No one left behind
A feasible goal for the health-related Sustainable Development Goals in the Arab region?

Conference organized by the Center for Research on Population and Health, Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS), American University of Beirut

June 6–8, 2017
Sawsan Abdulrahim is an Associate Professor and Chair in the Department of Health Promotion and Community Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, American University of Beirut.

She obtained her PhD from the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Her research focuses on social inequalities and health, the social and cultural meanings of subjective health evaluations, and the structural conditions that influence the wellbeing of labor migrants and refugees. Her previous work focused on the social determinants of health among Arab immigrants in the United States and migrant domestic workers in the Arab region. Currently, she is undertaking research on the health of Syrian refugee women in Lebanon, with an emphasis on reproductive health outcomes and early marriage. She teaches courses in health promotion theory, forced migration and health, and global public health.

Mohammad Abu-Zaineh is an Associate Professor at Aix-Marseille University (AMU), holding the INSERM-AMU Chair of Excellence in Health Economics and Policy since 2013. He is also a research fellow at SESSTIM (UMR 912) and the Aix-Marseille School of Economics.

He is the founder and coordinator of the AHEAD research Network, the Laureate of the SANTEMED project financed by the University foundation A*MIDEX and the HEALTHCOV project financed by Campus France. He was also the lead of the ANR funded project, “INEGSANTE Tackling Inequalities in Health and Access to Healthcare in the Middle East and North African Countries: Challenges of Measurement and Explanation.”

He holds a PhD in Economics Sciences from Aix-Marseille University. His areas of expertise include the measurement of social justice and economic inequality; the economic evaluation of public policies; microeconometrics as well as health care financing and health insurance. In addition to his active participation in several international conferences he has published in high-ranking peer-reviewed journals including: *Journal of Health Economics*, *Health Economics*, *Social Science and Medicine*, *The Lancet*, *Health Policy and Planning*, *Health Policy*, *International Journal of Health Economics and Management*, and *Research on Economic Inequality*.

Rima Afifi is a professor in the Department of Health Promotion and Community Health and an Associate Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the American University of Beirut. Rima earned a BSc. in Psychology from the University of Iowa, a master’s of Public Health from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a PhD in Health Services Research from St. Louis University.

Her research falls into three broad categories: youth, protective and risk factors, and tobacco control. Within these areas, whenever possible, she uses methods of Community Based Participatory
Research; applies an ecological lens to the understanding of the issues; engages multiple disciplines; and emphasizes knowledge transfer of research to practice and policy.

She has authored over 80 peer-reviewed publications. She is co-author of the 2016 *Lancet* Commission report on the Adolescent Health and Wellbeing and is a member of the *Lancet* Standing Commission on Adolescent Health. She contributed to the *Arab Human Development Report* on youth published in 2016. She has engaged in professional practice in the Arab region around public health education, evaluation of health programs, trainings in health promotion, youth issues, CBPR, and tobacco control.

**DR. HABIBA BEN ROMDHANE**

Faculty of Medicine, University of Tunis
habibabr@yahoo.fr

Habiba Ben Romdhane is a professor of Preventive Medicine and director of the Epidemiology and Prevention Research Department of Cardiovascular Disease at the University of Tunis. She was the Tunisian Minister of Health and she has been the Chief Executive Officer for the National Board of Family and Population. She is co-founder and president of the Tunisian Society of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine and of the National Observatory of Health Equity; she is co-founder and member of the board of the Maghreb Network on Research on Health Systems.

She has coordinated several epidemiological studies on non-communicable disease and she has led the implementation of a number of important public health projects in Tunisia, including the Healthy Urbanization Project in Tunisia, the first Tunisian Cardiovascular Disease Registry, the first National Observatory on Women, the study on Health and Vulnerability, the national study on gender based violence, the national survey on maternal mortality, the study on women’s health and the epidemiological transition, and the adolescent health study.

She has led a number of EU-funded Projects: Epidemiological Transition and Health Impact in North Africa, Mediterranean studies of Cardiovascular disease and Hyperglycaemia: Analytical Modeling of Population Socio-economic transitions, MedCHAMPS, Non-Communicable Diseases and their social determinants in the Mediterranean: building sustainable Research Capacity for effective policy intervention.

She has published numerous scientific papers, monographs on women’s health, NCDs and health policy. She is the recipient of a number of awards, including an award by the Maghreb Medical Science Society for her work on Cardiovascular Disease Epidemiology and Prevention.

**DR. HICHAM BERRI**

Non-Communicable Diseases Division, Moroccan Ministry of Health
hichamelberri@gmail.com

Hicham El Berri is a physician and manager of public health programs. He is in charge of the Division of Non-Communicable Disease in the Directorate of Epidemiology and Disease Control of the Ministry of Health of Morocco. He has contributed to the development of several strategies, plans and public health programs, particularly those dealing with the prevention and control of non-communicable disease, food, and nutrition.

His work is part of efforts in Morocco to assess progress towards the MDG targets, including multi-sectoral collaborations, improvements in national data systems, and new digital approaches.
PROF. OONA CAMPBELL

Department of Infectious Disease Epidemiology, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
oona.campbell@lshtm.ac.uk

Oona Campbell is a reproductive epidemiologist with degrees in demography, epidemiology, and biology, who has worked on maternal health for 30+ years. She is currently Professor in Epidemiology and Reproductive Health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Her expertise includes measurement of maternal morbidity and mortality, perinatal mortality, and evaluation of different modes of delivering maternal health and family planning services. She has worked extensively in developing and assessing innovative indicators of service provision and capability, and is interested in physical accessibility to delivery care services.

She has worked in the Middle East (Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Turkey), in West Africa (Benin, Nigeria, and Ghana), East Africa (Zambia, Tanzania, and Uganda), in Indonesia, and in Brazil, among other countries. She has collaborated with a number of ministries of health, agencies, and foundations (including DFID, WHO, World Bank, UNICEF, USAID, Comic Relief, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the MacArthur Foundation). As part of her research, she has run, or been a member of, three DFID-funded Research Programme Consortia and led work with MotherCare and the MM+ component of IMMPACT, which focused on methods for measuring maternal mortality. She has experience in measuring maternal mortality at the national level and ran three national studies (two in Egypt, one in Turkey) and contributed to one in Syria, and subnational level (was co-PI on the Ghana ObaapaVitA trial, a large-scale RCT of 120,000 women testing whether Vitamin A supplementation reduces maternal mortality). She has also been PI or co-PI on large projects funded at a level of $1-10 million.

She has over 150 publications. She organizes and teaches Extended Epidemiology. She also teaches on Foundations in Reproductive Health Research, Family Planning, and Current Issues in Maternal and Perinatal Health. She co-founded the MARCH Centre for Maternal, Reproductive and Child Health at the LSHTM, and led the 2016 *Lancet* Maternal Health Series.

PROF. JAD CHAABAN

Department of Agricultural Sciences, American University of Beirut
jc11@aub.edu.lb

Jad Chaaban is an Associate Professor of Economics at the American University of Beirut. His primary research interests are in development economics and industrial organization, and his extended interests include public economics of health, education, and labor policies, in addition to agricultural and environmental economics. His work focuses mostly on using tools in micro and applied economics to tackle public policy issues that affect the lives of the most vulnerable groups in society. His interdisciplinary work has been published in several academic journals in disciplines including Economics, Area Studies, Demography, Agricultural Policy, and Public Health.

He has served as an economic policy advisor to various Lebanese ministries and public agencies. Prior to joining AUB in September 2006, he was an economist in the World Bank’s Middle East regional office, where he undertook research related to poverty-reduction and economic management in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. He was also the president and one of the founding members of the Lebanese Economic Association (LEA), 2007–14.

He regularly contributes to economic policy analysis on Middle Eastern and global development issues to various international institutions and UN agencies, and his research and advocacy work has often been
featured in local and international media. In 2014–15 he served as the Lead Author of UNDP’s *Arab Human Development Report 2015*, a flagship publication authored by leading scholars and policymakers working on the Arab countries.

He holds a BA in Economics from AUB, an MBA from the European School of Management, a master’s in Agricultural, Environmental, and Natural Resources Economics, and a PhD in Economics from the Toulouse School of Economics in France.

---

**PROF. JULIA CHRITCHLEY**

Population Health Research Institute, St George’s University of London
jchristley@sgul.ac.uk

Julia Chritchley is a Professor of Epidemiology at St. George’s, University of London, with 20 years of experience working in cardiovascular disease and diabetes epidemiology and public health. She holds a PhD in Epidemiology (Oxford University) and a master’s in Public Health (University of London), and has been developing modelling approaches to explain chronic disease trends in different populations and assess the impact of preventive or therapeutic interventions, particularly in low and middle income countries.

Earlier, at Liverpool University, she developed a Coronary Heart Disease mortality model (IMPACT), which has since been widely replicated and refined, and she authored a number of key publications using the model in high and middle income settings. She has also managed projects carrying out secondary analyses of large, serial cross-sectional surveys. At University of Newcastle she was awarded prestigious EC funding to evaluate the national situation and cost-effectiveness of different policy options for coronary heart disease and diabetes prevention in North African and Eastern Mediterranean Countries (Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, MEDCHAMPS project; 2009–13). This project combined qualitative methodologies and epidemiological modelling (including cost-effectiveness analyses) to develop a comprehensive and transparent prevention framework for regional and national policy makers. It was followed by a successor, capacity development project, RESCAP-MED, 2012–14, which aimed to build capacity for research on the social determinants of non-communicable diseases in the Middle East and North Africa.

She is the author of numerous publications including some highly cited large systematic reviews of observational data on mortality risk reduction, on quitting smoking and on the health effects of smokeless tobacco.

---

**PROF. JOCELYN DEJONG**

Department of Epidemiology and Population Health, American University of Beirut
jd16@aub.edu.lb

Jocelyn DeJong is Professor and Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs at the Faculty of Health Sciences, American University of Beirut which she joined in 2005. Her research interests are focused on reproductive health, including HIV/AIDS, and on the linkages between reproductive health, population, and development. She previously taught development at the University of Manchester, UK.

She is currently engaged in a study of maternal ‘near miss’ (women who almost died in pregnancy and childbirth) in public hospitals in Egypt, Lebanon, the occupied Palestinian territories, and Syria; an intervention study on early marriage among Syrian refugees in Lebanon and on reproductive health in conflict/humanitarian settings. She coordinates the Reproductive Health Working Group (a capacity building network in the Arab countries and Turkey). She is the chair of the Inter-professional
Education Committee at AUB which combines faculty members from medicine, nursing and public health. In a previous position as program officer in Reproductive Health at the regional office of the Ford Foundation for Middle East and North Africa, she supported reproductive health and HIV/AIDS programs by universities, governments, and NGOs across the Middle East and North Africa region.

She holds a BA in Social Anthropology from Harvard University, an M.Phil. in Development Studies (with a focus on health policy) from the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex (UK), and a PhD in Health Policy in Developing Countries from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

**PROF. JALILA EL ATI**

National Institute of Nutrition and Food Technology, Tunisia
jalila.elati@rns.tn / jalila.elati@yahoo.fr

Dr. El Ati is a professor of nutrition and physiology, a researcher on public health nutrition, and the head of the studies and planning department at the Ministry of Public Health in Tunis. She coordinates the SURVEN research laboratory, which is responsible for Nutritional Surveillance and Epidemiology in Tunisia (www.surventunisie.rns.tn). She is a member of the scientific council of the National Institute of Nutrition and Food Technology.

She has led a number of large epidemiological surveys to assess nutritional status, food customs, food consumption, health problems, and their determinants. Her current research focuses on nutrition and food surveillance, the nutritional and epidemiological transitions, obesity prevention, teen lifestyles, and micronutrient deficiencies. She is responsible for the implementation of the national strategy to prevent and control obesity and associated diseases in Tunisia; the national program to reduce salt, fat, and sugar consumption; the ANR-Project on Promoting sustainable Mediterranean food systems for good nutrition and health; the FAO Project “Towards promotion the Mediterranean Diet in the Mediterranean region;” and a survey on the consumption of the palm oil and trans-fatty acids by Tunisian children.

**PROF. ABBAS ELZEIN**

Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies, University of Sydney
abbas.el-zein@sydney.edu.au

Abbas ElZein is Professor of Environmental Engineering and Director of the Geoenvironmental Laboratory at the University of Sydney, Australia. His research has tackled problems of contaminant transport in soil and groundwater, vulnerability to climate change, as well as the broad links between poverty and environmental degradation in the developing world. He has investigated environmental and development problems in Australia, Canada, Cambodia, Nepal, Lebanon, and the Arab world.

He has been chief investigator on five Australian Research Council Discovery research grants, including two current ones. He has published over one hundred peer-reviewed articles, including papers in leading, high-impact journals such as *Bioresources Technology, the Lancet, International Journal of Numerical Methods in Engineering, Science of the Total Environment, Soil Science Society of America Journal, Risk Analysis and WIRES Climate Change*. He has delivered keynote and invited lectures at a number of national and international forums and symposia. He is a member of a United Nations expert group on water scarcity in the Middle-East, two technical committees on environmental sustainability at the International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (ISSMGE), a member of the editorial boards of international journals Environmental Geotechnics and Frontiers in Environmental Science,
Interdisciplinary Climate Studies, and member of the scientific/organizing committees of a number of international conferences.

He has a BE degree in Civil Engineering from the American University of Beirut, an MS in environmental sciences from the École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées in France, and an MS (with distinction) and a PhD in computational mechanics from the University of Southampton in the UK.

DR. CLAUDIA GARCÍA-MORENO

Department of Reproductive Health and Research, World Health Organization
garciamorenoc@who.int

Claudia García-Moreno currently leads the team working on violence against women at the World Health Organization (WHO), which includes work on measurement and epidemiology, interventions research, and development of guidelines and tools for the health sector. She has led the WHO’s work on gender and women’s health and on violence against women, and was coordinator of the Gender, Reproductive Rights, Sexual Health and Adolescence team in the Department of Reproductive Health and Research until 2013, when the Department was reorganized.

She coordinated the WHO Multi-Country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence against Women and is a founder and coordinating group member of the Sexual Violence Research Initiative. She is currently co-chair of the FIGO Working Group on Gender-based Violence and chair of the Independent Advisory Board of the DFID-funded *What works to prevent violence against women and girls* initiative, and previously a member and chair of the Steering Committee of the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS.

She is a physician with an MSC in Community Medicine from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She has thirty years of experience in health care delivery, sexual and reproductive health, women’s health, and gender in health research and policy, including in humanitarian settings.

PROF. HALA GHATTAS

Center for Research on Population and Health, American University of Beirut
hg15@aub.edu.lb

Hala Ghattas is Assistant Research Professor and Associate Director of the Center for Research on Population and Health at the American University of Beirut. Her research has focused on the biological, social, and structural determinants of maternal and child health and nutrition in low-resource settings and marginalized populations. Her research includes mixed-methods studies of food insecurity experience, barriers to appropriate infant feeding, and barriers to antenatal care access in Lebanon, as well as survey research on food security, nutrition and health status of refugees. Her work responds to the challenges identified by designing, implementing and evaluating public health interventions to address these. Examples include a community-based intervention to empower marginalized women through the establishment of social enterprises that cater healthy food to refugee schoolchildren, and community radio aiming to link refugee women with reproductive health information.

She holds a master’s in Public Health Nutrition from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and a PhD from St George’s, University of London.
PROF. RITA GIACAMAN

Institute of Community and Public Health, Birzeit University
RITA@birzeit.edu

Rita Giacaman is professor of public health at the Institute of Community and Public Health, Birzeit University, occupied Palestinian territory. A founding member of the Institute in 1978, she served as a committee member for the establishment of the Women’s Studies Institute at Birzeit University in 1993. She was a researcher/practitioner in the 1980’s Palestinian social action, which led to the development of the Palestinian primary health care model. In the 1990s, she participated in building the Palestinian community-based disability rehabilitation network.

She has chronicled the effects of Israeli military occupation on the physical and mental health of Palestinians. Since 2000, she has been focusing on the impact of chronic war-like conditions and exposure to political violence on the health and well-being of Palestinians, with an emphasis on psychosocial health; the development of measures suitable for assessing health and well-being in conditions of protracted political violence; and ways in which interventions could generate the needed active capacity to endure and resist ongoing exposure to political violence in war-like conditions, especially among young people.

She has published extensively on women’s health and mental health from a public health perspective, and was awarded an honorary PhD from the LSE in 2011 for having made an outstanding contribution to the increased understanding or appreciation of “the causes of things.”

DR. RANA HAJJEH

Division of Communicable Disease Control, World Health Organization, EMRO Regional Office
hajjehr@who.int

Rana Hajjeh did her undergraduate and medical studies at the American University of Beirut and trained in Internal Medicine and Infectious Diseases at Emory University, Atlanta. She is American board certified in both specialties. In 1993, she joined the Epidemic Intelligence Service at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and has been at CDC since.

During 2003–05, she was the director of the Surveillance Program at the US Navy Medical Research Unit-3 in Cairo, Egypt, where she worked closely with the WHO and countries in the region to set up systems for laboratory-based surveillance and outbreak response. During 2005–09, Dr. Hajjeh was the director of the GAVI’s Hib Initiative, a consortium including Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, CDC and WHO, which resulted in introducing Hib vaccines in the 73 poorest countries in the world. In 2014, she won the Federal Employee of the Year Award for her Hib vaccine work. She is a visiting professor at Hopkins SPH and Emory University SPH and Medicine.

Between 2008 and 2016, Dr. Hajjeh was the director of the Division of Bacterial Diseases at the National Center of Immunizations and Respiratory Diseases, CDC, where she led a team of nearly 200 staff, responsible for bacterial respiratory and vaccine-preventable disease surveillance and response efforts in the US and globally.

She has played an important role in the response and control of multiple domestic and global outbreaks that CDC has supported over the last two decades, including epidemic meningitis in Africa and in Saudi Arabia, Anthrax, SARS, Cholera in Haiti and recently MERS in Saudi Arabia, and Ebola in West Africa.

Currently, Dr. Hajjeh is the director of the Department of Communicable Diseases at WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office, responsible for prevention and control of various priority communicable
diseases in the Middle East. Dr. Hajjeh is a fellow of IDSA and has published over 150 peer-reviewed papers and book chapters, and serves as a reviewer for multiple journals.

PROF. CARLA MAKHLOUF OBERMEYER

Department of Epidemiology and Population Health, and Center for Research on Population and Health, AUB

cm39@aub.edu.lb

Carla Makhlof Obermeyer is Professor, Department of Epidemiology and Population Health, and Director, Center for Research on Population and Health, at the American University of Beirut (AUB).

Before joining AUB in 2011, she spent a decade as Scientist in the Department of HIV/AIDS of the World Health Organization, where she was responsible for research projects on HIV, in particular on programs for HIV testing and counselling. Prior to that, she was for a decade a faculty member in the Department of Population and International Health at Harvard University, where she taught and conducted research at the intersection of epidemiology, demography, and medical anthropology.

She has led a number of multi-site collaborative studies that were funded by the US National Institutes of Health and National Science Foundation. These projects investigated women’s mid-life health in Lebanon, Morocco, Spain and the United States, and HIV testing and counselling in sub-Saharan Africa. She is the recipient of a number of research awards in public health and medical anthropology.

She has published over 100 articles and four books that bring together public health and social science perspectives on a variety of topics. These have included HIV prevention and treatment, safe motherhood, reproductive health, client views on health services, medication use, gender and aging, population policies, female genital cutting, the ethics of research, as well as the human rights dimensions of HIV policies and programs. Most recently, she is leading a series of reviews on public health in Arab countries.

PROF. JEAN-PAUL MOATTI

President-Director General, Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, Marseille

president-directeurgeneral@ird.fr

Professor Jean-Paul MOATTI has been President and Director-general of the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD) since 2015. Throughout his career, Professor Moatti has led many national scientific bodies and he was also a member of the national committee of the Conseil National de la Recherche Scientifique and of the governing board of Aix-Marseille University.

He has been member of the Advisory Committee for Health Research that advised the Director-General of the World Health Organization (2007–11), and he was also Counselor for Economic and Social Affairs of the Executive Director of the Global Fund against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (2008–09). He has recently been appointed by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, together with 14 other eminent scientists and experts, to draft the 2019 edition of the quadrennial Global Sustainable Development Report.

He is the author of over 350 articles in scientific journals and publications, writing as much in the field of economics and social sciences as in biomedical and public health. Notably, he is co-author of the article published in *Nature Medicine* in 2003, which demonstrated for the first time not only the virological and clinical feasibility but also the economic feasibility of access to highly active antiretroviral therapies for HIV/AIDS in developing countries. Jean-Paul MOATTI is the author of several books, including *Le principe de Prévention: Le Culte de la Santé et ses Dérives* (The principle of prevention: The cult of health and its excesses), published in 2009 with the sociologist Patrick Peretti-Watel by Editions du Seuil.
He was granted the rank of knight of the Legion of Honor in January 2016.

**PROF. ALI MOKDAD**

Department of Global Health, Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, University of Washington
mokdaa@uw.edu

Prof. Ali Mokdad, is Director of Middle Eastern Initiatives and Professor of Global Health at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington. In this role, he is building IHME’s presence in the Middle East through new research projects, dissemination and uptake of IHME’s methods and results, and consultation with regional leaders in population health. IHME was founded in 2007 at the University of Washington to provide better evidence to improve health globally by guiding health policy and funding.

Prior to joining IHME, he worked at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), starting his career there in 1990. He served in numerous positions with the International Health Program; the Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity; the National Immunization Program; and the National Center for Chronic Diseases Prevention and Health Promotion, where he was Chief of the Behavioral Surveillance Branch. Prof. Mokdad also managed and directed the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), the world’s largest standardized telephone survey, which enables the CDC, state health departments, and other health and education agencies to monitor risk behaviors related to the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in the United States.

He has published more than 400 articles and numerous reports. He has received several awards, including the Global Health Achievement Award for his work in Banda Aceh after the tsunami, the Department of Health and Human Services Honor Award for his work on flu monitoring, and the Shepard Award for outstanding scientific contribution to public health for his work on BRFSS.

He received his BS in Biostatistics from the American University of Beirut and his PhD in Quantitative Epidemiology from Emory University.

**PROF. NISREEN SALTI**

Department of Economics, American University of Beirut
nisreen.salti@aub.edu.lb

Nisreen Salti is Associate Professor of Economics at the American University of Beirut. Her areas of research include microeconomic analysis of healthcare, health inequality measurement, political economy of development and Tobacco control. Her work has been published in *Social Science and Medicine*, *the Lancet*, *Tobacco Control* and *the International Journal for Middle Eastern Studies* among others. She has been an active participant in local and regional policy debates, engaging policy-makers and analysts in government, at the WHO, UNDP, UNHCR, UNRWA, ILO, ESCWA, and the World Bank.

She obtained her PhD in Economics from Princeton University in 2006, after completing a master’s in Public Affairs at the Woodrow Wilson School, also at Princeton, in 1999.