

Sarah Hendriks

Deputy Executive Director for Policy, Programme, Civil Society, and Intergovernmental Support, UN Women

Ms. Sarah E. Hendriks (Canada) was appointed UN Women Deputy Executive Director for Policy, Programme, Civil Society, and Intergovernmental Support, a.i., on 1 June 2023.

Ms. Hendriks is a visionary leader in global cooperation and development with more than 25 years in programme and policy work on gender equality.

Ms. Hendriks joined UN Women in 2019, where she served as Director of the Policy, Programme, and Intergovernmental Support Division (PPID), driving UN Women as a global thought and practice leader through cutting-edge policy analysis, strategic guidance to field programming, and intergovernmental support to normative advancements for gender equality, including through the Commission on the Status of Women, the UN General Assembly, and Human Rights Treaty Bodies.

With extensive experience in leadership and strategy design, Ms. Hendriks supported the development and execution of UN Women's new Strategic Plan 2022–2025 within six geographic regions and across the core impact areas of governance and participation; ending violence against women; economic empowerment; peace, security and resilience; and humanitarian action. Ms. Hendriks provided overarching leadership to UN Women's global response to COVID-19, including through the advancement of research and policy analysis to meet women's needs. To advance results on the Sustainable Development Goals, Ms. Hendriks spearheaded the agency's efforts as convener of the Generation Equality Forum Action Coalitions, a leading global multi-stakeholder initiative to accelerate investment and implementation on gender equality.

Ms. Hendriks brings more than two decades of experience working across multistakeholder partners, including with government, public sector, foundations, non-governmental organizations, and research institutions. Prior to joining UN Women, Ms. Hendriks served as the Director, Gender Equality, Global Growth and Opportunity at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2015–2019), developing the Foundation's first-ever strategy on gender equality and women's economic empowerment, driving new global philanthropic investment of USD 170 million. This work was supported by Ms. Hendriks' leadership to design and launch a global investment strategy on gender data, catalysing a USD 80 million portfolio and institutional support on gender data as core to advancing global accountability to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Prior to this role, Ms. Hendriks worked as the Director of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion at Plan International Headquarters (2010–2015), where she led the strategic direction across 50+ countries that drove more than EUR 500 million in new resources towards innovative work on gender equality and adolescent girls' development. Ms. Hendriks served for nine years as Chair of the Advisory Board governing Plan's flagship annual report and campaign "State of the World's Girls", which reached audiences across more than 72 countries. Previously, Ms. Hendriks served as the Global Advisor on Gender Equality and HIV/AIDS at Plan International Canada (2005–2010), leading the Canadian Government's coordinated investment on HIV/AIDS and youth in Africa (Burkina Faso, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Mozambique).

Earlier, Ms. Hendriks worked with several development and human rights organizations, including Women and the Law in Southern Africa in Malawi (2002–2005), World Vision International in Zimbabwe (1997–1998), and as a senior consultant with Global Affairs Canada (on gender-based violence), GIZ (on women’s access to justice), and the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (on gender mainstreaming in public sector delivery and good governance).

A national of Canada, Ms. Hendriks holds an M.A. in Adult Education and International Development from the University of Toronto and B.A. in International Justice and Human Rights from McMaster University, Canada.