

**Interactive Expert Panel on the priority theme: Ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls, including by promoting inclusive and equitable legal systems, eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices, and addressing structural barriers**

**Monday, 16 March 2026 | 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**Speaker biographies:**

**Ms. Teresa Zapeta** (Guatemala), Executive Director, International Indigenous Women’s Forum is a seasoned advocate with over 25 years of experience in championing the rights of women and Indigenous Peoples. She has held influential roles within NGOs, government agencies, and international organizations. Notably, Ms. Zapeta has served as an official in the Government of Guatemala, advocating for Indigenous women, and spent 5 years leading the Indigenous Women Program for Central America and Mexico at UNIFEM and UN Women. She currently serves as the Executive Director of the International Indigenous Women’s Forum (FIMI).

**Professor Rangita de Silva de Alwis** (Sri Lanka) is a Distinguished Adjunct Professor of Law and Global Leadership at Penn Carey Law, University of Pennsylvania, and Visiting Faculty at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. A globally recognized women’s human rights expert, she has served in senior advisory roles at the the World Bank, the United Nations, governments, and NGOs on implementing human rights treaties. She serves as an expert member of the CEDAW treaty body and focal point on Women, Peace and Security, and has also served as Special Advisor to the UN SDG Fund and on several UN and World Bank high-level working groups on women’s access to justice, gender equality lawmaking, and women with disabilities.

**Dr. Marwa Sharafeldin** (Egypt) is an Egyptian scholar-activist and former Visiting Fellow in the Program on Law and Society in the Muslim World at Harvard Law School, and Senior Advisor to Musawah, the Global Movement for Equality and Justice in the Muslim Family. Her work focuses on the intersection of Islamic law, international human rights law, and feminist activism. She has co-founded and served on the executive and advisory boards of several feminist organizations, including Musawah, the Global Fund for Women, the Young Arab Feminist Network, and the Network for Women’s Rights Organisations in Egypt, and has contributed as a technical expert to major UN reports such as Progress of the World’s Women and Gender Justice and Law in the Arab Region.

**Ms. Aferdita Prroni** (Albania) is Executive Director of the Human Rights in Democracy Center and a senior legal and GBV/access-to-justice expert with over 20 years of experience in Albania’s justice system. She has advised the Ministry of Justice, prosecution offices, and civil society on legal aid, VAW legislation, protection orders, and access to remedies for women and girls. Her work includes substantive contributions to criminal justice reforms and specialized training for judges and prosecutors.

**Tania Sourdin** (Australia) is Emeritus Professor, University of Newcastle. Her career has spanned the globe as a consultant and specialist expert in a range of complex programs across the justice sector. With an extensive career focusing on justice, technology (including AI), ethics, litigation, conflict avoidance and dispute resolution. Professor Sourdin has influenced legislative reform initiatives, standards and cultural change in technological reform and justice and in dispute resolution. She has also taught judges in a range of programs that include technology use, court craft, civil procedure, decision making, complex behaviour and in judicial orientation programs.