



Rebeca Grynspan

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

2021-present

In September 2021, Rebeca Grynspan was appointed **Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**, becoming the first woman to lead the organization in its 60-year history.

Rebeca Grynspan, an **economist and former Vice President of Costa Rica**, is an experienced leader of international institutions with a substantive track record in government, UN diplomacy, economic policy and multilateral cooperation at the global level.

Prior to joining the United Nations, she was Vice President of Costa Rica and held cabinet positions as Minister of Housing, Minister Coordinator of Economic and Social Affairs and Deputy Finance Minister.

Previously, she served as **Secretary-General of the Ibero-American Conference** (2014–2021), chairing regional summits of Heads of State and Government; United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (**UNDP**); and UNDP Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean. She was a member of the UN Commission for the Reconstruction of Haiti, representing the UN Secretary-General.

At 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.

Her leadership has been recognized widely. In 2024, she received the Doha Negotiator of the Year Award for spearheading UN efforts to restore Black Sea trade routes. In 2025, Spain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation awarded her the inaugural Isabel Oyarzábal Women in Multilateralism International Prize for her contribution to multilateralism.

Ms. Grynspan holds degrees in economics from the **University of Costa Rica** and the **University of Sussex**, and honorary doctorates from several European universities.

