

# Elizabeth Mrema

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema

**Elizabeth Maruma Mrema** is a [Tanzanian](#) biodiversity leader and a lawyer. She is currently living in [Montreal, Canada](#). She was appointed as an executive secretary of the [United Nations](#) "Convention on Biological Diversity" (CBD) in 2020.<sup>[1][2]</sup> She is the first African woman to hold this role.<sup>[1]</sup> She previously had many top leading positions in the "United Nations Environment Programme".

## Education

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Mrema had a "Bachelor of Law" from [Tanzania's University of Dar-es-Salaam](#). Later, she had by a "Master of Law" degree from "Dalhousie University" in [Halifax, Canada](#). She also had a "Postgraduate Diploma in International Relations and Diplomacy" from the Centre of Foreign Relations and Diplomacy in [Dar-es-Salaam](#), Tanzania.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Career

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Before starting her work with [UNEP](#), Mrema worked for Tanzania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. She was serving as a Counsellor/Senior Legal Counsel.<sup>[4]</sup> She was also a lecturer in Public International Law and Conference Diplomacy at Tanzania's Centre for Foreign Relations and Diplomacy.<sup>[4]</sup>

From 2009 to 2012, she worked at an organisation in Bonn, [Germany](#).<sup>[4]</sup> In 2009, she became Acting Executive Secretary of the UNEP/ASCOBANS (Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas), Executive Secretary of the UNEP/Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and Interim Executive Secretary of the UNEP/Gorilla Agreement.<sup>[4]</sup>

Starting from 2012, she has been working as Deputy Director of the Ecosystems Division at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). While doing so, she oversaw the organization's coordination, operations and programme delivery.<sup>[4]</sup> She then became the Director of the Law Division at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in June 2014.<sup>[4]</sup> In 2018, she again worked as the Acting Director of the "Corporate Services Division".<sup>[4]</sup> In November 2019, Mrema worked as a temporary

*Officer in Charge of the CBD Secretariat.*<sup>[4]</sup> Starting from December 2019, she worked as the Acting Executive Secretary of the [United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\) Secretariat](#).<sup>[4]</sup> In July 2020, she became the Executive Secretary role.<sup>[3]</sup>

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema was the Director of the Law Division. She had worked with UNEP for over twenty years.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Other professional works

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Besides doing leading roles, Mrema serves as a willing lecturer without taking any salary at the University of Nairobi - Law School. She has previously lectured without taking any salary at International Development Law Organization (IDLO), [Rome, Italy](#).<sup>[4]</sup>

She wrote many articles on international environmental law. She also created many handbooks and guides for many-sided environmental agreements and other topics on environmental law.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Awards and Honors

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In 2007, she was given the first-ever UNEP-wide Best Manager of the Year Award (the UNEP Baobab Staff Award) "for exceptional performance and dedication towards achieving the goals of UNEP".<sup>[4]</sup>

In 2021, the IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) awarded Elizabeth with the "Nicholas Robinson Award for Excellence in Environmental Law".<sup>[6]</sup>

## References

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6. ↑ Unit, Biosafety (2021-08-05). "[Executive Secretary](#)". *www.cbd.int*. Retrieved 2022-03-28.

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