



Biography of Noël Nelson MESSONE, PhD.

Candidate for Director General of UNESCO

In July 2024, the Government of the Gabonese Republic (Gabon) announced officially that it has decided to present a candidate for the election of the next Director General of the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO).

The Government of Gabon designated **Dr. Noël Nelson MESSONE**, as the country's candidate. Dr. MESSONE has been Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Gabonese Republic to the United States of America, since August 10, 2022.

Dr. MESSONE has a long experience in multilateral and bilateral diplomacy. He held key cabinet positions in Gabon, and served as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Forestry and Environment. He chaired multilateral organs, including the United Nations Fourth Committee, the United Nations 11th Forum of Forests, and the African Ministerial Conference on Environment.

Professional Experience

- Associate Director, in charge of Education and Rural Development, U.S. Peace Corps Program in Gabon (1995-1999).
- Regional Director, West Africa Bureau of the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF), responsible for OIF's programs in *culture, education and vocational training, sustainable development and the environment, democracy and human rights*. (1999-2003).
- Senior Advisor to Secretary General of OIF (2003-2007).
- Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, in charge of sub-regional integration in Central Africa and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (2007-2009).
- Minister of Forests and Environment (2014-2015), and was Vice-President of the Conference of African Ministers of Environment.
- Minister of Foreign Affairs (2017-2018).
- Minister of Relations with Constitutional Institutions (2018-2019).
- Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Gabon to the BENELUX and the ACP/EU in Brussels (2010).
- Ambassador Permanent Representative of Gabon to the United Nations in New York (2011-2014). Chief Negotiator at the Conference of the Parties sessions on Climate Change. Chair of the United Nations Security Council (June 2011); Chair of the Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly (2012); Chair of the 11th UN Forum on Forests (2014-2015).
- Senator elected in 2009. Member of the National Assembly, and Vice-President of the Committee on Foreign Affairs elected in 2018.

Education

- Attended the Lycée Franco-Japonais in Tokyo
- Baccalaureate Lycée d'Etat de l'Estuaire in Libreville.
- Master's degree in English from the University of Gabon in Libreville (1987).
- Diploma of Advanced Studies, University of Paris Sorbonne-Nouvelle (1988).
- Fulbright Scholar and Master's degree Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce (1991).
- *PhD* in political economy from the University of Kentucky (1994).

Languages

- French fluent; English fluent.
- Spanish basic; Japanese basic; Korean basic.