

Christiana Figueres

Ms. Figueres is an internationally recognized leader on global climate change. She was Executive Secretary of the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\) 2010-2016](#). Assuming responsibility for the international climate change negotiations after the failed Copenhagen conference of 2009, she was determined to lead the process to a universally agreed regulatory framework. Building toward that goal, she directed the successful Conferences of the Parties in [Cancun 2010](#), [Durban 2011](#), [Doha 2012](#), [Warsaw 2013](#), and [Lima 2014](#), and culminated her efforts in the historical [Paris Agreement of 2015](#).

Throughout her tenure Ms. Figueres brought together national and sub national governments, corporations and activists, financial institutions and communities of faith, think tanks and technology providers, NGOs and parliamentarians, to jointly deliver the unprecedented climate change agreement. For this achievement Ms. Figueres has been credited with forging a new brand of collaborative diplomacy.

She is a founding partner of [Global Optimism](#), a purpose-driven enterprise focused on social and environmental change. Its initiatives include Mission 2020 and Profiles of Paris. Global Optimism was founded by Christiana Figueres and Tom Rivett-Carnac.

- [Mission 2020](#) is a global initiative that seeks to ensure the world bends the curve on greenhouse gas emissions by [2020](#) in order to protect the most vulnerable from the worst impacts of climate change and usher in an era of stability and prosperity.
- [Profiles of Paris](#) is an initiative collated by Global Optimism and led by Christiana Figueres, bringing together international leaders and changemakers to offer unique views on how the Paris Agreement was achieved and what lessons can be drawn for the future.

She has a long trajectory in the field of global climate change, having been a member of the Costa Rican negotiating team 1995- 2009, and having played a number of key roles in the governance of the UNFCCC before formally joining the Secretariat.

She initiated her life of public service as Minister Counselor at the Embassy of Costa Rica in Bonn, Germany in 1982. Moving to the USA, she was Director of Renewable Energy in the Americas (REIA) and in 1995 founded the non-profit Center for Sustainable Development of the Americas (CSDA) which she directed for eight years.

Currently Christiana's current corporate engagements include:

- Non Executive Board member of [ACCIONA](#)
- Co-chair of the Advisory Committee of [Formula E](#)
- Advisory Board member of [ENI](#)
- Fellow of [DeepMind](#)

Her non-profit engagements include:

- [Vice Chair of the Global Covenant of Mayors](#)
- [Member of the Commission on the Global Consequences of Renewable Energy Transformation](#)
- [Climate Leader for the World Bank](#)
- [Distinguished Fellow of Conservation International](#)

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- Board member of [Climate Works](#)
- Board member of the [World Resources Institute](#)
- Member of the [Rockefeller Foundation Economic Council on Planetary Health](#)
- [B Team Leader](#)
- Ambassador of the [Under 2 Coalition](#)
- Chair of the [Lancet Countdown High Level Advisory Board](#)

Christiana is an international leader on climate change and so has received these recognitions from governments:

- Great Cross of the Order of Merit of Germany 1985
- [Legion of Honor of France](#) 2015
- [Grand Medal of the City of Paris](#) 2015
- [National Guayacan Medal](#) of Costa Rica 2016
- [Officer in the Order of Orange-Nassau](#) of The Netherlands 2016

Her recognition from civil society includes:

- [Ewald von Kleist Award](#) from the Munich Security Conference 2015
- [Solar Champion Award](#) from California's Vote Solar 2016
- [British Renewable Energy Judges Award 2016](#) from the Renewable Energy Association
- [Power with Purpose 2016 Award](#) from Devex and McKinsey 2016
- [Joan Bavaria Award](#) from CERES 2016
- [CK Prahalad Award](#) from the Corporate Eco Forum 2016
- [Global Leaders](#) by the Talberg Foundation 2016
- [Manuel de Maria Peralta Prize International Law](#) 2017
- [Shackleton Medal from the Royal Scottish Geographical Society](#) 2017
- [CARE Millennium Award](#) 2017
- [Distinguished Leadership Award BCSE 2017](#) 2017
- [Aenne Burda Award](#) 2018
- [Laureate International Four Freedoms Award](#) 2018
- In the natural world, a newly discovered tropical moth ([Struthoscelis christianafigueresae](#)), a wasp ([Pseudapanteles christianafigueresae](#)) and an orchid ([Vanilla karen-christianae](#)) have been named after her. Costa Rica has recently issued a [commemorative postage stamp](#) in her honour.

Recognition from press and journals:

- [Medal of Honour](#) from The Guardian 2015

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- [Hero of El Pais newspaper](#) of Spain 2015
- [Top 10 of Nature Journal of Science](#) 2015
- [Global Thinker](#) of Foreign Policy Magazine 2015
- [Number seven of the World's 50 Greatest Leaders](#) Fortune Magazine 2016
- [Top 100 Time magazine Influential Leaders of the World](#) 2016
- [One of the 5 most powerful women in science, BBC Mundo](#) 2017

She has an undergraduate degree from [Swarthmore College](#), a Masters Degree in Anthropology from the London School of Economics, and a certificate in Organizational Development from Georgetown University. Ms. Figueres has received honorary doctorate degrees from [University of Massachusetts Boston](#), [Concordia University](#), [Georgetown University](#), [Cranfield University](#), and [Warwick University](#). She is the mother of two daughters and speaks Spanish, English and German.