

Ad Melkert

*Candidate for the Office of Director-General
of the International Labour Organisation (ILO)*



The Government of the Netherlands has decided to put forward Mr. Ad Melkert as the Dutch candidate for the Office of Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The Dutch Government and Mr. Melkert have duly consulted the Dutch social partners on his candidature.

From July 2009 until September 2011, Mr. Melkert was Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

Before this, Mr. Melkert served as United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator of UNDP (from March 2006 until June 2009). As Chief Operations Officer he oversaw UNDP's operations in over 150 countries as well as the organisation's strategic planning, budget and human resources policies.

Previously, Mr. Melkert served as a member of the Board of Directors at the World Bank for over three years, from 2002 until 2006. In this capacity, he oversaw the bank's business, including approval of loans and guarantees, and country assistance strategies. As Executive Director he represented the "constituency" led by the Netherlands and liaised with representatives of governments, the private sector and civil society of 12 member states.

He joined the World Bank Group after a long and prominent political career in Dutch politics, from 1986 until 2002, and during which he was elected parliamentary party leader, and subsequently general party leader of the Dutch Labour party (PvdA).

Mr. Melkert served as Minister of Social Affairs and Employment from 1994 until 1998, dealing with labour market regulations, social security and pensions, health and safety standards, and equal opportunities for women. As Minister and parliamentary party leader, he contributed to a decrease in unemployment from 8.6% in 1994 to a record low of 3.5% in 2001. He chaired several meetings, such as the EU Council of Social Affairs Ministers and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Ministerial Committee on Employment, Labour and Social Affairs. He also led the Dutch governmental delegation to the International Labour Conference and the UN Women's Conference in Beijing (1995).

Mr. Melkert currently works as an independent adviser.

Throughout his career, Ad Melkert has sought to advance social and economic development. As host of the 1997 Amsterdam Child Labour Conference that, together with the subsequent Oslo Conference, provided a basis for the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (no. 182), he witnessed the potential for fundamental change brought about by the ILO family. He has gathered first-hand experience with the world of work, and is a strong advocate for social dialogue. Mr. Melkert has ample management experience and is very knowledgeable of the vastly different demands of countries in diverse situations. He regards the ILO, the organisation that voices the needs and aspirations of the real economy, as pivotal to the UN systems role in addressing global economic issues. Particularly, in the context of the current financial and economic crisis. He is eager to contribute to advancing decent work by leading the ILO.

Mr. Melkert looks forward to discuss his views regarding the ILO and his candidacy with representatives of governments, workers, and employers.

Ad Melkert was born in Gouda, the Netherlands, in 1956. He holds a Master's degree in Political Science from the University of Amsterdam. In addition to his native Dutch, he is fluent in English, French, Spanish, and German.

Ad Melkert nominated as next Director-General of the ILO

The Netherlands has nominated Ad Melkert as its candidate for the position of Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The Government made this decision on the recommendation of Minister of Social Affairs and Employment Henk Kamp and Minister of Foreign Affairs Uri Rosenthal, following consultation with Dutch trade unions and employers' associations, which support the candidacy.

The ILO is a specialised UN body with 183 member states. It defines and promotes compliance with international conventions on matters like the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining and the prohibition of discrimination, forced labour and child labour. It is the only UN organisation which brings together representatives of not only governments but also workers and employers.

The present Director-General of the ILO, the Chilean Juan Somavía, will be stepping down on 30 September 2012.

The Netherlands regards Ad Melkert as an excellent candidate to succeed Mr Somavía. Over the course of his career he has shown himself to be a staunch supporter of a constructive social dialogue, a man who is capable of reconciling the interests of government, workers and employers. In addition he has demonstrated considerable knowledge in the field of economic and social development and a proven ability to manage large, international organisations efficiently.

From 1994 to 1998 Ad Melkert was the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment. With a range of policy initiatives he precipitated a sharp drop in unemployment in the late 1990s. Each year he led the Dutch delegation to the International Labour Conference, and in 1997 he organised a major international conference against child labour. This conference laid the groundwork for the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

Before and after his time as minister, Mr Melkert was a member of the House of Representatives. From 1998 he was the parliamentary party leader for the Labour Party (PvdA), and in the 2002 election he was at the top of that party's list of candidates. In 2002 he was appointed Executive Director at the World Bank. From 2006 to 2009 he was the Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). From July 2009 to last September Mr Melkert served as the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Iraq.