



H.E María Teresa Fernández de la Vega

Former Deputy Prime Minister of Spain and
President of Women for Africa Organization

María Teresa Fernández de la Vega Sanz, LLD is a [Spanish Socialist](#) politician. From 18 April 2004 to 20 October 2010, she was the [first deputy prime minister](#), minister of the Presidency and cabinet spokesperson in the government of Prime Minister [José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero](#).^[1] She is the first female deputy prime minister in Spanish history

She was born in [Valencia](#) in 1949.^{[2][3]} She earned a degree in law from the [Complutense University of Madrid](#) in the early 1970s.^[3] In 1974 she entered Spain's *Cuerpo de Secretarios Jurídicos Laborales*, a specialised body of the civil service.

She started her political career in the [Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia](#), remaining a member of it until 1979. From 1982 until 1985, she was the director of the advisory cabinet of the minister of justice, and in 1985 she was appointed general director of services at the ministry of justice. In 1986 she became a member of the legal cooperation committee of the [Council of Europe](#). In 1990, she was chosen as a spokesperson of the [general council of judicial power](#) by the [Senate](#) (1994–1996). On 13 May 1994, the then Justice Minister [Juan Alberto Belloch](#) appointed her [Secretary of State](#) of justice.

She was elected a member of the [Spanish Congress](#) for [Jaén](#) for the [Spanish Socialist Workers' Party](#) candidacy for the 1996-2000 term, being re-elected in the elections of 2000 for [Segovia](#).^[3] During this term she became general secretary of the Socialist parliamentary group. In the [Spanish general election of 2004](#) she became a member of the parliament for [Madrid](#), and on 18 April of that year she was appointed [first vice president](#) and [minister of Presidency](#), remaining the incumbent of each. For the 2008 election she headed the list for the PSOE in [Valencia](#).

Vega was the first woman to take on the functions of the [prime minister](#) in the history of Spanish democracy, when, on 24 April 2004, during the first official visit abroad of Spain's Prime Minister, Zapatero, she presided over the Council of Ministers.

In March 2006, the first vice president went on an African tour with the state secretary for cooperation, [Leire Pajín](#), visiting [Kenya](#) and [Mozambique](#), in whose capital, [Maputo](#), they celebrated [International Women's Day](#) and closed the forum "Spain-Africa: Women for a better world".

On 7 October 2006 she received the [Tomás y Valiente](#) Award in [Fuenlabrada](#), Madrid.

She is a member of judges for democracy (Jueces para la Democracia). She has written many papers, including *La reforma de la jurisdicción laboral* and *Derechos humanos y Consejo de Europa*.

She established and she is the president of the Organization Mujeres por Africa (women for Africa) under the Patronage of Her majesty Queen of Spain ,