



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

WILLIAM LACY SWING
Director General
International Organization for Migration (IOM)

On 14 June 2013, Ambassador William Lacy Swing of the United States was re-elected to his second five-year term as Director General of the International Organization for Migration. Ambassador Swing was first elected on 18 June 2008, and assumed the post on 1 October 2008.

From May 2003 till January 2008, as UN Special Representative of the Secretary- General (SRSG) for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ambassador Swing successfully led all facets of the largest UN peacekeeping operation in history. Before his appointment to the DRC and since November 2001, Ambassador Swing was the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and Chief of Mission, United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

William Lacy Swing was a career member of the Senior Foreign Service of the Department of State, (USA). His diplomatic career has spanned some forty years including six postings as Ambassador – South Africa, Nigeria, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (ex-Zaire), the former People’s Republic of the Congo (Congo Brazzaville); and Haiti. William Lacy Swing was named Ambassador to the Republic of South Africa in 1989, shortly before Nelson Mandela’s release from prison. The posting was a culminating experience for William Lacy Swing, who began his diplomatic career twenty-six years before in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, 1963 to 1966. As a Fellow at Harvard University from 1976 to 1977, William Lacy Swing published a monograph, U.S. African Policy and the Case of South Africa: Dilemmas and Priorities. Mr. Swing was Deputy Director for Central African Affairs and Country Officer for Zaire at the Department of State, 1977-79. He was Ambassador to the People’s Republic of the Congo 1979-1981 and Ambassador to Liberia, 1981-85. Between 1985-89, he occupied senior positions in the Department of State, Washington, DC. In 1992, William Lacy Swing became Ambassador to Nigeria, and from 1993-98, served as Ambassador to Haiti.

In December 2009, the American Academy of Diplomacy awarded Ambassador Swing the Annenberg Award for Excellence in Diplomacy. Ambassador Swing has also been awarded the Presidential Certificate of Commendation; the Secretary of State’s Distinguished Service Award; and the Department of State Award for Valor. Ambassador Swing is also recipient of: the Presidential Distinguished Service and Meritorious Honor Awards; Superior Honor Award; the US Coast Guard’s “Distinguished Public Service Award;” the US Information Agency’s Meritorious Honor Award; several honorary doctorates; and a foreign government decoration. On 26 June 2012, in a ceremony at the US Department of State, Ambassador

Swing received the American Foreign Service Association's award for "Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy". On 26 June 2013, he was made an honorary fellow of Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford, and received the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, 1st Class, in November 2014.

William Lacy Swing was born in 1934 in Lexington, North Carolina. He graduated from Catawba College (BA 1956) in North Carolina, and Yale University (BD, 1960) and did post-graduate studies at Tuebingen University, Germany. He taught at a private German boarding school before entering the Foreign Service. Ambassador Swing speaks French and German. He is married to Yuen Cheong. The Swings have a son, Brian, who lives in Cape Town, South Africa, and a daughter Gabrielle, who is a United Nations peacekeeper in Afghanistan.