



H.E Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka

United Nations Under-Secretary-General and
Executive Director of UN Women

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka is the [Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations](#) and the Executive Director of [UN Women](#). Previously she was a [South African](#) politician who was [Deputy President of South Africa](#) from 2005 to 2008. She was the first woman to hold the position and at that point the highest ranking woman in the history of South Africa.

On 10 July 2013, Mlambo-Ngcuka was appointed as Executive Director of the [United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women \(UN Women\)](#) by [United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon](#)

She obtained a [bachelor's degree](#) in [social science](#) and [education](#) from the [National University of Lesotho](#) in 1980, as well as a [master's degree](#) in [philosophy](#) from the [University of Cape Town](#) in 2003, which dealt with educational planning and policy.^[4] In 2013 she completed a [doctorate](#) from the [University of Warwick](#) which still needs defending.^[4] The work covered using mobile technologies to support Teacher Development in resource poor nations. She was awarded an honorary doctorate from [Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University](#) in 2014

From 1981 to 1983 she [taught](#) in [KwaZulu-Natal](#), after which she moved to [Geneva](#) to work with the World [Young Women's Christian Association \(YWCA\)](#) from 1984 to 1989, as the organisation's Youth Director, where she advocated for job creation for young people within the UN system and promoted development education in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Mlambo-Ngcuka was the first president of the [Natal Organisation of Women](#). During this time she also founded and directed the Young Women's International Programme. From 1987 to 1989 she was director of TEAM, a developmental [Non-Government Organisation \(NGO\)](#) in [Cape Town](#), as well as being involved with [squatter](#) women and [African](#) independent [churches](#) to promote economic self-reliance and running skills training programmes. From 1990 to 1992 she was director of [World University Service](#), a funding agency, as well as being involved in the management of funds donated to development organisations by [Swedish](#) and [Swiss](#) government development agencies. She started and managed her own management consulting company, Phumelela Services, during 1993 and 1994

In 1994 Mrs Mlambo-Ngcuka became a [Member of Parliament](#), [chairing](#) the Public Service Portfolio Committee. She was deputy minister in the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) from 1996 until 1999, during which time she also was a founding member of the Guguletu Community Development Corporation. From 1997 she served as member of the national executive committee of the [African National Congress \(ANC\)](#), as well as being the provincial vice-chairperson of the ANC [Western Cape](#).

Mlambo-Ngcuka was Minister of Minerals and Energy from June 1999 to June 2005. During this time she was a driving force behind the government's policy of creating New Order Mining Rights which ended a period where big mining firms which controlled nearly all South Africa's minerals reserves, were able to hold mining rights to them in perpetuity. Mlambo-Ngcuka's policy of 'use it or lose it' created a situation where mining rights became available to a much broader segment of the population including many previously disadvantaged black people. She served as acting Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology from February 2004 to April 2004

On 22 June 2005, President [Thabo Mbeki](#) appointed her as [Deputy President of South Africa](#) from 2005 to 2008. She was the first woman to hold the position and at that point the highest ranking woman in the history of South Africa.

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