

General Assembly to Adopt Resolution on the Selection of the Secretary-General

Friday morning, the General Assembly is scheduled to adopt a resolution which marks a significant departure from the secretive and outdated process through which the United Nations has selected its Secretary-General for the past 70 years. The *1 for 7 Billion* campaign welcomes this landmark resolution and commends the many countries who worked tirelessly for its adoption.

“Now is the time to implement a fully open, transparent and merit-based process –one that the world’s 7 billion people expect of the UN– ensuring that the best possible candidate is selected for one of the most important and challenging jobs in the world,” said William Pace of the *1 for 7 Billion* campaign.

The resolution contains the following important elements, all of which are supported by the campaign:

- A call for a joint letter by the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council to start the selection process by soliciting candidate nominations in a 'timely manner'. The *1 for 7 Billion* campaign believes the letter must include a deadline for nominations and should be sent no later than October;
- A list of basic selection criteria, including, ‘proven leadership and managerial abilities, extensive experience in international relations and strong diplomatic, communication and multilingual skills’;
- The circulation of candidates' names and their CVs by the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council on an ongoing basis;
- A decision to conduct informal dialogues or meetings with candidates. *1 for 7 Billion* believes these meetings must be open and allow for interaction with all Member States and civil society;
- An invitation to Member States to present women candidates while continuing to stress that 'the best possible candidate' must be appointed.

The resolution also establishes an active and supportive role for the President of the General Assembly to monitor and review implementation of all resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on the selection process. These provisions create an excellent basis for the President of the General Assembly to play a proactive role in shaping an open, transparent and merit-based process with a role for civil society, and to initiate a debate on the length of term of appointment, as the Assembly required in resolution 51/241.

Regrettably, two major proposals were dropped from the resolution: a request that the Security Council present more than one candidate to the General Assembly and the length of the Secretary-General’s term. Despite support from the majority of Member States, including the Non-Aligned Movement and the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group, Russia, China and the United States reportedly opposed even the discussion of these topics.

1 for 7 Billion believes that these proposals would enhance the inclusivity of the process and the independence of future Secretaries-General. However, nothing prevents the General Assembly from discussing these proposals in the next session, and indeed, it should do so.

“With the implementation of this resolution, it will no longer be business-as-usual for a handful of countries to select the Secretary-General behind closed doors, without selection criteria or public scrutiny,” said Mr. Pace. “The General Assembly, its President and the Security Council must now turn words into action.”

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