



## Former WCD head Achim Steiner will lead UNDP - April 2017

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, following consultations with the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), wrote to the President of the General Assembly requesting the General Assembly to confirm Achim Steiner of Germany as the new Administrator of UNDP for a term of four years. The General Assembly confirmed the nomination on 19 April.



The 55-year-old Brazil-born German citizen has been in the trenches of environmental activism since before his service at the UN, including work with the Washington-based **International Union for Conservation of Nature**.

He's even devoted his professional life – for example, while working as secretary general of the World Commission on Dams (WCD) – to pet projects.

A commentator said : "In 2000, the WCD published a report showing how reservoirs posed dangers to the environment despite their importance for development. Notable for its holistic and sustainable approach, **it is this viewpoint that Steiner brings to his new office.**" (our emphasis).

The UN had been considering other candidates, not just Steiner. France's environmental minister, Segolène Royal, was a final contender – and noticeably unhappy about the UN's selection. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had actually promised the job to a woman, Royal said. She speculated that the UN tapped Steiner due to Germany's role as an important donor for the UNDP, which relies on (voluntary) donations from individual nations.

Mr Steiner was Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme between 2006 and 2016. He previously served as Director-General of the United Nations Office in Nairobi from 2009 to 2011, Director-General of the International Union for Conservation of Nature from 2001 to 2006, and as Secretary-General of the World Commission on Dams, in South Africa, from 1998 to 2001.