

H.E. Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa

President of the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly

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María Fernanda Espinosa is an academic, diplomat and politician with more than 30 years of professional experience in the academy, non-governmental and international organizations, and leadership positions within the Government of Ecuador. She is regarded as an expert in international affairs and the United Nations, defense and security, sustainable development, the environment, climate change, gender equality, and indigenous peoples' rights. She has a vast experience in intergovernmental negotiations and is recognized as an international advocate of multilateralism and women's rights and empowerment.

María Fernanda was an advisor on biodiversity and indigenous peoples' policy and later regional director for South America of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, IUCN. Served as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Defense, Minister of Cultural and Natural Heritage and was the first female ambassador and permanent representative of Ecuador to the United Nations in New York. She was also permanent representative to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva. Most recently, served as President of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, becoming the fourth woman in history and the first from Latin America and the Caribbean to preside over this body since its foundation in 1945.

María Fernanda is recipient of numerous scholarships and acknowledgements from the Latin American Studies Association, the Ford Foundation, the Society of Woman Geographers, the Rockefeller Foundation, the German Agency for Cooperation, for her research and academic work about the Amazon, and her work in the Amazon on biodiversity, the environment and the rights of indigenous peoples.

Before beginning her political and diplomatic career, María Fernanda was Associate Professor and Researcher at the Latin American Faculty for Social Sciences, FLACSO, where she established and coordinated the Program on Socio-Environmental Studies. She has written over 30 academic articles about the Amazon region, culture, heritage, sustainable development, climate change, intellectual property, foreign policy, regional integration, defense, and security.

She holds a bachelor's degree in applied linguistics from the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador; a master's degree in social sciences and Amazonian studies; and a postgraduate diploma in anthropology and political science from the Latin American Social Sciences Institute. She has completed advanced doctoral studies in Geography at Rutgers University. María Fernanda Espinosa has produced several works of poetry that included an award from the National Poetry Prize of Ecuador in 1990.