

Laura Chinchilla

President of Costa Rica

Laura Chinchilla was elected President of Costa Rica in February of 2010 for a four-year term, becoming the first woman to lead this Central American nation.

President Chinchilla has a long and distinguished record in public service. She was First Vice President of Costa Rica and Minister of Justice during the Administration of Oscar Arias Sánchez (2006-2008). Previously, she served as member of the Costa Rican Legislative Assembly (2002-2006) and Minister of Security (1996-1998) and Vice-Minister of Security (1994-1996) during the Administration of José María Figueres Olsen.

She has also an extensive experience working as a consultant in Latin America and Africa for various international agencies in the area of institutional reform, with special emphasis on judicial reform and public security reform. Some of her work in consultancy led her to conduct assessments of the justice sector for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the coordination of studies and projects on judicial reform for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and assessments and advice on police reform for the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). She has written and published extensively on judicial reform, police reform and crime prevention.

Her career highlights include working in the public sector management while serving as Minister and Vice Minister of Security. She was also Chairman of the Joint Drug Intelligence Center, Chair of the National Immigration Council, member of the National Drug Council, National Security Council and the Academic Council of the National Police Academy.

As a Congresswoman, she worked in areas of judicial reform, public security including police, drug trafficking and organized crime. She also promoted children and youth programs, political and institutional reform, trade and investment, competitiveness, innovation and technology.

She has been a strong supporter of trade and economic liberalization, actively promoting Costa Rica's integration in the world economy.

Mrs. Chinchilla has a Master's Degree in Public Policy from Georgetown University and a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the University of Costa Rica.

President Chinchilla was born on March 28, 1959 in San Jose, Costa Rica. She is married to Mr. Jose Maria Rico, and has a teenage son, Jose María.