



VIP Speaker Bios

Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D. (*Canada*), *Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada*

Michaëlle Jean was appointed Governor General of Canada—Canada's de facto Head of State—in 2005 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The Office of the Governor General is the highest and oldest public institution in Canada.

Born in Port au Prince, Haiti, Michaëlle Jean, left her country as a young child in 1968 with her family and sought refuge in Canada. While pursuing her university education, Michaëlle Jean worked for eight years with Québec shelters for battered women. She has taken in, supported and accompanied hundreds of women and children in crisis while contributing to the establishment of a network of emergency shelters throughout Québec and elsewhere in Canada. She was also involved in aid organizations for immigrant women and families, and later worked at Employment and Immigration Canada and at the Conseil des Communautés culturelles du Québec. For 18 years, she has been a highly regarded journalist and anchor of information programs. In 2004, she started her own show, *Michaëlle*, which is broadcast on both French-language public television networks.

Michaëlle Jean received a Bachelor of Arts in Italian and Hispanic languages and literature and a Master of Arts in comparative literature at the University of Montreal. She is fluent in French, English, Italian, Spanish and Creole.