

Christiana Figueres

Christiana Figueres was appointed by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as the new Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC on 17 May 2010.

Ms. Figueres has a long and distinguished career in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. She has been a member of the Costa Rican negotiating team since 1995 and has dedicated herself exclusively to the global strategy of addressing climate change for the past 15 years. Recognizing her profound knowledge and leadership in the matter she was elected Vice President of the Bureau of the Convention 2008-2009 in representation of Latin America and the Caribbean, having represented the region on the Executive Board of the Clean Development Mechanism in 2007.

Given her conciliation prowess, Christiana Figueres is recognized as one of the most skilled facilitators of the Convention and is frequently asked to chair controversial negotiations. She co-chaired the Contact Group on Guidance to the Clean Development Mechanism in Nairobi in 2006, in Poznan in 2008, and in Copenhagen in 2009, and the Contact Group on flexibility mechanisms for the post 2012 regime, in Bonn, Accra and Poznan in 2008. She was a member of the Friends of the Chair Group that negotiated the Bali Action Plan for long term cooperative action of all nations in December 2007.

As a visionary and an innovator of the regime, and aware of the fact that developing countries need stronger incentives to reach broader mitigation levels, she conceived the new financial instrument “programmatic CDM” with four groundbreaking publications that have marked global thinking on this concept. As capable regulator, she achieved consensus on the rules and procedures for the submission of programs in the CDM during her tenure on the Executive Board.

In addition to her achievements at the inter-governmental level, Ms. Figueres has actively engaged with private sector leaders to incorporate strategies of climate protection, clean energy and conservation in their investment plans. She is the principal Climate Change Advisor to ENDESA Latinamerica, largest private utility in Latin America, and serves as Vice Chair of the Rating Committee of the Carbon Rating Agency, first entity to apply credit rating expertise to carbon assets.

Christiana Figueres has over twelve years of management experience. From 1982-1985 she was Minister Counselor of the Embassy of Costa Rica in Bonn, Germany, and managed all departments of the Embassy. She was bestowed the Great Cross for the Honor of Merit by the German government for outstanding performance in bilateral relationships. In 1987 she was the Director of International Cooperation in the Ministry of Planning in Costa Rica. She designed and directed the negotiation of comprehensive financial and technical cooperation programs with eight European countries (total investment US \$90 million), and supervised the evaluation of all national technical and financial assistance requests. In 1988 she was named Chief of Staff to the Minister of Agriculture, where she supervised a staff of more than 750 employees and the execution of 22 national programs involving training, credit and marketing (credit portfolio US \$200 million). She reorganized the Minister’s Bureau for greater teamwork and productivity, and designed coordination strategies among three major public institutions in the sector, eliminating duplications of services and contradictions in policy.

In 1995 Ms. Figueres founded the Center for Sustainable Development of the Americas (CSDA) and directed the four programs of this non-governmental organization for eight years, establishing fruitful working relationships with NGOs around the world. She designed and helped to establish national climate change programs in Guatemala, Panama, Colombia, Argentina, Ecuador, Honduras, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic, becoming a prime promoter of Latin America’s active participation in the Climate Change Convention. She designed and implemented capacity building activities for over 500 professionals in both public and private sectors in Latin America. In 2001 she received the Hero for the Planet Award by the National Geographic Magazine in recognition of her international leadership in sustainable energy and climate change.

Ms. Figueres has made important contributions to the analytic literature on the design of the climate regime. Her writings are widely published and she is a frequent speaker on the climate change negotiations, design of the regime, as well as on policies and financial instruments for the promotion of clean energy and energy efficiency.

Ms. Figueres has a Masters Degree in Anthropology from the London School of Economics, and a certificate in Organizational Development from Georgetown University. She speaks Spanish, English and German. For more detailed information and access to her multiple publications, please refer to www.FigueresOnline.com.