

Selection and appointment of the next Secretary-General of the United Nations in 2016

A call for ACTION

Mr. Ban Ki-moon's second five-year term as Secretary-General of the United Nations will come to an end on 31 December 2016. ACT¹ calls for increased transparency, inclusiveness and a more rigorous process in selecting the next chief of the Organization. ACT acknowledges and fully respects the relevant Charter provisions² and is cognizant of relevant General Assembly resolutions on the appointment process. The principle, according to which the candidatures for the post of Secretary-General of the UN are first discussed within the Security Council and then recommended to General Assembly, should remain unchanged. This being said, the Charter leaves much room for improvement in the transparency and inclusivity of the process.

ACT – with the purpose to enhance the working methods of the Security Council – calls for the practical implementation of the following proposals for improving the appointment process, which shall be conveyed to the PGA as well as to the President of the Security Council:

Nomination of Candidates and Timeline for the Selection Process:

- Official call for nominations: to start the process in an open and transparent manner, ACT recommends a joint letter by the Presidents of the General Assembly and of the Security Council, inviting UN Member States to present nominations for the post of Secretary-General of the UN. To be valid, a candidature will have to be supported by at least one Member State. The joint letter should fix a deadline when the nominations need to be submitted (i.e. the end of 2015).
- The joint letter should strongly encourage Member States to nominate qualified female candidates.
- List of candidates: at the conclusion of the nomination process, a joint General Assembly/Security Council document should be issued containing the names and nationalities of the candidates in alphabetical order with the CVs in annex. The document should also outline the ensuing steps and indicative timelines until the decision of the General Assembly in order to make the process more structured and foreseeable.

Selection Process:

- Active role of the General Assembly: The General Assembly should play a more active role in the selection process, in accordance with the UN Charter. We also call for the full implementation of relevant resolutions³, keeping in mind the rules of procedure, including rule 141, while acknowledging existing relevant General Assembly practices.
- Public hearings: ACT calls for widening the scope of consultations beyond the Members of the Security Council and for considering the views of all Member States. ACT

¹ Accountability, Coherence and Transparency – a cross-regional group of 27 States

² Article 97 of the UN Charter stipulates that the Secretary-General shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.

³ including resolutions 11 (1) of 24 January 1946, 51/241 of 31 July 1997, 60/286 of 8 September 2006, in particular paragraph 17 to 22 of the annex thereto and 64/301 of 13 September 2001

encourages the formal presentation of candidatures for the position in a manner to allow sufficient time for interaction with Member States. The wider membership could also benefit from open hearings such as interactive dialogues organized by the PGA to engage with nominees and have an input to the process.

- Consultations: ACT also endorses more transparency within the Security Council. Hearings and “*Arria*-formula” meetings should be held in the Security Council with shortlisted candidates, so that all members – both permanent and elected – can make an informed decision on which candidate to support.
- SC briefing: ACT encourages public briefings by the Security Council regarding the development of the nomination process for the wider membership to be updated on the process.
- The selection process should be finalized as early as possible, preferably three months prior to the assumption of the office by the next Secretary-General.

Appointment:

- The identification and appointment of the best candidate for the post should be in line with the best practices in high-level appointments of executive heads of the United Nations and other international organizations.
- Due regard should be given to equal and fair geographical distribution through rotation and gender balance through giving preference to equally qualified female candidates.

Term in Office

- ACT sees merit in discussing the term in office of the Secretary-General.