

## Biography



Stephen O'Brien

**Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and  
Emergency Relief Coordinator  
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs**

Stephen O'Brien became the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator in June 2015.

As a former Conservative Member of Parliament in the UK for 16 years, Stephen O'Brien was the Prime Minister's Envoy and Special Representative for the Sahel 2012-2015. Prior to that he served as the Coalition Government's Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development and before that in a succession of economic, health, care and education shadow Ministerial roles. He brings extensive experience in multilateral diplomacy and advocacy, gained over 35 years of global leadership in the campaign to control Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases, for which he was awarded the 2014 Champions Action Award in Washington DC. Before his political career, he was an entrepreneur and an International UK FTSE100 manufacturing industrialist, business leader and manager at Redland PLC. Before that, he practised as a lawyer in the City of London with Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, in international commercial arbitrations and dispute resolution.

Stephen's pro bono activities encompass serving as a Director of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, Global Advocate for the UN/WHO Roll Back Malaria Partnership, Patron of Malaria No More UK, Chairman of NGO Malaria Consortium, and the All Party Parliamentary Group of Malaria and Tropical Diseases which he founded. Born in Mtwara, Tanzania, and schooled in Mombasa, Kenya and the UK, he gained his MA (Law) at Emmanuel College, Cambridge University; professionally he qualified as a Solicitor (1983) and was made a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (1997). He is a Director of the Innovative Vector Control Consortium. For 15 years he served as a Director of the City of London Sinfonia and many other charitable and voluntary activities.

He is a classical musician (principally piano and conducting). Stephen (58) is married to Gemma (a nurse) and they have three children (2 sons and 1 daughter) now in their 20's. Stephen was appointed a Privy Counsellor in 2013 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.