



World Food Programme

Biography

Josette Sheeran
Executive Director

Josette Sheeran became the eleventh Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme in April 2007. As leader of WFP, Ms. Sheeran oversees the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide. Each year, WFP aims to feed about 100 million people in more than 70 countries. WFP reaches out to hungry people who cannot help themselves, with a special emphasis on women and girls who suffer disproportionately from hunger and malnutrition. WFP aid recipients include victims of war and natural disasters, orphans and families affected by HIV/AIDS, and schoolchildren in poor communities.

Ms. Sheeran also is currently serving a two-year term as Chair of the High Level Committee on Management, which ensures coordination and coherence in administrative and management areas across the entire UN system.

Previously, she served as Under Secretary for Economic, Energy and Agricultural Affairs at the United States Department of State. There she was responsible for economic issues including development, trade, agriculture, finance, energy, telecommunications and transportation, with much of her focus on economic diplomacy to help developing nations advance towards economic self-sufficiency and prosperity. Believing that effective policies to address global issues such as hunger and poverty must focus on long-term solutions in addition to urgent responses, Ms. Sheeran has developed several important U.S. initiatives and aided development of critical multilateral projects to aid reconstruction in Afghanistan, in Pakistan after the 2005 earthquake, and in Lebanon after the 2006 war.



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In 2006, she was appointed by Secretary-General Annan to the High-level UN Panel on System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment. As part of the UN Panel, Ambassador Sheeran has conducted hundreds of interviews with development and humanitarian experts, NGOs and national leaders throughout the world, and found WFP to be a gem in the UN system. Ms. Sheeran has also served as Deputy U.S. Trade Representative in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR). There she advanced the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which helps African countries develop trade capacity so they can successfully compete in international markets. She was responsible for trade negotiations in Asia and Africa, and was instrumental in launching the first USTR trade capacity building department.

Ms. Sheeran has extensive private sector experience. Before joining USTR, she was Managing Director of Starpoint Solutions, a leading Wall Street technology firm that works with Fortune 500 clients. She also served as President and CEO of Empower America, a Washington D.C. think tank, where she advanced the agenda of economic empowerment for inner cities and developing nations. Ms. Sheeran has a distinguished background in media. During her tenure as managing editor of a U.S. major newspaper, she was a regular commentator on television news programmes and twice served as a Pulitzer Prize juror, including for foreign reporting.

She has been a member of the Council on Foreign Relations for 15 years and has served on its Washington advisory board. She has served on a number of other boards, including the Washington boards of the Urban League and the United Negro College Fund.

She has received numerous awards, including the Press Award for Journalistic Achievement by the National Order of Women Legislators and a national award for developing and promoting African-American journalists. She earned her BA from the University of Colorado in 1976.