

# **Rebeca Grynspan- Ibero-American Secretary General, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Secretary-General and Former VP of Costa Rica**

## **In this episode:**

- Looking into the reason for the conception of Ibero, how it continues to bind seventeen countries of Latin-American descent and the discourse of sustainability development goals for 2021.
- Rebeca recalls her experience of being the only woman in a state-sponsored “meeting of minds” and her first connection to a life of governance.
- She shares her journey as the person occupying the second-most top position in the government and how it impacted her life as a mother.
- Discussing her most exciting initiatives that she consistently works on from her day of vice-presidency until now.
- Rebeca tackles Covid-19 strategies from vaccination rollouts, aid and recovery processes.
- Get ready to hear Rebeca’s nuggets of wisdom especially for women wanting to start sustainable change in their respective community.
- Rebeca inspires everyone to find unity in diversity and she explains how this progression will positively impact women’s rights.

Rebeca Grynspan was born in San José, Costa Rica. She was unanimously elected as Ibero-American Secretary-General at the Extraordinary Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in Ciudad de Mexico, on 24th February 2014. She took office on 1st April 2014 and in 2018 her mandate was renewed for a further four-year term. She has since coordinated the 22 member state Ibero-American Conference and led four key summits of Heads of State and Government in Mexico (2014), Colombia (2016), Guatemala (2018), and Andorra (2020-2021).

In 2010 she was named Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) and Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). From 2006 to 2010, she was UNDP Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Prior to joining the United Nations, Ms. Grynspan served as Vice-President of Costa Rica from 1994 to 1998. She was also Minister of Housing, Minister Coordinator of Economic and Social Affairs, and Deputy Minister of Finance.

In addition, she has been a member of the High-Level Panel on Financing for Development, convened by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2001.

She is a renowned advocate of human development, who has helped to focus the world’s attention, and also that of Latin America, on relevant issues such as the reduction of inequality and poverty, gender equality, South-South cooperation as a tool for development, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), among others.

She was also a delegate to the United Nations Commission for the Reconstruction of Haiti, a group consisting of the Haitian government, the former President of the United States Bill Clinton, and other prominent international partners.

In June 2014 she was appointed Chair of the Board of Trustees of the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), a leading global organization at the forefront of development and environmental policy research.

Ms. Grynspan is a member of the steering committee of the UNICEF Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement; member of the Governing Council of the Society for International Development (SID), a global network of individuals and professionals at the forefront of development; member of the International Labour Organisation's Global Commission on the Future of Work; member of the Advisory Board of the Expansión International Economic Forum 2021 and in 2021 became a member of the G20 High-Level Independent Panel on Financing the Global Commons for Pandemic Preparedness and Response.

In addition to her experience as a conference lecturer and advisor to a number of international organizations and institutions, she has been actively involved in key United Nations initiatives, such as the Millennium Project's Task Force on Poverty and Economic Development and the High-level Panel on Financing for Development.

In 2014 and 2015, she was recognized as one of the 50 leading intellectuals of Latin America. Since 2016 she serves as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Complutense Institute for International Studies (ICEI), which forms part of the Universidad Complutense, Madrid. In 2017 she received the Forbes Award for Excellence and the Spanish government awarded her the highest honour awarded to civilians, the Gran Cruz de la Orden Civil de Alfonso X El Sabio. In 2020 she received the Aquí Europa-Vocento award as a Latin American personality for her outstanding contribution to strengthening Europe-Latin America relations.

She was recognized as one of the 100 most powerful women in Central America by Fobes magazine in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020.

In 2020 she received the Gumersindo de Azcarate Award and the Woman of the Year Award from the Women in a Legal World Association.

In 2021 the President of Argentina named Ms. Grynspan Special International Advisor to the newly created Economic and Social Council of Argentina.

Ms. Grynspan holds a degree in Economics from the University of Costa Rica and an MSc in Economics from the University of Sussex. She has been awarded a Doctorate Honoris Causa by the University of Salamanca, the University of Extremadura, and the European University of Madrid in recognition of her outstanding professional achievements.

### **Quotes from this episode:**

“Life is continuing. Birth, breastfeeding, being mom and dad, is part of what you have to contribute in the society.” – Rebeca Grynspan

“Feminist means to fight for equal rights of men and women.” – Rebeca Grynspan

“Society takes us women and feels that we need to do everything at once. The best mom, the best professional, the best prime minister, the best wife, whatever. And, I think that we really need to say, no, no, no.” – Rebeca Grynspan

“I want not only a gender perspective on the policies. I want women to be in the table of the decision-making process.” – Rebeca Grynspan

“What we want is the chance to talk for ourselves.” – Rebeca Grynspan

“Believe that change can happen.” – Rebeca Grynspan

“To advance women’s rights, we have to believe in diversity.” – Rebeca Grynspan

“The first thing we have to recognize in ourselves is that we are diverse. We can be so many things at the same time.” – Rebeca Grynspan

“Persevere. Things are not easy and it won’t happen overnight. Don’t think that because you tried once, it will happen. With perseverance, partnership and alliances, you’ll be able to change a lot of lives.” – Rebeca Grynspan

### **3 Pearls of Wisdom:**

“Don’t let others define who you are. You will have to decide for yourself.”

“Persevere. Life is not linear.

“Value what you have. Not only what you don’t have.”

**Resources:**

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Website: [www.segib.org](http://www.segib.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SEGIB>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/segibdigital/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/secretaria-general-iberoamericana-segib/>

Link to Episode: <https://www.kamiguildner.com/ewr-rebeca-grynspar-206/>

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**Timestamp:**

**25:45 – 27:35** – Honoring the efforts of those who impacted change and how it can inspire people of today to change