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To All Member States

Following the adoption by consensus of General Assembly resolution A/69/321, this serves as the joint letter called for in that resolution to begin soliciting candidates and to set in motion the process of selecting and appointing the next Secretary-General.

The role of Secretary-General is a job of critical importance. It is particularly important that the next Secretary-General has the exceptional and proven executive level management and leadership skills needed to run an organization as large and diverse as the United Nations.

A future Secretary-General should bring integrity, independence, moral courage and impartiality and demonstrate a commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. He or she should create and sustain a culture that emphasizes integrity, fairness and competence. Extensive experience in international relations and sophisticated diplomatic communication skills, including multilingualism, will also be required and are essential for a mediator and crisis manager in an interconnected and diverse world. She or he should show moral and intellectual as well as political and public affairs leadership.

Bearing in mind the need to ensure the selection of the best possible candidate and that appointment should be on merit, the strongest field of candidates will be one that includes good representation by women. We therefore invite the presentation of women candidates for the position of Secretary-General.

Those seeking the role should declare their interest in a timely manner to facilitate full participation in the process, which should be guided by the principles of transparency and inclusiveness and build on best practices and the participation of all Member States. The Presidents of the Security Council and of the General Assembly will jointly circulate to all Member States, on an ongoing basis, the names of individuals that have been submitted for consideration, as set out in General Assembly resolution 69/321.

That resolution also provides for informal dialogues or meetings of the General Assembly with candidates, while noting that any such interaction will be without prejudice to those who do not participate. It would be beneficial as well for there to be interaction of individuals under consideration with Security Council members. One potential model could be through Arria-formula meetings, for example.

The newly appointed Secretary-General should have time to prepare for the role. Concluding the appointment process ideally some three to four months before 1 January 2017 should allow sufficient time for this preparation. The Council plans to begin the selection process during the Summer of 2016. An initial idea – by the Spring of 2016 – of those putting themselves forward will help the Council's deliberations; nonetheless, this should not preclude others making themselves known throughout the process, as appropriate.

The challenges facing the world and the Organisation today oblige us to conduct the most strenuous efforts in securing the best possible Secretary-General to meet the exigencies of the role.

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