



## Ad Melkert

**Former world bank, UNDP, UN Iraq, NL  
employment minister**

Former Executive Director on the Board of the World Bank Group, Under Secretary General of the UN and Special Representative for Iraq and Cabinet Minister for Social Affairs and Employment in the Dutch Government.

## Ad's biography

Former cabinet minister of Social Affairs and Employment in his native country, The Netherlands, Ad Melkert rose to international prominence as Executive Director on the Board of the World Bank Group; UN-Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator of the UN Development Programme; and as UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq.

These international positions followed a sixteen years period in Dutch politics as a Member of Parliament and a Cabinet Minister, before becoming the leader of the Labour Party (PvdA) and candidate for Prime Minister in the 2002 elections.

### **Ad Melkert's Career**

Ad Melkert's professional career represents a great variety of managerial, diplomatic and political [leadership](#) experiences. His work has taken him across the globe, connecting with governments, employers, trade unions and civil society organisations and countless people on a broad range of subjects.

He led the Dutch turnaround of a record high unemployment into a record low in a determined, systematic and passionate manner and is considered a founding father of the flexibility and security balance as fundamental for productive and inclusive growth. He chaired the EU Social Affairs Council in the preparation of the first ever European Employment Strategy as well as the OECD Employment Ministers Committee on the Jobs Strategy.

Ad Melkert's career has shown consistency and tenacity in pursuing a balanced combination of [economic](#) and social development. His tenure as Minister of Social Affairs and Employment in the cabinet

led by Prime Minister Wim Kok was characterised by a strong commitment to tripartism and social dialogue as the basis for economic growth, job creation, fair labour market and social security arrangements.

Internationally Melkert left his mark in seeking and finding allies in global efforts to coordinate employment-generating policies and to promote the view that social costs turn into productive factors when skills development and social protection are recognised as an indispensable condition for a competitive economy. As the budget holder for the largest area of public expenditure, he skillfully managed an unprecedented reduction of social security expenditures (almost 10% of the sector that at the time made up approximately 15% of GDP). This turnaround was part of the ambition to substitute welfare benefits for work rewards. The results proved the concept right.

As Executive Director at the Board of the World Bank, he represented a constituency of twelve member states (Netherlands, Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, Israel, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Ukraine).

As such he served as a respected adviser to governments of constituency countries in transition to democracy and market economy. Apart from contributing to decisions on the Bank Groups loans and grants portfolio, his record shows particular focus on the [inclusion](#) of job creation into the Banks policy framework; the promotion of principles of corporate social responsibility and the modernisation of the institution's corporate governance practice. He was elected as the first chairman of the Boards Ethics Committee.

Melkert's competence as an effective leader of UNDP, working in close association with Administrator [Kemal Dervis](#), has been widely recognised. He successfully supervised operations in over 150 countries and led the process leading to the adoption of the UNDP Strategic Plan by its Executive Board. In close cooperation with the Independent Audit Advisory Committee, he oversaw the introduction of standards in order to strengthen accountability and transparency vis-a-vis development partners. A proponent of results-based management, he generated a sharp focus on economic and social recovery of countries in post-conflict situations, including in the preparation of a groundbreaking UN-World Bank Partnership Framework for Crisis and Post-Crisis Situations. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed him as the first chair of the MDG Gap Task Force in charge of the annual Millennium Development Goals progress report.

At the Secretary-General's request, he served for over two years as his Special Representative in Baghdad. Melkert's pro-active and discrete mediation role in advising the Government and Parliament of Iraq in the successful parliamentary elections in 2010 has been widely acknowledged. He operated in close contact with member states through their diplomatic missions in Baghdad and in capitals. As Head of Mission, he managed the 1,000 UNAMI staff in Baghdad, Erbil, Basra, Amman and Kuwait; and led the UN Country Team in the design and implementation of the UN Development Assistance Framework for Iraq.

His extensive international experience, networks and fluency in five languages have made him acutely aware of the vastly different demands of countries in diverse stages of economic development. His leadership style is focused on being results-based, inclusive interaction and promotion of equal opportunities. Whilst capable of seeing the bigger picture and designing the longer-term strategy, he is also hands-on in exploring and proposing solutions to the day-to-day challenges. An avid sailor, he has navigated through his career with a sailor's instinct in knowing that when faced with a strong wind, sailing at an angle against it is necessary for progress with a firm eye on the destination ahead.

In recent years Ad Melkert has been operating worldwide as senior independent adviser, coach and [facilitator](#) working with governments, major international corporations and civil society organizations on various topics with an emphasis on:

- “Inclusive growth” strategies including job creation, labour market and skills development policies and social dialogue
- The 2030 UN [Sustainable Development](#) Goals; Financing for Development; Climate Action
- Public affairs, corporate social responsibility and private business strategies
- Public administration standard setting and institution building
- European Union institutions and policies

– Middle East and North Africa economic, social and humanitarian challenges.

## **Ad Melkert's Current / Past Roles & Positions**

- Non-executive Board Director at NxtVn, an investment company in data center parks and cloud infrastructure based in London, Amsterdam, Helsinki and Dubai.
- Chair of the Board of Development Gateway, a “data and digital for development” focused social enterprise in Washington DC.
- Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq
- Associate Administrator, United Nations Development Programme
- Executive Director, The World Bank Group
- Netherlands Minister of Social Affairs and Employment
- Netherlands Member of Parliament and Parliamentary Party Leader

Since January 2016, Ad serves as Extraordinary Councillor at the Council of State of The Netherlands, appointed by H.M. the King, with the task to advise on the Dutch Government's budgetary policies under the EU Stability and Growth Pact. He is also a senior independent adviser, facilitator and speaker on various topics to audiences around the world.

## **Ad's talks**

- **Middle East and North Africa political, economic and social issues**
- **Employment policy strategy, labour markets and skills development, social dialogue**
- **Global economy, governance and multilateral institutions**
- **Public affairs and private business strategy**
- **Corporate governance and corporate social responsibility**
- **Public administration standards and institution building**
- **Post-2015 Millennium Development Goals and effective development cooperation**