

Yolanda Kakabadse Navarro

Yolanda Kakabadse was born in Ecuador in 1948. She studied Educational Psychology in the Catholic University of Quito. Her nexus with the environmental conservation movement officially began in 1979, when she was appointed Executive Director of Fundación Natura in Quito, where she worked until 1990. Ms. Kakabadse helped Fundación Natura become one of Latin America's most important environmental organizations through the development of important processes for Ecuadorian society and the international community: from environmental education to the proposal of development policies, Fundación Natura took an important place in the world of non-governmental organizations. In 1993 she created Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano and was its Executive President until 2006; she is presently the Chair of the Advisory Board of this organization dedicated to promote sustainable development in Latin America through conflict prevention and management.

From 1990 until 1992, Ms. Kakabadse coordinated in Geneva, Switzerland, the participation of civil society organizations for the United Nations Conference for Environment and Development (Earth Summit). In August 1998 she was appointed Minister of Environment for the Republic of Ecuador, position she held until January 2000. During 2001 she was a visiting professor at Yale's School of Forestry and Environment, USA.

She was President of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) from 1996 to 2004, and Member of the Board of the World Resources Institute (WRI) during the same period. She co-Chaired the Environmental Sustainability Task Force of the UN Millennium Project, 2002 – 2005. She chaired the Scientific and Technology Advisory Panel of the Global Environment Facility (STAP / GEF) from 2005 to 2008. She was the Team Leader for the Poverty and Environment Nexus (PEN) evaluation of UNDP (2009 – 2010)

Between 2008 – 2010 she was a member of the Presidential Commission of the Yasuni Initiative promoting the concept of "payment for non-emission" of CO₂ as an option to reduce and control climate change drivers.

Yolanda Kakabadse became President of Worldwide Fund International (WWF) on January 1, 2010.

Other activities, memberships, and appointments include:

- Member of the Board of Trustees of the Ford Foundation (1997 – 1998; 2000 –)
- Member of the Leadership Council, FES / Yale University
- Member of the Environmental Advisory Board of CocaCola (2002 –)
- Member of the Environmental Advisory Board of the HOLCIM Foundation (2005 -)
- Special Advisor to the Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) of UICN

She has been in the Board of Participación Ciudadana – Ecuador (2003 – 2011), The InterAmerican Dialogue (2004 – 2011), TROPENBOS (2005 – 2010) and RIMISP (2008 - 2011)

Honorary orders and awards:

- Insignia of the National Order for Merit as a Commissioned Officer for the Republic of Ecuador (1990)
- Global 500 Award of the United Nations Environment Program (1991)
- The Golden Ark Order, bestowed by Prince Bernard of The Netherlands (1991)
- Zayed International Price for the Environment, (2001)
- Doctor in Science (ScD) Honoris Causa – University of East Anglia – 2008