



16 November 2015

Excellency,

The selection of the Secretary-General is of paramount importance among the responsibilities of the Member States of the United Nations.

During the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, many delegations underlined the importance of advancing the transparency and inclusiveness of the selection process, including an appreciation of the roles that are accorded in Article 97 of the Charter, which states that the Secretary-General “shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.”

While the process of selecting and appointing the person entrusted with the highest position in the Secretariat differs from the process used with regard to other executive heads in the organizations of the United Nations system, it is nonetheless important to emphasize that the process is to be guided by the principles of transparency and inclusiveness, building on best practices and the participation of all Member States.

We have the honour to transmit to you an invitation for the nomination of candidates for the post of Secretary General and the details of the process leading to a final appointment that reflect these principles.

This text is the outcome of several consultative and inclusive discussions and aims to provide a predictable timeline and the necessary steps, including early presentations of candidatures and the establishment of a list of candidates, to facilitate the process and allow for sufficient time for interaction with Member States. We are confident that all efforts have been made to reflect the many views and contributions made by Member States on this important matter during the sixty-ninth session.

It reflects the overall consensus on the importance of appointing the most qualified person to the post of Secretary-General, with due regard to regional and gender balance. In reaffirming the role of the United Nations in advocating women’s empowerment and gender equality over the past 70 years, we strongly encourage Member States to put forward qualified female candidates meeting the highest possible requirements during the forthcoming selection process.

We welcome the submission of candidatures from all Member States to be presented in a timely manner in the form of a letter and containing a curriculum vita of each candidate. Such letters should be submitted to the President of the Security Council by 31 March 2016. Members of the Council may hold discussions on the consideration of candidates as they are put forward.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Handwritten signature of Mogens Lykketoft in black ink.

Mogens Lykketoft
President of the General Assembly

Handwritten signature of Matthew Rycroft in black ink.

Matthew Rycroft
President of the Security Council

All Permanent Representatives
to the United Nations
NEW YORK

Procedures on the Nomination and Appointment of the Secretary General

- 1) General principles
 - a) The selection of a candidate for a Secretary-General shall proceed in an atmosphere of harmony among the Members of the Security Council. This will ensure not only the smooth functioning of the Council but also the effectiveness of the Secretary-General.
 - b) Throughout the selection process, Members of the Council shall respect and honor the dignity of the candidate or candidates.
 - c) While the decision of the Security Council to select a candidate for Secretary- General shall be taken by vote, efforts should none-the-less be exerted toward the reaching of a consensus. However, these efforts shall not unduly delay the decision-making process.
 - d) The deliberations to reach agreement on a candidate for Secretary-General may be conducted in consultations of the whole of the Security Council in the absence of the representatives of the Secretary-General and members of the Secretariat.
 - e) To facilitate the selection process, the consultations of the whole should only be attended by Heads of Delegation accompanied by one or two of their respective officers, or only by Heads of Delegation as appropriate.
- 2) Legal basis
 - a) Article 97 of the Charter (see annex)
 - b) Rule 48 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Security Council (see annex)
 - c) Rule 141 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly (see annex)
- 3) Submission of candidate(s)
 - a) Any Member of the Security Council or any other Member of the United Nations may submit a candidate or candidates to the President of the Security Council.
 - b) Members States are encouraged to ensure equal and fair distribution based on gender and geographical balance, while meeting the highest possible requirements, and in this regard are invited to consider presenting women as candidates for the position of Secretary-General.
 - c) Members States are encouraged to present a candidate or candidates for the position of Secretary-General who embodies the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity and demonstrates a firm commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, and with proven leadership and managerial abilities, extensive experience in international relations and strong diplomatic, communication and multilingual skills.
 - d) The President of the General Assembly shall consult with Member States to identify potential candidates endorsed by a Member State and may advance such nominations to the President of the Security Council.
 - e) Member States may submit a candidate or candidates other than its own national.
 - f) Members of the Security Council may submit the name(s) of candidate or candidates formally or informally as appropriate.
 - g) Members States submitting a candidate or candidates shall provide a brief curriculum vita of the candidate or candidates.
 - h) Members States shall submit a candidate or candidates until 31 March 2015.

- 4) List of candidate(s)
 - a) The President of the Security Council shall draw up a list of the name(s) of the candidate or candidates on the basis of the submission of Member States received each month.
 - b) The list of name(s) of the candidate or candidates drawn up by the President of the Security Council in accordance with a) shall be distributed to all Member States on an ongoing basis together with accompanying documents, including curricula vitae.
 - c) The list shall be up-dated as and when necessary.

- 5) Engagement between Members States and candidate(s)
 - a) Candidates are encouraged to engage in an exchange of views with Members States, regional groups, or non-governmental groups to discuss their candidature and platform.
 - b) The President of the General Assembly, in consultation with the President of the Security Council and Members States, shall organize and chair informal, interactive dialogues between Members States and candidates, without prejudice to any candidate who does not participate, in order to enhance transparency and credibility of the selection process and to make the process more inclusive of all Member States.
 - c) Candidates and their sponsoring governments are strongly advised to avoid engaging in activities that may be perceived as unethical such as promises, favours, invitations, gifts, etc., provided by candidates in the conduct of their campaign or in completion of their official duties.

- 6) Decision-making process
 - a) Unless it is decided otherwise by the Members of the Security Council, the process for consideration of a candidate for Secretary-General may commence within 48 hours after the distribution of the list of name(s) of candidate or candidates submitted according to the process defined above.
 - b) The viability of each candidate may be assessed by means of a "straw poll(s)" to be conducted in accordance with the following procedure:
 - i) A uniform paper will be distributed to members of the Security Council. Each paper will contain a column listing the name of candidate or candidates, and the three columns, the first marked "encouraged," the second "discouraged," and the third "no opinion."
 - ii) Each member of the Security Council may indicate on the appropriate paper the candidate or candidates who it wants to encourage or discourage, or abstain from indicating a preference.
 - c) The Security Council may hold informal consultations on the result of the straw poll(s). The purpose of these informal consultations is to review the situation and to determine the next step in the process.
 - d) Following the consultations, the Security Council may enter into further round(s) of "straw poll(s)" on the basis of the existing list or an up-dated list which will be drawn by the President of the Council which may include new names of candidates submitted by Members States.
 - e) Process (a) to (c) may be repeated as needed in order to arrive at a consensus decision. However, these efforts should not unduly delay the decision-making process.
 - f) If a consensus decision is not reached by 30 June 2016, new papers will be distributed to members of the Security Council for use in further straw poll(s). The new papers will include white papers for non-permanent members and red papers for permanent members. Each paper will contain the same columns and each member will not a preference in the same manner. Following straw polls held with these distinguishing papers, the Security Council may hold informal consultations with candidate(s) and sponsoring governments regarding the continuation of their candidacy. Candidates who wish to withdraw from further consideration may do so.

- g) The Security Council will aim to conclude its consultations and reach agreement no later than 31 July 2015.
- 7) Consultation with the President of the General Assembly
The President of the Security Council shall, as and when necessary, inform and consult with the President of the General Assembly on the considerations underway in the Council.
- 8) Decision of the Security Council
- a) Agreement reached by members of the Security Council at the consultations of the whole on a candidate for Secretary-General to be recommended to the General Assembly shall be formalized at a private meeting of the Council.
 - b) Following agreement, the President of the Security Council will inform the President of the General Assembly of its agreement on a candidate nominated for the position of Secretary-General.
- 9) Decision of the General Assembly
- a) Consistent with Article 97 of the Charter and relevant Assembly resolutions as well as with rule 141 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, the Assembly will formalize the appointment of the candidate nominated by the Security Council in a private meeting.
 - b) The President of the Assembly will consult with Members States and regional groups to encourage a consensus decision. However, these efforts should not unduly delay the decision-making process, and if necessary, the Assembly will hold a secret ballot, with a 2/3 majority of the members of the General Assembly required for the appointment to be agreed.
 - c) The Assembly will aim to conclude the appointment no later than 31 August 2015 in order to ensure a smooth transition between the incumbent and the incoming Secretary-General.

Annex

Article 97 of the Charter

The Secretariat shall comprise a Secretary-General and such staff as the Organization may require. The Secretary-General shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council. He shall be the chief administrative officer of the Organization.

Rule 48 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Security Council

Unless it decides otherwise, the Security Council shall meet in public. Any recommendation to the General Assembly regarding the appointment of the Secretary-General shall be discussed and decided at a private meeting.

Rule 141 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly

When the Security Council has submitted its recommendation on the appointment of the Secretary-General, the General Assembly shall consider the recommendation and vote upon by secret ballot in private meeting.

This imagined text is offered as a guide to a much advocated accountability mechanism on the selection of the United Secretary General. Such a joint letter was called for by UN member states in General Assembly resolution 69/1007 in September 2015. It is authored by Tony Fleming, Senior Editor at GlobalMemo.org, a site covering multilateral elections in the United Nations system. Tony authored the comprehensive blog UNSG.org in 2006 on the selection of the UN Secretary General that year. He can be reached at tony@globalmemo.org.