

TALEB RIFAI

Brief biography

Taleb Rifai (Nationality: Jordanian. Born in 1949 in Cairo) was elected as Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) at the General Assembly, Astana, Kazakhstan, in October 2009 and begun his four-year term on the 1st January 2010. He assumed the functions of Secretary-General ad interim of the World Tourism Organization since 1st March 2009 and served as Deputy Secretary-General from February 2006 to February 2009.

Mr. Rifai has an extensive background in international and national public service, the private sector and academia. Prior to joining UNWTO he was the Assistant Director General of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Mr. Rifai has also served in several ministerial portfolios in the Government of Jordan: Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Minister of Information and Minister of Tourism and Antiquity.

As CEO of Jordan's Cement Company, Mr. Rifai successfully led the first large-scale privatization and restructuring scheme in Jordan during the mid-1990's. Other positions he has held include Director of the Economic Mission to Washington DC and Director General of the Investment Promotion Corporation of Jordan.

Until 1993, Mr. Rifai was involved in research, teaching and practicing Architecture and Urban Design in Jordan and the USA. He has a Ph.D. in Urban Design and Regional Planning from the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, an M.A. in Engineering and Architecture from the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) in Chicago, and a BS.c. in Architectural Engineering from the University of Cairo in Egypt.