

Ms. Catarina de Albuquerque

SWA Chief Executive Officer

Biography

Catarina de Albuquerque joined Sanitation and Water for All in 2014 and has since strengthened political will in favour of water, sanitation and hygiene, and positioned SWA as a vital contributor to the Sustainable Development Goals agenda.



In July 2018, following a wide-ranging governance review, SWA created the position of Chief Executive Officer and Ms. de Albuquerque was chosen for the position in a competitive process. Through her strategic leadership as CEO, she is an influential and powerful advocate for SWA and the human rights to water and sanitation. She leads the SWA secretariat and provides strategic leadership compatible with its vision and high-level objectives, including all operational, executive and fundraising activities.

In 2008, Ms. de Albuquerque was appointed by the Human Rights Council to become the first [UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation](#). In 2010, she played a pivotal role in the recognition of water and sanitation as human rights by the UN General Assembly. Her work helped ensure that the rights to water and sanitation were incorporated into the language of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Between 2004 and 2008 she presided over the negotiations of the [Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#), which the UN General Assembly approved by consensus on 10 December 2008. She also participated in the development of several other international human rights standards, including the two Optional Protocols: one on the [Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict](#), and the one on [Sale of Children, Child Pornography and Child Prostitution](#).

She was awarded the Human Rights Golden Medal by the Portuguese Parliament (10 December 2009) for outstanding work in the area of human rights. Her work in human rights was also honoured by the Portuguese President of the Republic with the Order of Merit (October 2009), which is a recognition of an individual's personal bravery, achievement, or service. She holds an honorary degree from the [University of Carolina at Chapel Hill](#), a Law Degree from the [Law Faculty of the University of Lisbon](#) (Portugal) and a Diplome d'Etudes Superieures from the [Institut Universitaire de Hautes Etudes Internationales](#) (Geneva, Switzerland).

Ms. de Albuquerque has been an invited Professor at the law faculties of the [Universities of Braga](#) and [Coimbra](#) (Portugal), at the [American University's Washington College of Law](#), at the [European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratization](#). She was also a Senior Legal Adviser at the [Office for Documentation and Comparative Law](#), an independent institution under the Portuguese Prosecutor General's Office. During her career she has also worked for the [Swiss Development Agency](#), the [European Commission](#), [UNICEF](#), and [UNDP](#), among others. She has country experience in Angola, Bangladesh, Brazil, Costa Rica, Egypt, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Moldavia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua,

Portugal, Romania, Senegal, Slovenia, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Tuvalu, Uruguay, and USA.

Languages: Fluent in Portuguese, English, French, Spanish and German.

Expertise / Speaking topics

- Financing for water, sanitation and hygiene / Financing SDG 6
- Human right to sanitation, water and hygiene
- Gender in sanitation, water and hygiene; Menstrual hygiene management
- Multi-stakeholder participation in decision-making / Multi-stakeholder partnerships (SDG 17)
- “Leave no one behind”; Progressive elimination of Inequalities; Discrimination
- Responsibilities of countries across all wealth spectrums in SDG Era
- Public policies for achieving SDG 6, including national planning and monitoring, regulation, accountability and financing
- Nexus between SDG 6 and other Goals and Targets