Biographies

JEAN-MICHEL BLANQUER

Minister of National Education and Youth of the Republic of France

Jean-Michel Blanquer holds a doctorate in law from the Université Panthéon-Assas and a Master’s degree in politics from the Institut d'études politiques de Paris (Sciences Po). He has been Minister of National Education and Youth since May 2017.

Between 1989 and 1991, Mr Blanquer was a cooperating researcher at the French Institute of Andean Studies in Bogota, Colombia. He was a temporary teaching and research associate at the University Panthéon-Assas from 1992 to 1994, then a lecturer in public law at the François-Rabelais University in Tours.

In 1996, he became a professor of public law at the Institute of Political Studies in Lille. From 1996 to 1998, he was also a professor at the University of Lille-II. In 1998, he was appointed Director of the Institut des hautes études de l’Amérique latine (IHEAL) at the University of Paris III Sorbonne-Nouvelle. In 2004, he became rector of the French Guiana Academy.

In 2006, he joined the office of the Minister of National Education, Higher Education and Research, Gilles de Robien, as Deputy Director. In March 2007, he took up the position of Rector of the Créteil Academy. Between 2009 and 2017, he was appointed Director General of School Education (DGESCO) at the Ministry of National Education, then Director General of the ESSEC group (École supérieure des sciences économiques et commerciales).

AUDREY AZOULAY

Director-General of UNESCO

Elected to head UNESCO in 2017, Audrey Azoulay has embarked on a major Strategic Transformation programme aimed at placing UNESCO at the heart of the challenges of the 21st Century and enabling it to respond to the major challenges of our time. Audrey Azoulay is committed to positioning UNESCO as a platform for humanist cooperation, a standards-producing forum and an agency of experts that helps to disseminate knowledge and know-how throughout the world to as many people as possible.
A former student of the Ecole Nationale d'Administration, Audrey Azoulay is a graduate of the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris and holds a Diploma of Business Administration from the University of Lancaster (United Kingdom). Having worked in the cultural sector since the beginning of her career, she has, among other things, worked on the financing of the French public audiovisual sector and on the reform and modernisation of French film support systems.

As Minister of Culture, she was very strongly committed to the protection of endangered heritage, particularly in the Middle East. It has also worked to promote access to culture for children by launching arts and cultural education programmes (programmes "Creation in progress" and innovative cultural infrastructures (Microfolios).

JEAN-YVES LE DRIAN

Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs

Jean-Yves Le Drian, born on 30 June 1947 in Lorient (Morbihan), is a French politician.


Secretary of State for the Sea in the government of Edith Cresson, during the presidency of François Mitterrand, between 1991 and 1992, he became President of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe in 2010.

In 2012, he was appointed Minister of Defence in Jean-Marc Ayrault’s first government. He is still in office in the Ayrault II, Valls I, Valls II and Cazeneuve governments.

In 2017, he became Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs in the government of Édouard Philippe.

AMINATA

Student and activist

Student in M1 in audit and management control at the Ecole Supérieure d'Informatique et de Comptabilité de Bamako.

Her struggle is to give all young girls the opportunity to make their dreams come true. To achieve this, she has acquired strong advocacy skills and has evolved in several spheres. She was a member of the National Children's Parliament of Mali, and has participated in children and youth groups such as the Association pour la Promotion des Jeunes et Enfants Communicateurs (APJEC), and the Conseil Consultatif National des Enfants et Jeunes du Mali (CCNEJ).

She also organized the advocacy session on girls' schooling for the Minister of Basic Education and Literacy of National Languages in 2014 and, in 2015, she participated in the International Forum for Girls' Education organized by the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) in partnership with UNICEF in Mali.
Stefania Giannini

UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education

Ms Stefania Giannini was appointed UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education in May 2018, becoming the top UN official in the field. In this position, she provides strategic vision and leadership for UNESCO in coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Education 2030 Agenda, encapsulated in Sustainable Development Goal 4.

With an academic background in the Humanities, Ms Giannini has served as Rector of the University for Foreigners of Perugia (2004 – 2012), being one of the first and youngest women to hold this position in Italy. As Senator of the Republic of Italy (2013 – 2018) and Minister of Education, Universities and Research (2014 – 2016), she developed and implemented a structural reform of the Italian education system, centred on social inclusion and cultural awareness. She has also been closely involved in an advisory capacity with the European Commissioner for Research and Innovation.

Akosua Adubea Agyepong

UNFPA Youth Leaders Fellowship

Akosua is a youth fellow in the Youth Leaders Fellowship (YoLe) programme at the UNFPA country office in Ghana, where she leads and guides the coordination of fellows’ activities to contribute to the overall mandate of the country office. Akosua is also a former member of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) and the Hansen Summer Institute on leadership and international cooperation.

She is also the champion of UNESCO’s comprehensive sexuality education campaign, Foundation for Love and Life, in the Central African region. For the past four years, Akosua has led and represented young people on the Board of the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana. Using her influence on advice and skills, she participates in community interventions, particularly in rural Ghana. With her team, she has provided thousands of young people and women with information on sexual and reproductive health and rights, with the aim of improving reproductive health outcomes in her community.

She is a strong believer in girls’ education as it is also a crucial means of improving social and health outcomes. To scale up efforts in the area of sexual rights, Akosua obtained a grant of USD 37,648.73 from the Australian High Commission for the construction of what would be the only emergency shelter for victims of sexual and gender-based violence in the Ghanaian capital.
CATHERINE CANO
Administrator, International Organization of the Francophonie (IOF)

Previously, she was President and Chief Executive Officer of CPAC (Cable Public Affairs Channel), Canada's leading democratic literacy channel.

For more than 20 years, Catherine has held various senior management positions in the broadcasting industry - on all platforms - in Canada, the United States and internationally. She has held senior management positions at CBC/SRC, including those of Editor-in-Chief of CBC News and Director of RDI - a 24-hour news channel - and Director of Programming Development at CBC News. Catherine was also deputy director of Al Jazeera English's news department in Doha. Most recently, she was Director, Information Programs on Television, Radio and Digital Platforms. Catherine has also gained experience as a senior executive in the private sector, where she was Managing Partner of the Toronto office of the national public relations firm.

Catherine's achievements have earned her many awards, including two Gemini Awards and the Michener Award, one of the most prestigious honours in Canadian journalism. In November 2017, she was named one of the 100 most influential women in Canada by the Women's Executive Network (WXN) - an honour she was also awarded in 2012. Last year, she also received the coveted FCT (Women in Communications and Technology) Innovator of the Year Award. In May 2018, Catherine was awarded the Meritas-Tabaret Award for Exemplary Graduate from the University of Ottawa, the highest honour bestowed by her alma mater.

STANISLAS OUARO
Minister of National Education and Literacy of Bukina Faso

Mr. Stanislas Ouaro is the Minister of National Education and Literacy since February 5 2018. Doctor of Mathematics by training, he was President of the University of Ouagadougou II since 2012 after having held the positions of lecturer and full professor.

He was also the Director of the Burkinabe Institute of Arts and Businesses from 2008 to 2012.

He is a Knight of the Order of the Academic Palms of Burkina Faso (2012), Officer of the Order of the Togolese Academic Palms, Officer of the Order of the Togolese Academic Palms (2014), Officer of the Order of the Academic Palms of Burkina Faso (2017)..

EMANUELA DEL RE
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Italy

Emanuela Claudia Del Re is Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

A full professor of sociology at the European University Institute and La Sapienza University in Rome, she has had extensive field expertise in conflict and transition areas since 1990. She taught for many years at the University La Sapienza in Rome.
She is a member of the scientific committee, of the editorial board of several scientific journals (Limes), author of numerous scientific essays and documentary filmmaker. 

She is also a member of several organizations such as the Forum for Transition Cities and EPOS - International Mediating and Negotiating Operational Agency.

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HARRIETT BALDWIN

Minister of State for Africa in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development, United Kingdom

Sole representative of the United Kingdom at the meeting of the Ministers of Education and Development of 5 July 2019, in the absence of the British Minister of Education

Harriett Baldwin was appointed Minister of State for Africa in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development on January 9, 2018. She was elected Member of Parliament for West Worcestershire in May 2010.

Ms. Baldwin was appointed Prime Minister’s Trade Envoy to Russia before joining the government in February 2014 as Assistant Whip of the government. She was promoted to Lord Commissioner in July 2014 and held this position until May 2015. Ms. Baldwin served as Economic Secretary of the City Minister from May 2015 to July 2016. She then served as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Defence from July 2016 to January 2018.

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NYARADZAYI GUMBONZVANDA

Chief Executive of Rozaria Memorial Trust

Chief Executive of the organisation she found in memory of her late mother, Dr. Gumboonzvanda is the Africa Union Goodwill Ambassador on Ending Child Marriages since 2014.

A Zimbabwean national, she is a trained human rights lawyer with extensive experience in conflict resolution and mediation. For 27 years, she has worked on issues of women and children’s human rights, with a special focus on crisis countries, violence against women, health and HIV and AIDS.

Dr. Gumboonzvanda served for almost 9 years as the General Secretary of the World YWCA, leading a global movement of 25 million women and girls in 120 countries. She held various positions within the United Nations for 10 years, serving as Regional Director for the United Nations Development Fund for Women in Eastern and Horn of Africa, and human rights officer with UNICEF in Liberia and Zimbabwe. She served as a member of the United Nations Commission on Information and Accountability on Women and Children’s Health, and also as a member of the UN Civil Society Advisory Group on Women, Peace and Security. She holds a Doctor in Laws (Honoris Causa) from University of Massachusetts, USA, Master’s degree in Law from the University of South Africa, Bachelor of Laws (Honours), University of Zimbabwe and completed postgraduate work on conflict resolution at Uppsala University, Sweden. She serves on the Peace is Loud Speakers Bureau. She served as Coordinator for the Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association during its formation; and a law officer in the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs in Zimbabwe. She is the current Board Chair for Action Aid International. She has received numerous awards for her work on women and children’s rights. Married with two children, she loves poetry.
HENRIETTA H. FORE

UNICEF Executive Director

Over a career spanning more than four decades, she has worked in economic development, education, health, humanitarian and emergency relief in the public service, the private sector and non-profit organizations.

From 2007 to 2009, Ms. Fore served as Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and Director of the United States Foreign Aid Services (United States Foreign Assistance). The first woman to hold these positions, she was previously at USAID as an Administrator Assistant for Asia and Assistant Director for Private Enterprise (1989-1993).

She has served on the boards of directors of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and the Millennium Challenge Corporation. In 2009, she received the Award of Merit, the highest distinction that the Secretary of State can bestow.

From 2005 to 2007, Ms. Fore served as Assistant Secretary of State for Management and Director General of Operations of the Department of State. From 2001 to 2005, Ms. Fore was the 37th Director of the Mint in the Treasury Department and managed the world's largest manufacturer of coins, medals and related products. In 2005, she received the Alexander Hamilton Award, the highest distinction from the Treasury Department.

ANNE-BIRGITTE ALBRECTSEN

Lawyer, CEO of Plan International

A renowned leader in development and gender equality, Anne-Birgitte Albrectsen has worked for over 25 years in international development, human rights, change management and diplomacy and has been listed as one of the Top 100 Most Influential People in Gender Equality by Apolitical.

Ms. Albrectsen has been CEO of Plan International since September 2015. Prior to this she was United Nations Assistant Secretary General and Deputy Executive Director for Management at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Ms. Albrectsen is also Chairperson of the International Civil Society Centre and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data and a member of the United Nations Every Woman Every Child High Level Steering Group and the Generation Unlimited Global Board.

Ms. Albrectsen has previously held senior leadership positions in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNFPA and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She served with the UNDP from 1997 to 2004, in Indonesia and later as Director of the Administrator’s Office at UNDP Headquarters. She led country operations for UNFPA in Turkey, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan from 2004-2006. From 2007-2009, she led the Danish government’s humanitarian and civil society affairs work as the director of the relevant division in the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ms Albrectsen is Danish and holds a law degree from the University of Copenhagen.
MINISTER OF NATIONAL EDUCATION, SENEGAL

Before his appointment in April 2019 as Minister of National Education, Mr. Mamadou Talla served as Minister of Vocational Training, Apprenticeship and Handicrafts during Macky Sall’s first term (2012-2019). Previously, he pursued a long career in Technical Education and Vocational Training. Once he graduated from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d’Enseignement Professionnel Technique, he taught electrical engineering in Senegal and in the scientific and industrial technical fields in France.

In parallel, he was President of the National Group of Partners in Education and Training (GNPEF). Mamadou Talla is also very active on the socio-humanitarian level in France and Senegal.

MASAHIKO SHIBAYAMA

MINISTER OF EDUCATION

Masahiko Shibayama is a Japanese politician from the Liberal Democratic Party, a member of the House of Representatives in the National Diet (legislative power). On 2 October 2018, he became Minister of Education.

He graduated from Tokyo University and joined Sumitomo Real Estate in 1990, but resigned to study for the bar exam, which he passed in 1998. In 2000, he became a lawyer and joined the law firm Toranomon Chuo Office in Tokyo.

Masahiko Shibayama was first elected to the House of Representatives in 2004. He was re-elected in the general election the following year. In 2008, he was appointed Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in the office of Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and remained in this position in the following office, at Tarō Asō

Masahiko Shibayama lost his seat in Saitama in the 2009 general election, but was included in the PLD Kanto list and therefore remained a member of the House of Representatives. After the PLD regained power in the 2012 general elections, he was appointed Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications in the second cabinet of Shinzō Abe. He has also served as Special Advisor to the Prime Minister and Government Spokesman for Fiscal Stimulus Policy.

MARK GREEN

USAID ADMINISTRATOR

In August 2017, Mark Green was appointed USAID Administrator.

A recognized leader in the foreign policy and business community, Mark Green served as U.S. ambassador to Tanzania from mid-2007 to early 2009. Prior to that, he held four terms in the United States House of Representatives for the Republican Party. He has been involved in the development of initiatives and key policies, including the Millennium Challenge Act.
Following his appointment by Barack Obama in 2010, he is currently serving his third term on the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

He was also President of the International Republican Institute and Chief Executive Officer of the for global development.

Mark Green holds a law degree from the University of Wisconsin and an honorary doctorate of science from Georgetown University's School of Nursing and Health Studies.

MALALA YOUSAFSAI

Co-founder and board member of Malala Fund

Malala began her campaign for education at age 11 when she anonymously blogged for the BBC about life under the Taliban in Pakistan’s Swat Valley. Inspired by her father’s activism, Malala soon began advocating publicly for girls’ education — attracting international media attention and awards.

At age 15, she was shot by the Taliban for speaking out. Malala recovered in the United Kingdom and continued her fight for girls. In 2013 she founded Malala Fund with her father, Ziauddin.

A year later, Malala received the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her efforts to see every girl complete 12 years of free, safe, quality education. Malala is currently a student at Oxford University pursuing a degree in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics.

ALICE ALBRIGHT

Executive Director of the Global Partnership for Education

Member of the G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council

She held positions in the Obama administration from 2009 to 2013 before joining the Global Education Partnership (GPE) as Executive Director.

Chief Financial Officer and Head of Investments and Office Director of GAVI the International Alliance of vaccine in Washington from 2001 to 2009, Ms. Albright also worked in the banking sector in 1985 to 2001 (at Citicorps, Bankers Trust Company, JP Morgan, and the Carlyle Group).

She holds a Bachelor of History degree with honours from Williams College, Massachusetts and a Master’s degree from Columbia University’s School of Public and International Affairs, and is married and has two children.
Maryam Monsef and President of the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada.

Prior to that, between November 2015 and January 2017, she was simultaneously Minister of Democratic Institutions and President of the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada.

Maryam Monsef has an important role in gender equality policy at both national and international levels. In particular, it has worked with the Minister of Finance to ensure that all federal budgets are subject to a gender-sensitive budgeting process. In 2018, she oversaw the activities of the Advisory Council on Gender Equality for the Presidency of the Canadian G7.

Stephen Manservisi

Director General of DG Development and International Cooperation (DEVCO)

Stefano Manservisi has been Director General of the European Commission’s DG Development and International Cooperation (DEVCO) since 16 May 2016.

Stefano Manservisi holds a law degree from the University of Bologna and a certificate in European Organisation Studies from the University of Law in Strasbourg. He quickly joined the European institutions and holds several positions in different Directorates-General of the European Commission.
He started in 1983 in DG Agriculture before joining DG Development in 1987. In 2000, he became Deputy Head of Cabinet to the President of the European Commission Romano Prodi. He then became head of DG Development and Relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific States from 2004 to 2010. Finally, before taking up his post as DG of DG DEVCO, he was Head of Cabinet of the High Representative and Vice-President of the EC Federica Mogherini.

**Michael Kaufman**

**Author and writer**

**Member of the G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council**

A Canadian, he is a writer, advisor and lecturer. He is known for his innovative approaches that encourage men and boys to promote gender equality and transform men’s lives.

He has worked in several UN agencies: UN Women, UNICEF, IFAD, UNESCO in particular, but also in international NGOs: Oxfam, ICRC, Save the Children and Amnesty International.

He is co-founder of the White Ribbon Campaign, an initiative bringing together committed men who are opposed to violence against women. Previously, he also taught at York University in Toronto.