**Bio panelists**

**Charlene May** is an attorney with the Legal Resources Centre in South Africa where she co-ordinates the Equality and Non-discrimination focus area of the organization. Charlene has extensive experience in litigation and advocating for the rights of women and marginalized persons such as those facing persecution as a result of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

**Claire Padilla** is the founder and executive director of EnGendeRights.

She has been practicing law for over 20 years and she has specialized expertise in the field of gender, gender-based violence, law, sexual and reproductive health and rights, sexual orientation and gender identity.

She has extensive experience in training, litigation, research, writing, and policy advocacy. After graduating from law school, she has dedicated her life in changing laws, policies, and practices that are discriminatory against women. As an advocate on reproductive rights, she has worked in the Philippines and in New York. In New York, she worked as an International Visiting Legal Fellow at the Center for Reproductive Rights from July 2002 through July 2003.

**Genoveva Tisheva** is a lawyer, Managing Director of the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation and Director of the Women’s Human Rights Training Institute. She has been working in the field of human rights and women’s human rights since the 90ies and participated in the UN conferences and processes, like alternative reporting under the CEDAW and the CESCR. She is active in legal reform in the field of human rights and gender equality in Bulgaria and undertakes protection of individual rights of women and girls before national and international courts and jurisdictions.

She is nominated candidate of the Bulgarian government to the CEDAW Committee.

**IslahJad**

**Birzeit University**

IslahJad (Hossneya Gad) is currently linked to Qatar University, International Affairs Department since 2014. Jad wasa lecturer on gender issues and politics at the Women's Studies Institute and Cultural Studies Institute of BirZeit University, where she was its director from 2008-2013. She joined Birzeit in 1983, and is a founding member of its women’s studies MA program. She has written books and papers on the role of women in politics, Palestinian women and the relationships among them, Islam, and NGOs.

Dr. Jad is also a consultant on gender issues to the United Nations Development Programme and is co-author of the UN's Arab Development Report on Women's Empowerment and author of two books:

1-Palestinian Female Headed Households, MAS, Rmallah, 2002.

2-Women at the Crossroads: The Palestinian Women's Movement between Nationalism, Secularism and Islamism, MUWATIN-The Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy, Ramallah. Palestine June 2008. Second edition reprinted by Dar al Farabi, Beirut, 2013.

Dr. Jad received her Ph.D. from the School of Oriental and African Studies in London in 2004.

**Rebecca Brown** is the Director of Global Advocacy at the Center for Reproductive Rights, a global women's human rights organization, with headquarters in NY and offices in LAC, Asia, Africa and Europe. Rebecca joined the Center in 2013 and leads the Center’s advocacy team in building human rights standards and seeking increased recognition and implementation of reproductive rights at the United Nations and in other inter-governmental processes.

Before joining the Center, she was Deputy Director of the International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net), where she oversaw the organization’s program work and coordinated the Women and ESCR Working Group and established the Network's Strategic Litigation Initiative. Rebecca has also worked on issues such as the right to water and US foreign policy.

**Ximena Andion Ibañez** holds an LLM on International Human Rights Law by Essex University. She is now the Director of the Instituto de Liderazgo Simone de Beauvoir a women’s rights organization based in Mexico. She is part of the board of the ESCR – Net. She has been working on the human rights field from more than 15 years. She worked for the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Mexico and Guatemala; for the Center for Reproductive Rights as International Advocacy Director and in various national organizations in Mexico including GIRE and the Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights. She is a professsor on women’s rights at Universidad Iberoamericana and on International Human Rights Law at the Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana. She has written articles on women’s rights, gender and the law.