

13 February 2015

Letter to Foreign Ministers of Member States of the United Nations on Improving the Procedures of Appointment of the UN Secretary-General

Excellencies,

The new Secretary-General of the United Nations will be selected in 2016. At this time of increased global challenges, the need for effective leadership and international cooperation is greater than ever. The role of UN Secretary-General is one of the most important and challenging in the world. It is unacceptable that the appointment process for the job remains so deficient. **We are writing on behalf of our global civil society campaign to ask you and your government to join other ministers and governments in endorsing significant reforms of the appointment procedures for the 2016 process.**

Excellency, the next Secretary-General must assume a major role in mediation, in peace-making (including preventing a new Cold War), in organising vital humanitarian assistance to a growing number of situations, and in addressing growing security, inequality, economic and development challenges.

She or he will be crucial to ensure implementation of the important decisions that the international community will make this year on climate change and sustainable development. An exceptional individual – competent, visionary and highly qualified – must be found. With candidates already coming forward, it is important that the best Secretary-General is selected in a process that is fair, transparent, inclusive and based on merit.

As we underlined in our letter to Member States of 5 November 2014, the process that the United Nations adopted as long ago as 1946 is not fit for purpose. It is secretive, outdated and does not live up to modern recruitment practices for high-level international appointments, let alone the UN's own standards and ideals. It must be changed as a matter of priority.

All UN Member States are responsible for the selection. Governments must seize the forthcoming opportunities in the General Assembly and Security Council– starting with the session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Revitalization in March – to advocate and adopt a selection process that meets the higher standards that the UN General Assembly, UN experts and civil society have persistently called for.

Launched last year, “1 for 7 Billion” is a global campaign supported by individuals and organisations around the world who are committed to the values of the UN Charter and who firmly believe that we need to do all we can to find the best UN leader. We promote a set of principles and proposals to strengthen the appointment process that are realistic and do not require amendment of the UN Charter. Based on UN resolutions and expert reports, many of them have already been endorsed by a majority of UN Member States.

They include:

- publication of formal selection criteria and a call for nominations
- a clear timetable that enables adequate assessment of candidates, including through an official list of candidates that features qualified women and men
- the opportunity for candidates to present vision statements, for example through open sessions that enable all UN Member States to hear from candidates, with civil society participation in accordance with General Assembly procedures

We also ask Member States to consider a single, non-renewable term of appointment, as mandated in 1997 in General Assembly resolution 51/241, and request that the Security Council presents more than one candidate to the Assembly.

These recommendations are outlined in the *1 for 7 Billion Policy Platform*, a copy of which is attached. The campaign does not promote any individual candidates. We believe that an effective selection process ought to produce an effective Secretary-General.

We have translated the key documents in all UN languages that can be found on our website next week.

Excellency, while Member States may differ in their views on particular recommendations, a majority of states have expressed their support for improving the procedures to nominate and appoint the Secretary-General.

We believe that all Member States should play a more meaningful role in the selection process. We therefore urge your government to publicly call for a better process and to support the principles and proposals we have put forward – in the General Debate of the Ad Hoc Working Group in the first week of March 2015, and in the Group's thematic discussion specifically on the selection of the Secretary-General in late April 2015.

We hope that your government will work for the adoption of a strong resolution by the General Assembly that will deliver a fair, open, and inclusive process to select the best candidate to be the next Secretary-General of the United Nations. We would be grateful to receive your government's views on the principles and proposals outlined.

Yours sincerely,



William Pace

For the Steering Committee on behalf of the campaign 1 for 7 Billion: Find the Best UN Leader

Avaaz

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung New York

United Nations Association-UK

World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy

More than 50 NGOs representing millions of members around the world have endorsed the 1 for 7 Billion campaign. For a complete list of endorsing NGOs, please visit 1for7billion.org/ngo-endorsements.

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