



UNIFEM Headquarters  
304 East 45th Street, 15th Floor  
New York, NY, 10017, USA

Tel: +1 212-916-6400  
Fax: +1 212-916-6705  
Website: [www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org)

### **UNIFEM Executive Director Noeleen Heyzer**

**Noeleen Heyzer** is the first executive director from the South to head the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the leading operational agency within the United Nations to promote women's empowerment and gender equality. Since joining UNIFEM, Dr. Heyzer has worked on strengthening women's economic security and rights; promoting women's leadership in conflict resolution, peace-building and governance; ending violence against women; and combating HIV/AIDS from a gender perspective. She played a critical role in the Security Council's adoption of Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and undertook extensive missions to conflict-affected countries world-wide to ensure its implementation to make a difference in women's lives on the ground.



Through her leadership, UNIFEM has assisted countries to formulate and implement legislation and policies to realize women's security and rights. This has led, for example, to changes in inheritance laws for women, better working conditions for migrant workers, the inclusion of women as full citizens in the constitution of Afghanistan and as full participants in several peace negotiations and electoral processes. UNIFEM has undergone a comprehensive restructuring to maximize performance, build knowledge and partnerships to deliver results. It has also increased its resources five-fold, strengthened its ground presence and successfully advocated to put issues affecting women high on the agenda of the UN system.

Before joining UNIFEM, Dr. Heyzer worked as a researcher for the World Employment Programme of the International Labor Organization (ILO), and was a Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex. She served in the Economic and Social Commission of the Asia and Pacific Region where she focused on youth employment and the preparation for the Third World Conference on Women. She was also Director of the Gender Programme of the Asia and Pacific Development Center. In this role, Dr. Heyzer was a policy adviser to several Asian governments on gender issues, playing a key role in the formulation of national development policies, strategies and programmes from a gender perspective. She has done extensive work at the community level with women migrant workers, women in the informal sector and in plantations, young women in prostitution, female workers in free trade zones, rural and indigenous communities affected by environmental degradation.

Dr. Heyzer has served on numerous boards and advisory committees of international organizations including, the UNDP Human Development Report, the Commission on Globalization of the State of the World's Forum, the UNDP Eminent Persons Group on Trade and Sustainable Development. She was a founding member of numerous international women's networks and has published extensively on gender and development issues, especially economic globalization, international migration and trafficking, women, peace and security. She is currently the convener of the International Women's Commission for a Just and Sustainable Palestinian-Israeli Peace, serves on the Board of President Ahtisaari's Crisis Management Initiative, and is in the High-Level Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding chaired by Nobel Prize Laureate Prof. Amartya Sen. Dr. Heyzer is a New Millennium Distinguished Visiting Scholar at Columbia University, an eminent speaker at the Asian Development Bank and chairs the Advisory Group of the Programme on Women's Empowerment in Muslim Contexts: Democratization from the Inside Out. She has also successfully mobilized private sector partners such as Macy's, CISCO, Citigroup and the Calvert Investment Fund to provide high value employment and market

access to women and youth in conflict and tsunami affected areas, and to the Arab States, as well as to set new standards for ethical investment.

Born in Singapore, she received a B.A. and an M.A. from the University of Singapore and a doctorate in social sciences from Cambridge University, United Kingdom. She has received several awards for leadership including the UNA-Harvard Leadership Award, the Woman of Distinction Award from the UN-NGO Committee on the Status of Women, NCRW "Women Who Make a Difference" Award in 2005 and the Dag Hammarskjöld medal in 2004 given to "a person who has promoted, in action and spirit, the values that inspired Dag Hammarskjöld as Secretary-General of the United Nations and generally in his life: compassion, humanism and commitment to international solidarity and cooperation."