

PROFILE

Dr. Kandeheh Yumkella is a former United Nations Under-Secretary-General (USG) and chair of UN-Energy (2008-2015). A distinguished development economist and an expert in agricultural economics with over 25 years of international experience, he brought a renewed and vital focus to global energy issues and led the coordination of the United Nations response to energy issues.

As Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All, Dr. Yumkella was the founding Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Vienna-based initiative on Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All). In this role, he mobilized global action towards a sustainable energy future. His global leadership was responsible for the planning and implementation of the initiative as well as engaging with the leadership of relevant stakeholders in government, businesses, academia and civil society at the highest level to advocate for and promote sustainable energy for all.

Prior to his appointment as Special Representative and Chief Executive, Mr. Yumkella was appointed Co-Chair of the High-level Group on Sustainable Energy for All by United Nations Secretary General in recognition of his leadership and passion for energy and environment-related causes following a decision by the United Nations General Assembly to designate 2012 as the International Year for Sustainable Energy for All. In this position, he was instrumental in guiding the initiative and in underscoring the need for universal access to energy, increased energy efficiency and enhanced deployment of renewable sources of energy.

Previously, Dr. Yumkella served as Director-General of United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) for two four-year terms (2005-2013). He was the first from Sub-Saharan Africa to have been appointed to the position having worked in various high-level policy positions in the organization, including as Special Adviser to two previous Directors-General and as Director of the Africa and Least Developed Countries Regional Bureau as well as Representative and Director of the first UNIDO Regional Office in Nigeria.

Under his leadership, UNIDO was at the forefront in providing solutions to many of the challenges the global community faces today: poverty, jobs, wealth creation and climate change. UNIDO also experienced an unprecedented level of growth in its programmes and has maintained a role as the largest provider of trade-related technical assistance to developing countries in the United Nations system. This assistance has enabled many developing countries to produce and export goods meeting international standards.

Between 1987 and 1996, Dr. Yumkella has extensive research and teaching experience as a former assistant professor in agribusiness management and international agricultural development and trade having held academic positions at Michigan State University and the University of Illinois. He has published various articles, book chapters, staff working papers and policy briefs on crucial development issues related to economics, the international commodity trade, structural transformation in African agricultural and industrial sectors, as well as rural development, poverty alleviation, and environmental sustainability.

Dr. Yumkella is a former Minister for Trade, Industry and State Enterprises in Sierra Leone and holds a BSc in General Agriculture from Njala University College, Sierra Leone; MSc in Agricultural Economics (Cornell University) and a PhD in Agricultural Economics, University of Illinois. A member of pre-eminent global organizations and the recipient of numerous international awards including:

- 2015 Development Champion Award (October 17, 2015) – Brussels
- Order of Merit of the Austrian Republic (July 28, 2015) - Vienna
- Commander of the National Order of Cote d'Ivoire (June 25, 2013)
- 2013 AAI Distinguished Alumni Award (conferred in New York in September, 2013)
- 2013 Energy Efficiency Visionary Award (ASE-EE Global Forum) for his steadfast commitment to the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative and his work to advance the next generation of energy efficiency through the pillars of investment, education and modernization.
- 2012 South-South and Triangular Cooperation Visionary Award (United Nations of South-South Cooperation)
- 2012 United Nations Association (UNA-USA) Global Leadership Award for the leadership he has provided to strengthen the United Nations
- Award of “Honorary Professor” by the Mongolian University of Science and Technology, Ulan Bator, Mongolia (April 2012)
- Wissam Award for service and son of Africa (March 30, 2011)
- Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa), Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Nigeria in recognition of his contribution to global industrial development and poverty alleviation in the world, (March 2012)
- Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa) from the Njala University, Njala, Sierra Leone in March 2011
- Doctor of Philosophy (Honoris Causa) from TERI University, New Delhi in October 2010 in recognition of his achievements and his contribution to society
- Doctor of Literature (Honoris Causa) at the 150th Year Special Convocation and Valedictory Function, September 2008, University of Madras, India.

- 2008 Champion of Youth Award at the 4th World Youth Congress, August 2008, in Quebec City, Canada
- Madhuri and Jagdish N. Sheth International Alumni Award for Exceptional Achievement, April 2008, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC)
- The "Prix De la Fondation" of the Crans Montana Forum for his global leadership and work in development, June 2006, Monaco presented by Prince Albert of Monaco
- Honorary Distinguished Visiting Professor by the Shanghai Institute of Foreign Trade, March 2006, China