

# **VERA EL KHOURY LACOEUILHE**

**CANDIDATE OF LEBANON  
TO THE POST OF DIRECTOR GENERAL OF UNESCO**



Addressing the challenges facing the world today is complex. There can be no simple answer to these challenges that affect all of us. Many promises were made but few were kept. The United Nations System provides the ideal forum for adequate solutions to be found. Together with a determined, ethical and motivated Director General for UNESCO, we can create the conditions for a better world with more empathy, justice and security.

**Vera El Khoury Lacoueilhe** has over two decades of in-depth experience in multilateral diplomacy and international relations. Strongly committed to the ideals of the United Nations, she has been, throughout her career, a passionate advocate of the United Nations System, of multilateralism, and their global role in building peace, stability and sustainability. Today she is regarded as a leading authority on UNESCO. **Among her most distinctive competencies are consensus building and inspiring leadership.**

**With a wealth of seasoned diplomatic experience and a strong international law expertise,** Vera El Khoury Lacoueilhe currently teaches a Master 2 level Seminar entitled "International Institutions and Organizations" at the Paris I Pantheon-Sorbonne University and is adviser to the Ministry of Culture of Lebanon.

Her broad knowledge of the design and structure of international organizations gives Vera El Khoury Lacoueilhe international level recognition as an authority on the UN System. In January 2016, she became a member of the "*Independent Team of Advisors*" established by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), in charge of making recommendations on the long term positioning of the United Nations Development System in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Throughout her career, Vera El Khoury Lacoueilhe has driven a tireless agenda for the strengthening of governance and effectiveness, which contributed to UNESCO's drive to remain relevant in a changing world. This motivated the request of the former President of Senegal, H.E. Mr Abdou Diouf, in his capacity as Secretary-General of the Francophonie, to invite her to chair an ad hoc group mandated to reform the governing bodies of the International Organization of Francophonie (OIF).

Vera El Khoury Lacoueilhe's capacity for critical analysis, her experience, and her insight have been deployed with great effect in a variety of leadership roles throughout UNESCO. At numerous occasions on multiple areas of interest, she has successfully persuaded supporting teams and peers to engage in a motivational and inspiring way.

She has a track record of imparting gravitas to political roles and has been entrusted plenipotentiary responsibilities on multiple missions, as head of delegation to ministerial meetings and as president of several intergovernmental bodies.

She actively participated in ten sessions of the General Conference and served two mandates (8 years) on the Executive Board of UNESCO. She was appointed to several senior positions, notably the presidency of subsidiary organs of the General Conference and the Executive Board. On matters of governance, she has been a constant advocate for transparency, ethics and accountability within UNESCO and its governing bodies.

Vera El Khoury Lacoueilhe is a politically astute negotiator and effective **consensus builder**. Her skills combined with her significant knowledge of and insights into international law have enabled her to play a lead role in elaborating the most important UNESCO legal instruments, mainly in the negotiations and the drafting of all Declarations, Recommendations and Conventions adopted by the Organization over the past 20 years. This has given her in-depth understanding of UNESCO's normative work which led her to chair several intergovernmental committees of international conventions, such as the World Heritage Committee.

Vera El Khoury Lacoueilhe, who embodies the highest ethical standards, will vigorously pursue value adding activities with a real impact. She believes in UNESCO's fundamental contribution to building a global mind-set for peace and progress. She will implement reforms and promote innovation, focus on priorities and results, while being committed to transparency, accountability, evaluation and oversight.

She has earned a reputation for leadership which has merited the respect of her peers. She has consistently been chosen to lead teams in reform and other politically sensitive issues. The results she has achieved indicate the strength of her **leadership** as well as her political dimension.

She leads through engagement. She leads through persuasion. She leads through diplomacy.

# Vera El Khoury Lacoueilhe

Born in 1959 in Beirut - Lebanon

Married, two children

Lebanese and French citizen

## EDUCATION

- 1983**     **Master of Arts (MA)**  
New York University (NYU)  
Near and Middle Eastern Studies  
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
- 1979**     **Bachelor of Arts (BA with distinction)**  
American University of Beirut (AUB)  
Political Science and Government  
School of Arts and Sciences

## DECORATIONS

- 2005**     Knight of the National Order of Merit (France)
- 2005**     Insignia of the Order of Vytautas the Great (Lithuania)

## LANGUAGES

Arabic (fluent)  
English (fluent)  
French (fluent)

## EXPERIENCE

### Current

**Adviser to the Ministry of Culture of Lebanon  
Government of Lebanon**

**Member of the Independent Team of Advisors (ITA)  
ECOSOC (UN Economic and Social Council), New York**

Active member of the panel established by ECOSOC in charge to make recommendations on the long term positioning of the United Nations Development System in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: function, financing, governance, organizational structures and partnerships.

### Since 2013

**Visiting Professor of International Law  
Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne University**

Sorbonne Law School, Department of International and European Studies, Paris

Teaching a Master 2 level seminar entitled "*International Institutions and Organizations*"

### 2001-2016

**Alternate Representative of the Government of Saint Lucia to OIF (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie), Paris**

**Alternate Representative** of the Head of the Government of Saint Lucia to the Permanent Council of OIF and **Head of the Delegation** to the Ministerial Conferences of Francophonie

**President** of the ad hoc group on the reform of the governing bodies of the International Organisation of Francophonie, appointed by President Abdou Diouf, Secretary General of Francophonie (2014)

**Member** of Delegation to the Summit of Heads of State and Government of Francophonie: IX Summit, Beirut (2002), XI Summit, Bucharest (2006), XII Summit, Quebec (2008), XIII Summit, Montreux (2010)

### 1996-2016

**Deputy Permanent Delegate of Saint Lucia to UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), Paris**

1997-2015	<b>GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO</b> <b>Member of the delegation</b> to the General Conference of UNESCO, 29 <sup>th</sup> through 38 <sup>th</sup> sessions
1999-2001-2013	<b>Vice-Chairperson</b> of the Administrative Commission at the 30 <sup>th</sup> , 31 <sup>st</sup> and 37 <sup>th</sup> sessions of the General Conference of UNESCO
2006	<b>President and Member</b> of the Think Tank of the General Conference on the Reform of the Executive Board and the General Conference of UNESCO
2003	<b>President</b> of the Group on the Right to Vote at the 32 <sup>nd</sup> session of the General Conference of UNESCO
1999	<b>Chairperson</b> of the Joint Commission - Administrative and Programme - at the 30 <sup>th</sup> session of the General Conference of UNESCO
<b>2009-2013</b> <b>1997-2001</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNESCO</b>
2012-2013	<b>Representative</b> to the Executive Board <b>Chairperson</b> of the Preparatory Group of the Executive Board
2010-2011	<b>Alternate Representative</b> to the Executive Board of UNESCO
2009-2013	<b>Member</b> of the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations
2009-2010	<b>President</b> of the Ad Hoc Group on the Independent External Evaluation of UNESCO (IEE)
1997-2001	<b>Alternate Representative</b> to the Executive Board of UNESCO
2001	<b>Chairperson</b> of the Group on the introduction of the Euro
2000-2001	<b>Chairperson</b> of the Group of Experts on Finance and Administration Matters
2000	<b>Alternate Vice-Chairperson</b> of the Executive Board of UNESCO
1999	<b>Vice-Chairperson</b> of the Working Group on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
<b>1999-2016</b>	<b>CONVENTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECLARATIONS OF UNESCO</b>
2014-2016	<b>Head of Delegation</b> to the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage



- 2013-2016 **Head of Delegation** to the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
- 2007-2011 **Head of Delegation** to the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
- 2001-2005 **Head of Delegation** to the World Heritage Committee: Helsinki (2001), Budapest (2002), Paris (2003), Suzhou (2004), Durban (2005), Vilnius (2006)
- 2003 **Head of Delegation** to the Intergovernmental Meetings for the negotiation of the International Convention against Doping in Sport
- 2002-2003 **Head of Delegation** to the Intergovernmental meetings for the negotiation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
- 2001 **Head of Delegation** to the Intergovernmental meeting for the negotiation of the Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage
- 1999 **Head of Delegation** to the Intergovernmental meetings for the negotiation of the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage and **Member of the Drafting Group** of the Operational Guidelines of the Convention

#### **2001-2014 LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN UNESCO**

- 2014 **President** of the 1<sup>st</sup> Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly of State Parties to the World Heritage Convention (Paris)
- 2014 **Vice-Chairperson** of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
- 2011 **Chairperson** of the Intergovernmental Meeting of Experts for the negotiation of the Recommendation on the "*Historic Urban Landscape*"
- 2009 **Chairperson** of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
- 2007 **Vice-Chairperson** of the Headquarters Committee of UNESCO
- 2006 **Acting Chairperson** of the Headquarters Committee of UNESCO
- 2004-2005 **Vice-Chairperson** of the Intergovernmental Meetings for the negotiation of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
- 2004 **Vice-Chairperson** of the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the World Heritage Committee (Suzhou, China)

- 2003 **Chairperson** of the 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the World Heritage Committee (Paris)
- 2003 **Chairperson** of the Drafting Group on the International Convention against Doping in Sport
- 2001 **Chairperson** of the Working Group on the Budget of the World Heritage Committee
- 1998-2014 OTHER LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AND EXPERT ROLES AT UNESCO**
- 2014 **Head of Delegation** at the “*Global Meeting on Education for All*” (Muscat, Oman)
- 2007 **Chairperson** of the Group of Francophone Ambassadors of UNESCO
- 2007 **Chairperson** of the Electoral Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) of UNESCO
- 2005 **Chairperson** of the Commonwealth Group of Ambassadors to UNESCO
- 1999 **Chairperson** of the G77 Working Group on the Reform of the General Conference and the Executive Board of UNESCO
- 1999 **President** of the Cultural Committee of the Francophone Group of UNESCO
- 1998 **Designated Expert** of the Intergovernmental consultations on “*The Human Right to Peace*”
- 1993-1996 Sabbatical to start a family, Paris**
- 1991-1993 Communication Officer**  
Advisor to private companies on communication through art and culture  
**Art Entreprise et Communication, Paris**
- 1986-1989 Founder, CEO and Managing Director** of a private commercial business **Classics Ltd, Beirut**
- 1985 Director of Internal Communications, Media Relations and Advertising**  
**INTRA** (Banque Al Mashrek, Crédit Lyonnais, Diners Club), **Beirut**



## CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

- **Speaker** at Science Po: *"Is it possible to reform the United Nations?"* (Menton, France, 2016)
- **Contributor**: *"Should International Law be taken seriously?"*, (Journée d'études en l'honneur de Pierre Michel Eisemann sous la direction de Sarah Cassella et Lucie Delabie. Editeur : Pedone) (Paris, 2016)
- **Speaker** at the Conference *"Should International Law be taken seriously?"*, Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne University (Paris, 2014)
- **Center stage** at Conference *"Debate with Vera Lacoeylhe: Aspects of multilateral diplomacy"* organized by Association of Internationalists, Paris II Panthéon-Assas University (Paris, 2014)
- **Speaker** at the Inter-Parliamentary Conference on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions organized by the Presidents of the National Assembly of Quebec and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie (Quebec, 2011)
- **Speaker** at the Seminar *"Sharing Strength: Commonwealth and Francophone Cultural Engagement with the UNESCO Convention"* organised by Commonwealth Foundation (London, 2008)
- **Speaker** at the Seminar *"Interaction between the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity"*, UNESCO (Paris, 2008)
- **Speaker** at the Seminar *"Who really decides in International Organizations?"* directed by Professor Pierre Michel Eisemann (Masters of Law), Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne University (Paris, 2007)
- **Speaker** at the Training Seminar for the members of the Executive Board of UNESCO (Paris, 2005)