



THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



© UN photo

Navanethem Pillay was appointed High Commissioner for Human Rights by the United Nations Secretary-General and approved by the General Assembly, effective 1 September 2008.

From 2003 to 2008, Ms. Pillay, a South-African national, served as Judge on the International Criminal Court (ICC). She was elected Judge President

of the UN International Criminal Court Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in 1999, which she joined in 1995 having been elected as Judge by the UN General Assembly; her four year term with ICTR was renewed in 1998. Ms. Pillay participated in the ICTR's groundbreaking jurisprudence on rape as genocide and on issues of freedom of speech and hate propaganda.

Navanethem Pillay was Attorney and Conveyancer on the High Court of South Africa from 1967 to 1995 and was appointed Acting Judge on the high Court of South Africa in 1995. The first woman to start a law practice in Natal Province in South Africa in 1967, she served as an attorney in the practice of law in criminal and civil courts providing legal defense for opponents to apartheid. In South Africa she co-founded the Advice Desk for the Abused. She is also co-founder of Equality Now, an international Women's rights organization based in New York.

Ms. Pillay holds a BA and a LLB from Natal University South Africa. She also holds a Master of Law and is Doctor of Juridical Science from Harvard University.

THE POST OF HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The post of High Commissioner for Human Rights was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993 to promote and protect the effective enjoyment by all people of all civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, including the right to development. The General Assembly resolution held that the High Commissioner should function as the UN official with principal responsibility for global human rights efforts. The High Commissioner is appointed by the UN Secretary-General and approved by the General Assembly, with due regard to geographical rotation. Appointments are at the level of Under-Secretary-General, for a fixed term of four years, with the possibility of one renewal for another fixed term of four years. Navanethem Pillay was preceded by Ms. Louise Arbour (2004-2008), Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello (2002-2003), Ms. Mary Robinson (1997-2002) and Mr. José Ayala Lasso (1994-1997). Mr. Bertrand G. Ramcharan was Acting High Commissioner from 2003-2004.

THE DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Kyung-wha Kang was appointed Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights in September 2006 and took up the position on 15 January 2007. Her appointment is at the level of Assistant Secretary-General.

Before joining the United Nations, Ms. Kang, a national of the Republic of Korea, was Director-General of International Organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic, with a portfolio that covered a wide range of UN issues, including human rights. She also served as Minister at the Republic of Korea Mission to the United Nations in New York and chaired the Commission on the Status of Women for its forty-eighth session in 2004 and its forty-ninth session in 2005, which marked the tenth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women.