

ANN M. VENEMAN



Ann M. Veneman assumed the leadership of UNICEF on May 1, 2005, becoming the fifth Executive Director to lead UNICEF in its 60-year history. Prior to joining UNICEF, Veneman served as the 27th Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture from 2001 to 2005.

Under her leadership, major, new partnerships have been launched, including the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health; and the global “Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS” campaign. UNICEF is also working with the World Food Programme and other partners on an initiative aimed at ending child hunger and undernutrition. Veneman currently chairs the United Nations’ Standing Committee on Nutrition and the board of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization.

Much of Veneman’s career prior to UNICEF was focused on child nutrition, public health, international trade and development, and alleviating hunger, including major initiatives to help fight undernutrition around the world.

Veneman previously served in various positions at USDA and in state government. From 1991 to 1993, she was USDA’s Deputy Secretary, the Department’s second-highest position. She also served as Deputy Undersecretary of Agriculture for International Affairs and Commodity Programs from 1989 to 1991. Veneman joined the USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service in 1986 and eventually served as Associate Administrator until 1989. From 1995 to 1999, she served as Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA).

She began her legal career as a staff attorney with the General Counsel’s office of the Bay Area Rapid Transit District in Oakland, California, in 1976. In 1978, she returned to her hometown of Modesto, where she served as a Deputy Public Defender. In 1980, she joined the Modesto law firm of Damrell, Damrell and Nelson, where she was an associate and later a partner.

She practiced law with the Washington, D.C., law firm of Patton Boggs from 1993 to 1995 before returning to California to serve as the state's Secretary of Food and Agriculture, where she managed agricultural programs and services in the largest and most diverse agriculture-producing U.S. state. Before her appointment as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Veneman was with the California law firm of Nossaman, Guthner, Knox and Elliott.

Veneman earned her bachelor's degree in political science from the University of California, Davis; a master's degree in public policy from the University of California, Berkeley; and a juris doctorate degree from the University of California, Hastings College of Law. She has also been awarded honorary doctorate degrees from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo (2001); Lincoln University of Missouri (2003); Delaware State University (2004); and Middlebury College (2006).

In a personal capacity, she serves as a board member of the Close Up Foundation, a nonpartisan civic education organization, and has served previously on a number of advisory councils and committees, particularly those involving higher education.

Veneman has received numerous awards and distinctions.

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