Ulrik V. Knudsen is an economist with more than 25 years of experience in international cooperation.

Since January 2019 he has served as Deputy Secretary-General of the OECD, with a wide-ranging portfolio including Employment, Labour, Social Affairs and Health (ELS), Science, Technology, Innovation (STI), Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Cities (CFE), and Education, Skills, Well-being, Inequalities and Sustainability, in addition to past responsibilities for Trade, Agriculture and Fisheries (TAD).

Possessing extensive experience working with and within the OECD, Ulrik combines this unique insight with a proven ability to craft solutions through compromise, build fact-based consensus, and consistently deliver excellence and innovation. He was the elected Chair of the OECD Global Strategy Group (GSG) from 2012-2017 and spearheaded Denmark’s OECD Ministerial Council Presidency in 2017.

Ulrik V. Knudsen previously served as Permanent Secretary of State/CEO of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013-2018), as Group Director for International Policy at Vodafone (2013), as Chief Foreign Policy Advisor to the Danish Prime Minister (2010-13), and as Ambassador to the OECD (2008-09).

In his five years as CEO of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ulrik oversaw a major change-management process, successfully navigated the Ministry through a period of budgetary constraints, and defined the strategic direction of the organisation in increasingly complex and unpredictable times.

Fluent in English and Danish. Proficient in French, German, Swedish and Norwegian. Born in 1969, Ulrik is married and has three daughters.
A VISION FOR OUR OECD

The need for international cooperation is urgent. We are navigating in new global and national environments of unprecedented unpredictability. At the same time, we must defend and promote our core values – market economy, open trade and democracy.

OECD is a unique organisation resting on the substantive work of its committees, the like-mindedness of its members, and a genuine commitment to standard-setting and sharing of best practices.

The Member States have already established their priorities for the organisation: economic reform, digitalisation, trade, tax and tackling climate change. Post Covid-19, we need an even more ambitious OECD. We must aim for a strong, green and inclusive recovery that creates quality jobs.

OECD must be an agent of change – a reliable and credible pillar of multilateral cooperation – with a Secretariat committed to unparalleled excellence in the analysis of global developments based on all relevant data and evidence.

The problems of the future are interconnected challenges requiring comprehensive solutions. We must have a visionary OECD that can identify new challenges and take a sound, holistic approach to the development and implementation of policy. We need the strong involvement of Member States at every level of decision-making. And we must bring non-members closer to OECD values and policy recommendations through outreach and further accession, if timely.

OECD needs strong leadership to fulfil the aspirations of Member States and a Secretary-General who knows the organisation – its problems, perspectives and potential. A team player who reflects the needs, wishes and aspirations of Member States.

A new leadership is an opportunity to undertake management reform. The organisation must be financially sound, characterised by strong communication and efficient operations, and powered by the excellence and expertise of a staff reflecting a commitment to national diversity and gender equality. The organisation must pursue compromise before ideology, facts before rhetoric, and analysis before assumption.

This is the OECD we want.
We need a strong and ambitious OECD - a reliable and evidence-based pillar of multilateral cooperation – putting compromise before ideology, facts before rhetoric and analysis before presumption.

FOREIGN MINISTER JEPPE KOFOD ON ULRIK V. KNUDSEN’S CANDIDACY

“I am proud that Denmark has a strong candidate for Secretary-General of the OECD. Ulrik V. Knudsen has more than 25 years of international experience. He has proven management skills and a global outlook. And he has unique insight into the OECD.

We live in challenging times. International cooperation is under pressure, yet is more important than ever before. These times call for a strong OECD. And the OECD needs a leader with a deep understanding of the challenges, the perspectives and the potential of the organisation and its Member States. Ulrik V. Knudsen is that leader.