as a Judge of the Court of Protection and in the Administrative Court. In June 2024 he was appointed as a Lord Justice of Appeal; he will take up his place in the Court of Appeal in the forthcoming months.

He has delivered judgments across the spectrum of family law issues and the Court of Protection and has sat as an appeal judge both in the High Court and in the Court of Appeal.

During his judicial career, he has also chaired the President's Private Law Working Group (2014-2021); he has been a member of the Ministry of Justice 'Voice of the Child' Working Group, and in 2019-2020 was the judicial member of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) 'Harm Panel' ([Assessing Risk of Harm to Children and Parents in Private Law Children Cases](#)). He is currently the Chair of the Cross-Jurisdictional Judicial Advisory Panel on Access to Justice within the MoJ's Overarching Reform Evaluation (2020-date).

He is a Consultant Editor of the Family Law Reports, and Family Law Journal, and has written and lectured on family law and Court of Protection issues in the UK and abroad, most recently in South Africa [June 2024].

Before his appointment to the Bench, he was Chair of the Family Law Bar Association (2010-2011), Head of Chambers (1 Garden Court) (2007-2013), Fellow of the International Academy of Family Lawyers (2007), and one of the founder members of the Family Justice Council (2004-2010).

He has an Honorary Doctorate in law (LLD h.c.) from the University of Liverpool (2019).

MODERATORS: SESSIONS 5 – 6

JAVIERA VERDUGO

See bio above.

EMMANUELLE JACQUES



Emmanuelle Jacques is a lawyer with the Constitutional, Administrative and International Law Section of the Department of Justice Canada.

She is a member of the Private International Law Team, which is responsible for Canada's participation in the work of the HCCH and works primarily on the Children's Conventions. Emmanuelle joined the Department of Justice in 2015, after serving as a law clerk at the Supreme Court of Canada.

She holds a degree in civil law from the University of Ottawa, a master's in French literature from McGill University and she has been a member of the Quebec Bar since 2014.

SESSION 5

JUDGE MERCELA SANDRA TRILLINI



Judge Marcela Trillini has been a Family Judge since 2006 and is currently in charge of Family Court No. 9 in San Carlos de Bariloche, a province of Río Negro in Argentina. She serves as the Vice President of the Río Negro province Magistrates and Judges Association.

Since March 2012, Judge Trillini has been a Member of the National Network of Judges for the Judiciary of the province of Río Negro for the correct and prompt application of the HCCH 1980 Child Abduction Convention. She was appointed as the Argentinian member of the International Network of Judges (IHNJ) in February 2021. She also serves as a contact point for IberRed (the Ibero-American Network for Judicial Cooperation on

Civil and Criminal Matters).

Judge Trillini has been a lecturer in various courses, training sessions, seminars, and conferences related to family law and international restitution of children and adolescents. She obtained her degree in Law from the University of Buenos Aires and her certification as a Mediator from the Libra Foundation.

ANTHONY MANWARING



Anthony Manwaring has been a Magistrat de liaison at the Embassy of France in the United States since September 2024.

He graduated from the Institut d'études politiques and the Faculté de droit d'Aix-en-Provence and joined the judiciary in 2001 as trainee. He first worked as a deputy public prosecutor in Avignon (2003 - 2005) and Marseille (2005 - 2009) before being seconded to the International Department of the Ecole Nationale de la Magistrature (ENM) in order to carry out judicial training in Europe and worldwide (2010-2015). In this role, he coordinated the 5th International Conference of the International Organization for Judicial Training (Bordeaux, October 2011) and contributed to the submission and implementation of various EU, UNDP and bilateral programs. In 2014

he was appointed Head of ENM's international department and elected chair of the Steering Committee of European Judicial Training Network.

In January 2016, Anthony was assigned to the Embassy of France in China as Magistrat de liaison and contributed the organisation of multiple Franco-Chinese meetings on law and justice. In January 2020, Anthony was appointed Head of European and international affairs at the General Secretariat of the Ministry of Justice.

SOMA KÖLCSÉNYI



Dr Soma Kölcseyi is a practicing family lawyer based in Hungary. He is a fellow of the International Academy of Family Lawyers (IAFL), the vice president of the Central European Mediation Institute (KEMI) and an ambassador of Mediation bei internationalen Kindschaftskonflikten (Mikk eV). He is also a member of the Judges for Mediation Association (BAM) and an expert delegate to the European Judicial Network (EJN).

He graduated from the Janus Pannonius University Law School in 2002 and has been practising attorney as of 2008. He is a lecturer at the Budapest Bar Association (conducting both trainee and senior attorney trainings), the Széchenyi University (delivering post-grad. mediator trainings) and at the Central European Academy (CEA) and the Hungarian Judicial Academy (MIA). He is an annual contributor to the Thomson Reuters Practical Law (The Big Blue Book) and the co-author of the Hungarian Commentary to the Brussels IIb Regulation.

LOLA LÓPEZ-MUELAS



Lola López-Muelas is a senior partner at her firm López-Muelas Abogados. She is qualified to practice law in Spain and specialises in both national and international Family Law. After obtaining her degree from the University of Murcia, Spain (1983-1989), she has completed postgraduate studies in mediation, international family law, legal psychology, domestic abuse and violence against women, collaborative law, and international child abduction.

She has practised law for over 30 years, becoming an expert legal professional helping individuals and their families in complex Family and Succession Law cases, both at a national and international level, such as divorce, cohabitation couples and breakups, civil partnership dissolution, child arrangements, child abduction, alimony, divorce settlements, prenuptial, and cohabitation agreements, as well as estates, wills and probate matters.

Ms López-Muelas is the president of AEAFA (Spanish Association of Family Lawyers), a founding member and the former President of AIJUDEFA (International Association of Family Law Jurists) and the former President of the Family Law Section at Murcia Law Society. She is a member of ASIME (Association Against International Child Abduction) and a fellow of the International Academy of Family Lawyers (IAFL).

Over the years, Ms López-Muelas has participated as an organiser and speaker at national and international congresses and has published several articles on Family Law and Child Abduction. She has offered her expert opinion on relevant family legal matters at The Congress of Deputies in Spain and has provided legal advice in different European Courts of Justice regarding various international family proceedings, including the UK Supreme Court. She lectures on Family Law at several universities in Spain and is in continuous collaboration with universities, institutions, organisations, and legal professionals worldwide.

SESSION 6

JUDGE GUILHERME CALMON NOGUEIRA DA GAMA



Judge Guilherme Calmon Nogueira da Gama is the President and Judge of the Federal Regional Court of the 2nd Region (RJ-ES), in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He is also a liaison Judge in the International Hague Network of Judges (IHNJ) for matters pertaining to the 1980 Convention and the Coordinator of the Brazilian Network of Liaison Judges of the Hague Conference on Private International Law.

He holds a Masters and Doctorate in Civil Law from the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), where he is currently a full Professor of Civil Law (undergraduate and postgraduate). He is also a full Professor in Civil Law at the IBMEC in Rio de Janeiro. He is a permanent Professor in the Postgraduate Programme of

Estácio de Sá University in Rio de Janeiro (UNESA/RJ) and a Researcher there. He is a member of ABDC (Brazilian Academy of Civil Law), IBDFAM (Brazilian Institute of Family Law) and IBERC (Brazilian Institute of Civil Liability).

JUDGE MARTINA ERB-KLÜNEMANN



Martina Erb-Klünemann is a German family court judge. She worked as a judge in civil law and criminal law cases at various courts before her appointment as a family judge in 1996. In this capacity she is responsible for international family conflicts pending at Hamm District Court as the centralized court for the District of Hamm Court of Appeals. Over the years, she has dealt with more than three hundred cases on return under the 1980 Hague Convention as a judge.

Since 2009 Martina Erb-Klünemann is a network judge in the International Hague Network of Judges and in the European Judicial Network in civil and commercial matters.

She publishes and runs worldwide training courses on cross-border family law and mediation in cross-border family conflicts.

Her main focus is on return proceedings under the 1980 Hague Convention and on strengthening children's rights in cross-border proceedings.

For many years, she has chaired the annual meetings of German judges who handle return proceedings. She has trained judges and employees of Central Authorities in various European and non-European countries in the application of the 1980 Hague Convention and advised ministries on the development of effective implementing legislation.

JUDGE OSCAR GREGORIO CERVERA RIVERO



Oscar Gregorio Cervera Rivero has been an attorney for twenty-two years and is currently a Magistrate of the Second Family Chamber of the Superior Court of Justice of Mexico City.

Oscar is also the Liaison Judge for Mexico in the International Hague Network of Judges (IHNJ), for matters pertaining to the 1980 Child Abduction Convention. He is a member of the International Association of Judges in Family Matters as well as the National Coordinator and promoter of the Mexican Network of Judicial Cooperation for the protection of children, which was founded in 2010.

Oscar has been a participant in various commissions and delegations specialized in family matters and a Member of the Working Group that developed the Guide to Good Practice on the application of Article 13(1)(b) of the 1980 Convention. He is also President of the Family Commission of the Superior Court of Justice of Mexico City and has conducted various Conferences at a National and International level. He is a member of the Ethics Commission of the Judiciary of Mexico City and delivers trainings, within the Council of the Federal Judiciary, on issues pertaining to the 1980 Hague Convention to federal judges.

Oscar holds a doctorate in Law and in Administration and Government of the Judiciary and is considered a national expert in family matters.

JUDGE ANNETTE C. OLLAND



Annette Olland was appointed as a judge in the District Court of the Hague, The Netherlands, in 2002. Since then, she has been active in the field of family and juvenile law and commercial law.

She was appointed as network Judge in the HccH International Hague Network of Judges in 2013. From 2019 to 2023 she was Head of the Family Court Department of the Court of Appeal of the Hague.

As of 1 January 2023, she has been a Senior Judge in the District Court of The Hague, working as a family judge specialised in private international law and child abduction law and continues in her role as network Judge in the HccH International Hague Network of Judges.

MODERATORS: SESSIONS 7 – 8

LAURA MARTINEZ-MORA

See bio above.

ANDREA WRIGHT



Andrea Wright is the Private International Law Senior Legal Adviser for the UK Ministry of Justice, and previously the Senior Legal Adviser on Private Law Children matters.

Andrea's role includes representation of the UK at a number of Hague Conference projects, including the 1980 Hague Convention and Domestic Abuse Forum Steering Committee, the Hague Conference Working Group (and the predecessor Experts Group) on Parentage/Surrogacy, and the 2023 and 2017 Special Commissions on the 1980 and 1996 Hague Conventions.

Andrea has also held a number of other roles in the UK, including Secretariat Director of the Bill of Rights Commission, and previously a number of public and private sector roles in Canada. Andrea has an LLB from McGill Law School and a BA from Dalhousie University.

SESSION 7

MARC BAUER



Marc Bauer has been with International Social Service since 2012 and is the deputy director of the German member organisation in Berlin, which is a department of the German Association for Public and Private Welfare.

He holds a master's degree in education from the University of Tübingen and a master's degree in social management from the Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences in Berlin.

Marc gained several years of professional experience in the field of residential childcare and socio-educational family support before spending four years in West Africa, in Benin, advising civil society organisations as part of the German development cooperation's democracy promotion and decentralization programme.

At International Social Service, he focuses on the cross-border placement of children, child protection and family conflict, and the application of international agreements in practice. In addition to casework and advising private individuals and professionals, he regularly organises training for employees of youth welfare offices and social services - regularly in cooperation with the German Central Authority. Marc was part of several delegations to train judges in new and potential member states of the Hague Child Abduction Convention - including Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco.

He has played a major role in developing the websites www.zank.de of the central contact point in Germany and www.issger.de of the International Social Service in Germany.

He speaks German and more or less French and English.

PATRICIA KUYUMDJIAN DE WILLIAMS



Patricia Kuyumdjian de Williams is a lawyer from Argentina, specialised in International Family and Succession Law. She is the current president of the international family law jurists' association AIJUDEFA (2024-2025).

She graduated from the Law School of Salvador University, Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1981 with honors and in 2001, she received her specialisation in family law, from Buenos Aires National University. She won the "Editorial LA LEY" prize in 1981, and in 1984 was awarded with a Scholarship by CONICET for her research "A future adoption law. Interdisciplinary aspects".

Patricia is an expert in international and Argentine family and inheritance law and is a professor of Family and Succession Law at several universities in Argentina. She has authored chapters in several family and inheritance books published in Argentina, Mexico and Spain and has written articles on family and inheritance law.

Patricia has spoken at several international congresses organized by the IAFL: in Seville, March

2015; Amsterdam, May 2016; Tokyo, Japan, May 2018; Mexico City, April 2019; Santiago de Chile, September 2023. She has also been a speaker and moderator at the AIJUDEFA International Congresses held in: Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic December 2018; Santiago de Chile, December 2019; Seville, Spain in May 2022; Cancun, Mexico in May 2023 and Porto, Portugal in June 2024.

She is a Member of the Steering Committee of the HCCH Forum on Domestic Violence and the Operation of Article 13(1)(b) of the 1980 Child Abduction Convention. She is also a member of the IAFL, ASIME and AJUFRA.

ANNA WORWOOD



Anna Worwood is a senior partner and Head of the Family Department of Penningtons Manches Cooper LLP, an international full-service law firm which has its head office in London. Anna is a very talented and highly skilled family lawyer who specialises in high value, international and complex private law children and financial cases. She has become the trusted advisor to many high net worth and ultra-high net worth clients on their family matters.

Anna is well-known for her work relating to the international relocation of children and in recognition of her reputation, she co-chairs the International Relocation of Children Committee of the IAFL. She has appeared in a number of reported relocation cases, including *Re C (permission to remove from jurisdiction)* [2003] EWHC 596 (Fam), *Re D leave to remove: shared residence* [2006] Fam Law 1006 and the landmark case, *Re C (A Child) (internal relocation)* [2015] EWCA Civ 1305, which determined there should be no difference in the approach of the courts to internal and international relocation cases. She co-wrote *Relocation: A Practical Guide*, the first comprehensive guide to international relocation cases and is also the General Editor of *Practical Law's Global Guide to the International Relocation of Children*.

Anna was President of the Private Client and Family Commission of the Association Internationale des Jeunes Avocats ("AIJA") from 2013 to 2016 and has been a fellow of the IAFL for many years.

In September 2019, Anna was profiled in *Spear's Magazine* as 'Family Law's New Superstar' and in March 2023, Anna was crowned the 'Inspirational Woman of the Year' in Citywealth's Powerwomen Awards. She features as a leading individual in *The Legal 500* and a highly ranked lawyer in *Chambers UK* and *Chambers High Net Worth*.

PROF. MARILYN FREEMAN



Professor Marilyn Freeman B.A (Hons), LL.M, PhD, is Co-Director of the International Centre for Family Law, Policy and Practice (ICFLPP), Principal Research Fellow at The Westminster Law School, Chairperson of the International Association of Child Law Researchers (IACLaR), and Academic Door Tenant at 4PB, a leading set of specialist family law barristers' chambers in London.

She is a qualified cross-border family mediator, trained to undertake direct consultation with children, cases of international child abduction and other international family disputes.

She is acknowledged as a leading expert in international child abduction, relocation, and international children's law. Her research on the Long-Term Effects of International Child Abduction is a seminal work, widely cited and used.

Her recent research (undertaken together with Professor Nicola Taylor, University of Otago, New Zealand) on domestic violence in the context of international child abduction cases, published in May 2024, has been similarly well received, and was circulated for the attention of all participants at the Forum on Domestic Violence held by The Hague Conference on Private International Law in Sandton, South Africa in June 2024.

Her most recent work relates to children's right to identity, selfhood, and international family law. The book on this subject, which she co-edited with Professor Nicola Taylor, and in which she and Professor Taylor co-authored the chapter on Relocation and International Child Abduction: The Impact on Children's Identity, will be published in May 2025: *Children's Right to Identity, Selfhood and International Family Law* (Edward Elgar, 2025).

PROF. NICOLA TAYLOR



Professor Nicola Taylor BSW (Hons), LLB (Hons), PhD is the Professor of Child and Family Law and Director of the Children's Issues Centre in the Faculty of Law at the University of Otago in New Zealand.

She also holds the Alexander McMillan Leading Thinker Chair in Childhood Studies, is Secretary of the International Association of Child Law Researchers, and an Associate Fellow of the International Academy of Family Lawyers (IAFL).

Nicola has been admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand and is a qualified mediator. She is a leading socio-legal researcher and has undertaken many studies with children, parents and professionals on family law and children's rights issues, including post-separation care arrangements, relocation, international child abduction, children's views and participation, child-inclusive practice, family dispute resolution, children's citizenship and nation-building, children's identity issues in international family law contexts, relationship property division and succession law. Nicola's research findings have been invaluable in informing legislative, legal policy and professional practice developments within New Zealand and internationally.

She has recently co-edited two books with Marilyn Freeman, the *Research Handbook on International Child Abduction: The 1980 Hague Convention* (Edward Elgar, 2023) and *Children's*

Right to Identity, Selfhood and International Family Law (Edward Elgar, 2025). In 2016, Nicola and Marilyn were jointly awarded the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) President's Award for their 'singular international work in promoting an empirically based approach in the field of child abduction and relocation'.

SESSION 8

ALISON SHALABY



Alison has been instrumental in the development of the charity **reunite** since 1991, initially as a volunteer member of **reunite's** Management Committee and now as Chief Executive Officer.

Under Alison's leadership, **reunite** operates a 24-hour telephone advice line managing in excess of 17,000 calls per annum, and offers cross-border mediation and advocacy to more than 1,500 families every year. Alison has developed longer-term preventative initiatives, including urging changes to UK legislation, raising awareness about child abduction, research into the impact of child abduction, pressing foreign governments to deal more effectively with the problem, and using international *fora* to promote mediated solutions. **reunite's** exemplary global reputation has enhanced the UK's reputation in dealing with this distressing issue. Many parents consider **reunite's** support has been crucial in helping them cope with the distress of this devastating situation and reuniting them with their children.

Alison's dedication to this cause stems from personal experience; her own daughter was abducted to Egypt as a child and only returned after a difficult struggle.

Alison is also a trained mediator, specialising in cross-border children's cases.

MARZIA GHIGLIAZZA



Marzia Ghigliazza is an experienced international family lawyer and cross-border mediator based in Milano, Italy.

She advises clients, family lawyers, judges, and authorities across Italy and abroad on international family law issues; the more complex they are, the more passionate she is about them.

She founded and is an ongoing member of various family law organisations, both national and international, including the International Academy of Family Lawyers (IAFL) and the International Association of Lawyers (UIA), and is currently Secretary of International Child Abduction Lawyers Italy (ICALI).

She has participated as an expert in the HCCH Special Commission on the practical operation on the 1980 Child Abduction and 1996 Child Protection Conventions and as an IAFL delegate in the HCCH Malta V Conference. She frequently writes, lectures and conducts trainings on international family matters.

As a founding member of ICALI, Marzia delivered the first high-level training of cross-border mediators, in collaboration with the Italian Central Authority, REUNITE, FiammeF (Italian Federation of Family Mediators), within the context of the European Judicial Network (EJN) project EJNita 2.0 (*Italian Network: Building Bridges and New Roadmaps*). The training resulted in the adoption of an institutional operational protocol, informed by guidelines already published by the Italian Central Authority.

She speaks Italian, English, German, French and some Spanish.

ROZ OSBORNE



Roz Osborne is the Founder and CEO of *GlobalARRK*, a UK-registered charity working internationally supporting parents who are ‘stuck’ in a foreign country and unable to return home with their children.

Roz founded *GlobalARRK* in 2012 after experiencing this issue firsthand in Portugal. When hundreds of other ‘stuck’ parents reached out to her for help, she recognised the urgent need for dedicated support. Under her leadership, the charity registered in 2016 and now assists over 300 new families each year. *GlobalARRK* offers a call-back helpline, legal network and clinic, peer support groups, domestic abuse recovery courses,

and befriending calls. Roz also works to amplify the voices of affected parents through advocacy, lobbying, media engagement, and public campaigns.

Alongside her role at *GlobalARRK*, Roz is a Trustee for *Bath Welcomes Refugees*, supporting refugees with housing, language classes, and social integration. She is also the lead violinist of a local string orchestra in Bath. Previously, she served as the Executive Officer of *VOICES*, a charity providing recovery support and lived-experience consultation for survivors of domestic abuse.

ALEXANDER JONES



Alex Jones focuses his practice in all areas of family law, ranging from mediation, to negotiating divorce agreements outside of court, to the litigation of domestic-relations proceedings at both the trial and appellate levels. He can assist clients with the division of assets, child support and alimony, tax advice and resolving child-custody disputes.

Alex is actively involved in the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (“AFCC”), an international interdisciplinary organization of lawyers, judges and mental-health professionals dedicated to improving the court process for children. Actively involved with the Massachusetts Chapter of AFCC, he is a past

President of the Massachusetts Chapter (2008-2009), Treasurer (2009-2012), and a board member (2004 – 2012). Alex has also assisted in planning annual conferences since 2003. Alex has presented at AFCC conferences at both a local and national level and was active in developing the strategic planning process for the AFCC. He was a member of the Boston Bar Association’s Family Law Steering Committee between 2006 and 2012, where he served as the Chair of the Family Law Section’s Amicus Committee and the Co-Chair of the Public Policy Committee. Alex is a member of the Massachusetts Bar Association’s Family Law Section and is currently serving as a member of “A Child’s Voice” Task Force, being run through the office of the Chief Justice of the Probate and Family Court. Alex is a member of Massachusetts Council on Family Mediation.

Alex is a 1996 honors graduate of Binghamton University, where he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. In 2000 he graduated with dual degrees from Boston College Law School and Boston College Graduate School of Social Work. At Boston College Law School Alex was awarded the West Publishing Award for outstanding academic achievement, the Boston College Graduate Student Association’s Graduate Student Award from Boston College Law School and the Boston College Law School Alumni Association’s Meritorious Student Award. After law school he clerked for two years for the Justices of the Massachusetts Probate and Family Courts.