Jamaican Michelle Gyles-McDonnough Appointed UN Assistant Secretary-General for Development Coordination



United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today announced the appointment of Michelle Gyles-McDonnough of Jamaica as Assistant Secretary-General for Development Coordination of the United Nations Development Coordination Office. She succeeds Oscar Fernandez-Taranco of Argentina, to whom the Secretary-General expressed his deep gratitude for his dedication and commitment to the United Nations.

Ms. Gyles-McDonnough brings more than three decades of leadership experience in sustainable development, international trade and international relations, policy advocacy and organizational transformation. Throughout her career, she has led complex, multidisciplinary portfolios spanning economic, social, environmental and governance issues, advancing sustainable development across diverse national and global contexts. Recognized for driving

institutional change, she has successfully led strengthened capacities, championed digital transformation and fostered innovative development solutions through strategic partnerships with Governments, United Nations entities and other stakeholders.

Ms. Gyles-McDonnough currently serves as Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), a position she has held since 2025. She previously served as Director, Sustainable Development Unit, in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General in New York (2017-2025). Over the course of her United Nations career, she has taken on a range of senior leadership and advisory roles, including United Nations Resident Coordinator and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative for Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam (2013-2016); United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative for Barbados and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (2008-2013); Programme Adviser in the UNDP Executive Office/Operations Support Group (2006-2008); Caribbean Regional Adviser for UNDP (2005); Chief of the UNDP subregional policy advisory facility for the Caribbean (1999-2004); and Coordinator of the Grenada Recovery Programme (2004-2005) following a hurricane destruction estimated at more than 200 per cent of national gross domestic product.

Prior to joining the United Nations, Ms. Gyles-McDonnough practiced international trade law, served as Legal Adviser at the Embassy of Jamaica in Washington, D.C.,; Adviser to the Secretary General of the Organization of American States on international trade matters; and was a Teaching Assistant at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Ms. Gyles-McDonnough holds a Juris Doctor degree from Columbia University School of Law in the United States, with honours in international and foreign law; a master’s in public administration from Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government and an Executive Education Diploma from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, all in the United States. She received her undergraduate degree in economics, with a minor in French, at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania in the United States. She is fluent in English with professional working fluency in French.

About The Desk at 13 West

Market Me Consulting Limited is a Jamaican owned and operated communications company.

Contact details

Kristina Kerr
kristina@marketmeja.com

Copy link

https://thedeskat13west.pr.co/274629-jamaican-michelle-gyles-mcdonnough-appointed-un-assistant-secretary-general-for-development-coordination/