

## 12<sup>th</sup> International Forum on the electronic Apostille programme (e-APP)

4 October 2021

### SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES AND PHOTOS

#### Opening Address



#### Professor Yun Zhao (HCCH)

##### *Representative for Asia and the Pacific*

Professor Yun Zhao is Henry Cheng Professor in International Law and Head of Department of Law at the University of Hong Kong (HKU); PhD (Erasmus University Rotterdam); LLM (Leiden University); LLM & LLB (China University of Political Science and Law). Prof. Zhao is currently Standing Council Member of Chinese Society of International Law and Council Member of Chinese Law Society; Chair Professor at Xiamen University (2020-2023); Chair Professor at Tianjin University of Finance and Economics (2018-2021). He is listed as arbitrator in several international arbitration commissions and has published widely on various topics including particularly dispute resolution and space law.

#### Session 1: The e-APP as an e-Government Solution



#### Ms Adile Keshfetdinova (Uzbekistan)

##### *Main Consultant, Public Services Agency, Ministry of Justice*

Ms Adile Keshfetdinova is the Main Consultant at the Public Services Agency of Uzbekistan's Ministry of Justice, a position which she has held for three years. Her current work centres around drafting and developing legal documents in the sphere of administrative procedures, preparing analytical reports and taking practical measures to optimise public services, as well as providing legal advice on drafts relating to the provision of public services. She previously worked in a leading law firm in Uzbekistan and holds a law degree in Jurisprudence (International Legal Activity) from the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, Tashkent.



### **Dr Rajesh Kumar Mishra (India)**

***Deputy Director General, National Informatics Centre (NIC), Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology***

Dr. R. K. Mishra is the Deputy Director General and Head of Division for the Ministry of External Affairs Division in the NIC of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and is responsible for the Technical Advisory Group. Prior to this, he was a lecturer at Banasthali Deemed University and has worked for a unit of Transport Corporation of India Ltd and National Fertilizers Ltd. In addition to an undergraduate degree from Agra University, he also holds a Master of Business Administration in Operations Management and a PhD in Computer Science.



### **Mr Senen T. Mangalile (Philippines)**

***Assistant Secretary, Office of Consular Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs***

Mr. Senen T. Mangalile is presently Assistant Secretary of the Office of Consular Affairs of the Department of Foreign Affairs. Having joined the Department in 1997, he has previously had numerous diplomatic postings, including as a Deputy Chief of Mission, Consul General, and Chargé d'affaires. He holds the rank of Chief of Mission Class II and has also served as a Division Director. He holds a Master of Science (with Distinction) in Diplomacy, Statecraft, and Foreign Policy from Loughborough University and a Bachelor of Arts (Philosophy) from Immaculate Conception Major Seminary.

### **Mr Albert Virabyan (Armenia)**

***Head of the Department of Fulfilment of International Liabilities, Civil Status Acts Registration Agency, Ministry of Justice***

Mr Albert Virabyan is the Head of Department of Fulfilment of International Liabilities at the CSAR Agency of Armenia's Ministry of Justice. He has been working at the Ministry of Justice since 2007 and has held his current position since 2016. He is a qualified lawyer and teaches at Brusov State University. He previously coordinated the practical operation of the HCCH Child Abduction and Adoption Conventions in Armenia, as well as other international treaties to which Armenia is party. He also prepared the legislative drafts on related amendments.



### **Mr Levi Gao (HCCH)**

***Legal Officer, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific***

Levi Gao Song is a Legal Officer on secondment at the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. He holds a Master of Laws from Peking University, with a focus on administrative law. Prior to his secondment, he worked in the General Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, responsible for the revision and compilation of domestic laws and regulations related to foreign affairs. He has assisted in the research and proposal of China's Foreign Investment Law, participated in the organisation of China-Africa Cooperation Forum, and served as a public lawyer as well.

## Session 2: Experience Sharing in e-APP Development



**Mr Tal Eisenberg (Israel)**

*Chief Technology Officer, Department of Digital Technology & Information, Ministry of Justice*

Mr Tal Eisenberg is the CTO at Israel's Ministry of Justice and part of the executive leadership at the Digital Technology & Information organisation. In his role, Mr Eisenberg is responsible for Enterprise architecture for both Cloud and On-Premise environments. He has vast experience with regulated environment and rapid software development in small start-ups and large-scale organisations, product strategy, and organisational structure and methodologies to serve all aspects of software development and product lifecycle from initial specs to production delivery. He holds a Master of Engineering in Systems Engineering from the Technion (Israel Institute of Technology) and a Bachelor of Technology in Software Engineering and Management (magna cum laude) from Tel Aviv Academic College of Engineering.



**Ms Yael Weiner (Israel)**

*Senior Director (International Law), Office of the Deputy Attorney General (International Law), Ministry of Justice*

Ms Yael Weiner is the Senior Director for International Law at Israel's Ministry of Justice and heads the Public International Law Unit within the Office of the Deputy Attorney-General (International Law). She is responsible for strategy and policy on core matters of public and private international law. In addition, she is responsible for advising the government on international dispute resolution and transnational litigation. Ms Weiner heads Israeli delegations in various bilateral and multilateral negotiations, as well as in international fora. She is also a member of the Israeli Intergovernmental Team for the Development and Implementation of the e-APP project. She holds a Bachelor of Laws from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a Master of Laws (magna cum laude) from Tel Aviv University.



**Ms Aviva Shavit (Israel)**

*Deputy Director, Department of Licensing of Notaries, Ministry of Justice*

Ms Aviva Shavit is the Deputy Director of the Department of Licensing of Notaries at Israel's Ministry of Justice. She is responsible for the professional and ethical oversight of over 6500 Israeli notaries in various aspects of their functions, including the production of Apostilles for private documents, and for coordinating these matters with Israel's Competent Authorities under the HCCH Apostille Convention. Ms Shavit plays a leading role in the development of Israel's remote e-Notary project, which will facilitate the provision of e-Apostilles for e-notarised documents. She holds a Bachelor of Laws from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.



### **Ms Cristina Ribeiro (Luxembourg)**

***Legal Supervisor, Office of Passports, Visas and Legalisations, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs***

Ms Cristina Ribeiro is the Legal Supervisor at the Office of Passports, Visas and Legalisations of Luxembourg's Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. She is responsible for coordinating the legalisation services within the Ministry, where she directs the project managers in the design of new digitisation projects and handles the legal files associated with their administration. Ms Ribeiro has been part of the management of national and European digitisation projects since 2016 and also works on the drafting of future national laws relating to legalisation.



### **Ms Süheyla Güçlü (Turkey)**

***Technical Manager, Department of Electronic Mail, Organisation of Post and Telegraph (PTT)***

Ms Süheyla Güçlü is the Technical Manager in the Department of Electronic Mail at PTT, the national post and telegraph directorate of Turkey. She began working at PTT as an automation engineer where she worked on many projects in the postal technologies department in 2001 until 2012. She has worked on various e-government projects carried out by the company within the framework of the e-Transformation Project. These include the e-signature project for the Information Technologies and Communications Authority, as well as the e-invoice, e-archive, e-storage projects with the Revenue Administration. She is currently assigned to the e-Apostille project for the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior and Turksat Corp. Ms Güçlü has previously worked as a project engineer at the Ministry of National Education and graduated from the Department of Physics Engineering at Hacettepe University in 1995.



### **Mr Brody Warren (HCCH)**

***Attaché to the Secretary General***

Mr Brody Warren joined the Permanent Bureau in 2014, working as part of the international legal cooperation and civil procedure team, within which his areas of work were the Apostille, Service, Evidence, Access to Justice, and the Civil Procedure Conventions. Appointed Attaché in 2020, Mr Warren has continued his work as Senior Legal Officer in the team responsible for the Apostille Convention. Prior to joining the Permanent Bureau, Mr Warren worked for legal publisher LexisNexis in the Press Gallery of the Australian Federal Parliament between 2012 and 2014. Mr Warren holds a Bachelor of Laws (Honours) and Bachelor of Arts (Political Science/Spanish) from the Australian National University (Canberra, Australia) and is admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of New South Wales (Australia).



## **Dr Christophe Bernasconi (HCCH)**

### ***Secretary General***

Dr Christophe Bernasconi has been Secretary General of the HCCH since July 2013. He first joined the Permanent Bureau (PB) in 1997 as Secretary, became First Secretary in 2000, and Deputy Secretary General in 2011. In addition to overseeing the execution of the work programme of the HCCH as mandated by its Members and managing the operations of the PB, Dr Bernasconi also has primary responsibility for the Apostille Convention (including the e-APP). Prior to joining the Permanent Bureau, he was assistant to Professor Paul Volken at the University of Fribourg, where he taught extensively in private international law. He also worked as Legal Expert at the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law, and as Scientific Collaborator at the Federal Office of Justice in Switzerland. Dr Bernasconi holds a law degree from Fribourg University (magna cum laude), an LL.M. degree from McGill University, and a doctoral degree from Fribourg University (summa cum laude).

## **Session 3: Progressive Implementation of the e-APP**



## **Ms Velichka Lozanova (Bulgaria)**

### ***Director of the Information Activities and Authentication of Educational Documents Directorate, National Centre for Information and Documentation (NACID)***

Ms Velichka Lozanova is the Director of the Information Activities and Authentication of Educational Documents at NACID. She has expertise in centralised electronic administrative services and is experienced in collecting, processing, and analysing information for decision-makers in the field of education. She was a principal member of the teams that successfully implemented five specific projects (among other activities) of the NACID aimed at implementing electronic administrative services, including the components of e-APP and implementation of the e-Register of all issued Apostilles. Ms Lozanova is currently a member of the project team for building a unified information system of higher education in Bulgaria, aimed at the monitoring, control, and management of higher education.



## **Mr Chris Ward (United Kingdom)**

### ***Head of the Legalisation Office, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office***

Mr Chris Ward is a career civil servant having worked for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (now Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office) since 1995. He has a wide range of experience in the UK and overseas including immigration, consular services and crisis response in Bangladesh, Russia, Pakistan and Uganda. He has occupied the role of Head of the UK Legalisation Office since May 2018, where his teams deliver all UK public-facing consular services including legalisation and overseas birth and death registrations.



## **Ms Gemita Riesco Avendaño (Chile)**

***Head of the Department of International Document Analysis and Validation, Consular Services Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs***

Ms Gemita Riesco Avendaño is the Head of Department of Analysis and Validation of International Documents at the Directorate of Consular Services of Chile's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She has worked in the Ministry since 1998, having served as an Analyst of the Department of Maritime Affairs for fifteen years and Consular Agent for two years. Since 2015, she has been responsible for the unit that provides document legalisation and Apostille services. In her time at the Ministry, she has participated in meetings of international and regional organisations, such as the International Seabed Authority, Permanent Commission of the South Pacific, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, and the HCCH. She holds a degree in Legal Sciences from the Universidad La República and admitted as a lawyer of the Supreme Court of Justice in 1998.



## **Ms Nicole Sims (HCCH)**

***Legal Officer***

Ms Nicole Sims is a Legal Officer at the Permanent Bureau of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH). She joined the Permanent Bureau in 2020, working as part of the international legal cooperation and transnational litigation team. This primarily involves work on the Apostille Convention and the Tourists and Visitors (ODR) Project. Prior to joining the Permanent Bureau, Ms Sims worked as a Tipstaff at the New South Wales Court of Appeal and as a policy adviser at the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Australia). She holds a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of International Relations from the Australian National University and is admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of New South Wales.

## Session 4: The Future of Document Authentication



### **Ms Natalie Smolenski (United States of America)**

#### ***Head of Business Development, Hyland***

Ms Natalie Smolenski leads business development for Hyland's blockchain-based content services. She was the founding business development executive for Learning Machine, a Texas-based startup specialising in blockchain-anchored digital records, which exited to Hyland in 2020. As Chair of the Board of the Texas Blockchain Council, a trade association, she works to advance public policy friendly to blockchain technology and the blockchain industry. Ms Smolenski is a trained anthropologist whose independent research focuses on the intersections of identity, technology, and government. By bringing a scientific perspective to distributed digital technologies and social transformation, she helps audiences from all backgrounds understand how individuals connect to form communities and build the infrastructures of the future.



### **Mr Giovanni de Paz Acevedo (Guatemala)**

#### ***Head of the Authentication Department, Directorate-General of Legal Affairs, International Treaties and Translations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs***

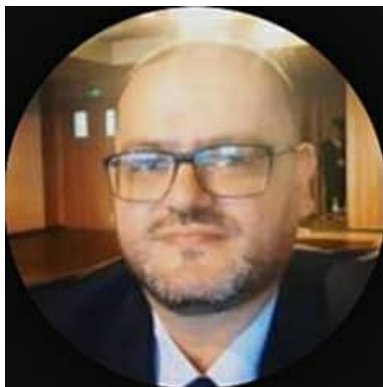
Mr Giovanni de Paz Acevedo is the Head of the Authentication Department in the General Directorate of Legal Affairs, International Treaties and Translations of Guatemala's Ministry of Foreign Affairs where he has worked for eleven years. He is responsible for the practical operation of the HCCH Apostille Convention in Guatemala, as well as the legalisation of documents for countries that are not party to the Convention. A lawyer and a notary, he holds a Master of International Relations.



### **Ms Taña Silva Manosalva (Peru)**

#### ***Legal Assistant, Sub-Directorate of Consular Processes, Directorate-General for Peruvian Communities Abroad and Consular Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs***

Ms Taña Silva Manosalva is Legal Assistant of the Sub-Directorate of Consular Processes of the Directorate-General for Peruvian Communities Abroad and Consular Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Peru. She works primarily on signature rectification procedures, consular regulations, consular tariff and Unified Administrative Procedures Text (TUPA). She is a lawyer with experience in public and private institutions, having graduated from the Cesar Vallejo University with a law degree and degree in public management. She also has a Certification in Signature and Fingerprint Verification and another in General Administrative Law.



### **Mr Willmer Orlando Santiago Santiago (Venezuela)**

***Coordinator of the Legalisation and Apostille Area, Ministry of People's Power of Foreign Affairs***

Mr Willmer Orlando Santiago Santiago is the Coordinator of the Legalisation and Apostille Area of Venezuela's Ministry of People's Power of Foreign Affairs. He is a Professor of Geography, graduated from the Universidad Nacional Experimental Libertador (UPEL). Mr Santiago is also an Assessor at the Open National University (UNA) and is a former representative of the Minister of Popular Power for University Education, Science and Technology (MPPEUCT) on the University Council of the UNA. He has also previously served as Director-General for Education and University Management of the MPPEUCT.



### **Ms Florencia Castro (HCCH)**

***Legal Officer, Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean***

Ms Florencia Castro is the Legal and Office Coordinator of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the HCCH, a position she has held since 2007. Before joining the HCCH, she worked for 9 years as Legal Adviser at the Directorate of International Legal Assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Argentina. She has participated as a speaker in training seminars on international child abduction in Argentina and abroad. She is also a member of the American Association of Private International Law (ASADIP).

## **Closing Address**



### **Mr Ignacio Goicoechea (HCCH)**

***Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean***

Mr Ignacio Goicoechea joined the Permanent Bureau in 2005. He became Principal Legal Officer in June 2011 and currently serves as the Representative of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) based in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The main objectives of ROLAC are to facilitate the proper implementation and operation of HCCH Conventions in the region, to encourage governments and stakeholders to engage actively in the work of the HCCH, and to support legislative projects developed at headquarters in The Hague. Before joining the HCCH, Mr Goicoechea worked for 11 years as a legal consultant to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Argentina, at the Direction of International Legal Cooperation.