

High Level Segment on Statelessness

Monday, 7 October 2019

70th Annual Session of UNHCR's Executive Committee
Mid-point #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness
2014 – 2024

Palais de Nations, Geneva

Biographies of the participants

Anita Rani, radio and television Broadcaster (*Panel Moderator*)

Anita Rani is a British radio and television Broadcaster. Ms. Rani has consistently used her voice to tell refugee stories. As a leading presenter for the BBC's flagship show Country file, she has told the stories of refugees rebuilding their lives in the UK. She also presented a three-part documentary 'The Refugee Camp: Our Desert Home', which shone a spotlight on life in Za'atari camp in Jordan. In 2017, Ms. Rani presented and co-produced BBC One's two-part series 'My Family, Partition and Me: India 1947'. She played an important role as the Master of Ceremonies for the Nansen Refugee Award in 2017 and also hosted the Facebook Live component of the 2018 Nansen Refugee Award. Ms. Rani presented the 2017 Women on the Move Awards, celebrating the vital contributions that refugee and migrant women make to their local communities in the UK.

Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations

Amina Mohammed is the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations. She served as Minister of Environment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria from November 2015 to December 2016, where she steered the country's efforts on climate action, protecting the natural environment and conserving resources for sustainable development. Prior to this, she served as Special Advisor to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Post-2015 Development Planning, where she was instrumental in bringing about the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Before joining the UN, Deputy Secretary-General Mohammed worked for three successive administrations in Nigeria. She is also an adjunct Professor in Development Practice at Columbia University.

Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Filippo Grandi has been the UN High Commissioner for Refugees since 2016, and has had a 30-year career in the field of international cooperation. He served as Commissioner-General of the UN Agency for Palestine Refugees, UNRWA, from 2010 to 2014, after having been the organization's Deputy Commissioner-General from 2005. Prior to that, High Commissioner Grandi served as Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Afghanistan. This followed a career with NGOs and later with UNHCR in Africa, Asia and the Middle East and at the Organization's Geneva Headquarters.

Lamberto Zannier, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

Ambassador Lamberto Zannier of Italy took up the mandate of OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) High Commissioner on National Minorities in July 2017. Before taking up this position, Ambassador Zannier was OSCE Secretary General for two consecutive three-year terms, from July 2011 until June 2017. Prior to this, he served as the UN Special Representative for Kosovo and Head of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. From 2006 to 2008 he was Coordinator for Common Foreign and Security Policy and Common Security and Defense Policy in the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dealing, *inter alia*, with EU foreign policy issues and Italy's participation in EU operations, both civilian and military. From 2002 to 2006, he was the Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre of the OSCE, focusing on political-military issues, as well as crisis management, and responsible for managing the OSCE's field operations. Ambassador Zannier joined the Italian Foreign Ministry as a career diplomat in 1978.

Maha Mamo, Activist and formerly Stateless Person

Maha Mamo is an advocate for the rights of stateless persons and is a formerly stateless person herself. Born in Lebanon in 1988 to Syrian parents, Ms. Mamo did not acquire any citizenship at birth. Her parents' marriage was not considered legal because one of them was Christian and one was Muslim, and without a marriage certificate they were unable to obtain birth certificates or citizenship for their children. After a long quest for citizenship and full belonging, Maha became a citizen of Brazil in 2018. Maha continues to advocate on behalf of stateless persons globally, including through public speaking. See for example <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbL6f3AVYfM>.

Cate Blanchett, Actor, Theatre Director and UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador

Cate Blanchett is an award-winning and internationally-renowned Australian actor and theatre director and was named a UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador in May 2016. She has travelled with UNHCR to meet refugees and stateless people in Lebanon, Jordan and Bangladesh, learning first-hand about their experiences of flight from conflict and persecution, as well as the challenges posed by statelessness. Harnessing the human stories she encounters, Ms. Blanchett raises awareness, advocates and mobilizes support at the global level, including through powerful statements in numerous fora such as the World Economic Forum at Davos and the UN Security Council.