



Rebeca Grynspan
Secretary-General
United Nations Conference
on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

2021-present

Rebeca Grynspan, a Costa Rican economist and former **Vice President of Costa Rica**, is a globally recognized leader in economic policy, diplomacy and multilateral cooperation. With decades of service in international institutions and the United Nations system, she is an influential voice on trade and human development.

Prior to joining the United Nations, Rebeca Grynspan's public service career began in Costa Rica, where she was **elected Vice President (1994–1998)** and held key cabinet positions as Minister of Housing, Minister Coordinator of Economic and Social Affairs, and Deputy Finance Minister.

In September 2021, Ms. Grynspan was appointed **Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**, becoming the first woman to head the organization in its 60-year history. In August 2025, the UN General Assembly renewed her mandate, acknowledging her role in reforming UNCTAD and enhancing the institution's role as a global voice for trade and economic development.

As Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Grynspan has been at the centre of critical negotiations to address global trade and development challenges. She played a decisive role in the Istanbul Agreements, including the successful **Black Sea Initiative** brokered between the UN, Türkiye, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, which enabled the safe export of over 33 million tons of grains, lowered global food prices by 23% and prevented millions from falling into food insecurity. She also led the UN Global Crisis Response Group on food, energy and finance, and has represented the UN in G20 summits.

Before joining UNCTAD, Ms. Grynspan held senior leadership roles across the multilateral system. She served as **Secretary-General of the Ibero-American Conference** (2014–2021), where she chaired summits of Heads of State and Government and strengthened dialogue and cooperation across 22 countries in Latin America and Europe.

She also served as United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator of the **UN Development Programme** (UNDP) from 2010 to 2015, as well as UNDP Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean (2006–2010).

Governments have recognized her negotiating and diplomatic skills. In 2024, she was awarded the Doha Negotiator of the Year Award for leading UN efforts to restore maritime trade routes through the Black Sea. And in 2025, Spain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs awarded her the inaugural Isabel Oyarzábal Women in Diplomacy International Prize for her contribution to multilateralism. She has also been consistently recognized among the most influential women leaders in Latin America and beyond.

Ms. Grynspan holds a degree in economics from the **University of Costa Rica**, an **MA in economics from the University of Sussex**, and has been awarded honorary doctorates from the University of Salamanca, the University of Extremadura and the European University of Madrid.