

MARIA OTERO BIO 2021



Ms. Otero currently serves as trustee at the American University; the Kresge Foundation; the Public Welfare Foundation; Development Alternatives Inc.; Herbalife, a publicly-traded U.S. company; and BancoSol, a microfinance bank in Bolivia. She is a Commissioner at the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery. She serves on various Advisory Committees and is a member of the Council of Foreign Relations.

Maria Otero served in the Obama Administration as Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights from 2009 to 2013. She reported to Secretary Hillary R. Clinton, traveled with her or on her behalf to 53 countries overseeing U.S. foreign relations on a spectrum of civilian security issues, including: democracy, human rights, rule of law, refugees, trafficking in persons, counter-narcotics, conflict prevention and response, global criminal justice, and countering violent extremism. She also served as the President's Special Representative for Tibetan

Issues. Ms. Otero was the highest-ranking Latino official at the State Department, and the first Latina Under Secretary in its history. Born and raised in La Paz, Bolivia, she immigrated to the US with her family when she was 12.

Ms. Otero was President&CEO of Accion from 2000 to 2009, a pioneer and leader in microfinance working globally in 27 countries. She chaired ACCION Investments, an equity investment fund for microfinance. She is recognized as a leading expert on microfinance, financial inclusion, women's issues and international development. She co-edited a book on microfinance and wrote numerous articles and monographs. Prior to Accion, where she worked for 23 years, Ms. Otero held positions including Economist for Latin America for the Women in Development office of USAID and Program Officer for Kenya, Indonesia and Egypt for the Centre for Development and Population Activities.

Ms. Otero was an adjunct professor at Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS), in Washington, D.C, from 1998 to 2008. In 2000, the President of the United States appointed Ms. Otero to the board of the United States Institute of Peace, USIP, a position she held for eight years, including one term as board Vice-Chair. In June 2006, Ms. Otero was appointed by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to the UN Advisors Group on Inclusive Financial Sectors. Ms. Otero also chaired the board of The Inter-American Foundation, a presidential appointment.

Ms. Otero's awards include selection by *Newsweek* in October 2005 as one of the United States' twenty most influential women; The Ellis Island Medal of Honor; Notre Dame University's Distinguished Service

in Latin America Award; and the Graciela Olivarez Award by UnidosUS. Ms. Otero holds a B.A and M.A. in literature from the University of Maryland and an M.A. in International Relations from Johns Hopkins SAIS, and several honorary Doctorate degrees, including one from Dartmouth College.

Ms. Otero is married to Joseph Eldridge, a leader in the field of human rights and retired University Chaplain at American University, and they reside in Washington DC. They have three adult children and one granddaughter.