



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 manages the world's largest humanitarian agency, which provides food assistance to more than 105 million people in 75 countries – 3.8 in Darfur alone – including victims of war and natural disasters, orphans and families affected by HIV/AIDS, and children in poor communities.

Overseeing more than 10,000 employees, Ms Sheeran has steered the organization through the “perfect storm” of high food and fuel prices and the global financial crisis. Under her leadership the world responded to the historic human food needs with a record US\$5 billion in donations to WFP in 2008 and has greatly increased the donor base to more than 100 nations and increased private sector donations from US\$7 million in 2007 to more than US\$150 million in 2010. She has put in place new emergency protocols that have helped the institution improve its ability to save lives and livelihoods in disasters and emergencies, most recently in Haiti and Pakistan and in 2011 scaling up response to the historic drought in the Horn of Africa.

Working with nations, she has helped develop innovative tools to build food security, such as the Purchase for Progress initiative, which empowers small-scale farmers and connects them to markets.

In addition to her WFP leadership, Ms Sheeran is the Chair of the UN High-Level Committee on Management and under her tenure has helped to update the UN's security system and has initiated a system-wide efficiency study. She is also a member of the UN Development Group and the UN High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis. An active participant in the World Economic Forum, she served as Chair of the WEF's Global Agenda Council on Food Security.



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Before WFP, Ms Sheeran was appointed to the UN High-Level Panel on System-wide Coherence in Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment. As a member of the Panel, Ms Sheeran conducted hundreds of interviews with development and humanitarian experts, NGOs and national leaders around the world, leading to ground-breaking recommendations for a more effective and efficient United Nations, such as creating a coherent platform for financial management, which WFP was the first to implement with IPSAS.

She previously served as Under Secretary for Economic, Energy and Agricultural Affairs at the United States Department of State, where her responsibilities included development, trade, agriculture, finance, energy, telecommunications and transportation, with a strong focus on economic diplomacy to help developing nations achieve economic self-sufficiency and prosperity.

Prior to this, Ms Sheeran served as Deputy U.S. Trade Representative in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR). During her tenure, she was responsible for advancing the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which helps African countries to develop the trade capacity to compete successfully in international markets.

Before entering U.S. public service, Ms Sheeran was President and CEO of Empower America, a Washington D.C. think tank, where she pursued an agenda of economic empowerment for inner cities and developing nations. She was also Managing Director of Starpoint Solutions, a leading Wall Street technology firm that works with Fortune 500 clients.

She has been a member of the Council on Foreign Relations for more than a decade and has served on its Washington advisory board as well as on the Washington boards of the Urban League and the United Negro College Fund. During her tenure as managing editor of a major U.S. newspaper, she was a regular commentator on television news programmes and twice served as a Pulitzer Prize juror.

She has received numerous awards, including the Press Award for Journalistic Achievement from the National Order of Women Legislators, Brazil's highest civilian award the Grand Official Order of "Rio Branco," and a national award for developing and promoting African-American journalists. She earned her BA from the University of Colorado in 1976.