



# Dr Mlambo Ngcuka Biography

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka is the former United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, who completed her term in August 2021 after being sworn into office on 19 August 2013. She was awarded her bachelor's degree in the Arts and Education at the National University of Lesotho (awarded in 1980). She further obtained a qualification in Gender Policy and Planning from the University College London (in 1988), a master's degree in Philosophy from the University of Cape Town (awarded in 2003), and a doctorate in Technology and Education from Warwick University (awarded in 2013).

As student and in her professional life she was a campaigner against Apartheid and against Gender Discrimination.

She was a lecturer at a Teachers Training College (1980 - 1981) and became a teacher at the Ohlange High School (1981 - 1983). She then moved to Geneva as the global coordinator of young women's mobilization at World YWCA, where she worked with young women around the world and established a global programme. She returned to Cape Town where she spearheaded TEAM, an ecumenical organization that focused on building leaders especially women. From there she transitioned to campaign for South Africa's democratic government as a member of the African National Congress.

Her formal political journey began as a member of the first democratic South African Parliament then as Deputy Minister in the Department of Trade and Industry (1996 - 1999), as Minister of Minerals and Energy (1999 - 2005), and finally as Deputy President of South, she became the first woman to hold the position of Deputy President, the highest-ranking female political leader in the history of South Africa. She focused on collaboration between government, business and civil society, focused on ending poverty and expanding access to opportunities for young people and women.

As the head of the United Nations Women she worked to change laws that discriminate against women and girls. She established work on transforming social inequalities that discriminate against women. Mobilised new allies inclusive of men through initiatives such as the HeForShe movement (for men and boys to contribute in the fight against gender inequality), the UnStereotype Alliance initiative for influencing advertising norms for positive change and equal representation and helped countries to change hundreds of laws that discriminate against women and girls.

She has also successfully mobilised a historic 40 billion USD in financial commitments from Member States, private sector, philanthropies and civil society as well as young people, which have formed Generational Equality to mark Beijing 25 around the world.

She was inducted as a Hauser Leader at the Harvard Kennedy School's Center for Public Leadership and awarded the Vanguard Award by Howard University for Leadership and Activism in promoting human rights, equality and justice for women and girls.

She has authored several scholarly and other opinion pieces, including in the Harvard International Review. She was awarded Honorary Doctorates from the following institutions: (2003) the University of the Western Cape (2007), Nelson Mandela University (2014), the University of Fort Hare (2016) University of Witwatersrand (2019) Rhodes University (2022) and University of Edinburgh.

Dr. Mlambo-Ngcuka continues to be engaged and affiliated with organisations committed to education, women empowerment and gender equality. She has affiliations with Umlambo Foundation which she (Founded) which works for improvement of education, access to edu tech and non discrimination.

She is in the board of the global organisation Women Deliver, Global Citizen, Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg and Chairperson of International Olympics Committee human rights. A member of the Panel of the Wise at the African Union. A board member of two listed companies Mercedes-Benz SA and a Canadian Mining Company Ivanhoe as well as a Renewable Energy start up SmartGrid.

