

## LAKSHMI PURI

*Former Assistant Secretary-General  
of the United Nations and Deputy Executive  
Director of UN Women;  
Former Ambassador of India*

Lakshmi Puri is a former Assistant Secretary-General at the United Nations and the former Deputy Executive Director of UN Women. She was Director of the flagship International Trade division and the acting Deputy Secretary-General of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. She led the preparations for the Fourth Least Developed Countries Conference as Director at OHRLLS.



Before her 15-year stint at the United Nations, she served as an Indian diplomat for 28 years. Lakshmi joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1974 and served in Japan, Sri Lanka, Switzerland (Geneva), and as an Ambassador to Hungary and accredited to Bosnia and Herzegovina. She was active in conceptualising and negotiating India's many bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral economic diplomacy initiatives.

Joining the leadership team of UN Women at its inception, she contributed strategically and vitally in building UN Women into a dynamic entity, a powerful advocate, knowledge and partnership hub, norm setter and program driver for gender equality and women's empowerment. Lakshmi was instrumental in convening by UN Women of the first-ever Global Summit on gender equality in 2015 with 70 key heads of state and government attending and making commitments. She also led imaginative Movement building campaigns such as HeForShe and Planet 50/50 with global impact.

Puri has multifaceted experience in bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, negotiations of international agreements and norm-setting. She has been active on public advocacy spanning, critical areas of sustainable development including poverty eradication, food security and agriculture, water, energy, urban development, education, trade in goods, services, and commodities investment and intellectual property rights regimes, migration and refugees, climate change and humanitarian action. Puri has contributed to publications and thinks tanks in these areas and to opinion editorials. Throughout her career, she has interacted with global leaders, decision-makers and opinion influencers at the highest levels. She has developed transformative partnerships with governments, civil society, academia, youth, the private sector, and the media.

Lakshmi has received international awards and accolades for her work and contribution to international development, human rights, humanitarian, peace and security policy-making and norm-setting. These include the prestigious *Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award*, *Novus Award for Championing the Sustainable Development Goals*, the *Millennium Campus Award 2015* and *Global Generation Award as Inspiration for Youth*.