

Biography – Chair of UN-Water

Mr. Gilbert F. Hougbo, Director-General of the International Labour Organization



Gilbert F. Hougbo was born in Togo in 1961 and has spent more than 35 years working to improve the lives of the world's most vulnerable people, using his extensive experience in political affairs, international development, diplomacy and financial management.

He obtained an advanced degree in business management from the University of Lomé, Togo, and a degree in accounting and finance from the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (Canada). He is a member of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Professional Accountants.

Gilbert F. Hougbo joined Price Waterhouse in Canada in 1986 and worked with them until 1993.

Between 1994 and 1996 he served as Director of Finance at the International Bank of Mali, before moving to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), where he held several posts, including as Head of Financial Reporting and Trust Fund Management, Comptroller and Director of Finance and Administration, Chief of Staff, and Assistant Secretary-General and Regional Director for Africa.

In 2008, Gilbert F. Hougbo was asked to serve as Prime Minister of Togo, a position he held until 2012.

He returned to the United Nations System in 2013 as Deputy Director-General for Field Operations and Partnerships at the International Labour Office.

In 2017 he was appointed as the sixth President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), based in Rome, Italy. He was re-elected to the post in 2021.

In 2021, he was invited to become a board member of the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA), and to chair the Board of the Natural Resource Governance Institute.

In March 2022 Gilbert F. Hougbo was elected by the ILO's Governing Body as the organization's 11th Director-General, becoming the first African to hold the position. He took up the role on 1 October 2022. He is also Chair of UN-Water, the coordination mechanism of the United Nations for water and sanitation, which coordinates the efforts of more than 30 UN entities and 40 international organisations active in this field.

Gilbert F. Hougbo is married and has three children.