

H.E. Mr. Hjalmar W. Hannesson (Iceland)



Hjalmar W. Hannesson became ambassador of Iceland to the United States on Jan. 6, 2009.

Ambassador Hannesson previously served as Iceland's permanent representative to the United Nations in New York, with concurrent accreditation as ambassador to the Dominican Republic, Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Grenada, Jamaica and Guyana (2003-09). During his time at the United Nations, Ambassador Hannesson also served as vice president of the 62nd Session of the U.N. General Assembly in 2006 and vice president of ECOSOC in 2007, as well as president of the International Association of Permanent Representatives in 2008.

In addition, he was ambassador to Canada, with simultaneous accreditation to Colombia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Peru, Venezuela, Ecuador and Panama (2001-03), as well as ambassador to the Holy See, residing in Reykjavik and Ottawa (1999-2002). He has also served as ambassador to China (as the first Icelandic ambassador residing in Beijing), with simultaneous accreditation to Japan, North and South Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand (1995-98), prior to which he was ambassador to Germany, with simultaneous accreditation to Switzerland, Austria and Greece (1989-95).

Ambassador Hannesson has held various postings in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including political director (1998-2001) and deputy permanent secretary of state (1999-2001), minister-counselor and counselor (1984-88), and ambassador for matters related to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe and disarmament and arms control (1988-89). He joined the ministry as a first secretary in 1976, prior to which he taught at the Icelandic Teachers College, the Reykjavik College and at the University of Iceland since 1969.

Ambassador Hannesson holds a master's and bachelor's degree in political science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and is a graduate of the Icelandic Teachers College.

He has been married to Anna Birgisdóttir since 1966, and has two sons, one daughter and four grandchildren.