



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

13 September 2016

Excellency,

Please find attached a copy of a letter that I have sent to the President of the Security Council earlier today, pertaining to the selection and appointment process of the next UN Secretary-General. As I near the end of my term, I felt it important to provide a recap of the historic cooperation between the UN Security Council and the entire membership of the General Assembly to advance this process, and share some expectations of the membership towards the Security Council regarding the remainder of the process, as well as ways to further improve future selection and appointment processes.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mogens Lykketoft', written in a cursive style.

Mogens Lykketoft

To all Permanent Representatives  
and Permanent Observers to the United Nations  
New York



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

13 September 2016

Excellency,

Over the course of the 70<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly, I have had the pleasure to work closely with the UN Security Council and the entire membership of the General Assembly to advance the process to select and appoint the next UN Secretary-General.

As I near the end of my term, I feel it important to provide a recap of this historic cooperation and some of the details that made this year's process so unique. I also wish to share some expectations of the membership towards the Council regarding the remainder of the process as well as ways to further improve future selection and appointment processes.

#### **The formal process to date**

Throughout the 70<sup>th</sup> session, the General Assembly and the UN Security Council have worked diligently together to advance a selection and appointment process that is transparent, inclusive and effective, guided by GA Resolution 69/321.

Monthly coordination meetings with the presidency of the Council from the beginning of my term September last year, and an opportunity to brief the Council in October 2015 at its open debate on working methods, set the tone for the rest of the session. This was followed by the formal commencement of the process in December 2015 through the circulation of a substantive joint letter (A/70/623-S/2015/988) from myself and the Security Council President of the month of December, which formally solicited candidates for the position, described the overall process and established a clearly defined nomination process - in short, the first ever job announcement for the position of the world's chief diplomat.

Over the course of the last nine months, 12 candidates have to date been presented and their presentations have been jointly circulated to the membership. In line with GA Resolution 69/321, each candidate has been provided the opportunity to participate in informal dialogues with the entire Assembly and it is gratifying that all 12 candidates presented thus far have embraced that opportunity.

The dialogues provided the same platform and equal time for each candidate and have been based on a format defined in my letters dated 25 February (A/70/877) and 29 March (A/70/878). Candidates have been invited to provide a vision statement in advance of the informal dialogue, laying out their vision of the challenges and opportunities facing the UN and the next Secretary-General. This enabled Member States to acquaint themselves with the overall views of each candidate in advance of the dialogue, and also allowed for short, opening statements during the informal dialogues permitting a more interactive dialogue. Indeed, both individual Member States and groups deserve praise for

scrupulously respecting the time provided for questions, allowing equal and balanced access to all and minimizing repetition.

Civil society and the wider global public have also been deeply engaged in the process thus far. Civil society questions – identified through an open and inclusive process – have been an integral part of the informal dialogues, and the use of video-links, together with the live streaming of the dialogues, has allowed us to reach people across the world – and for them to reach us. Public engagement has been further enhanced through the use of my official PGA70 website, which has been continuously updated with information about the candidates (presentation of candidatures, biographies, vision statement, withdrawal letters where applicable) and the process.

In addition, and distinct from the mandated informal dialogues, I took the initiative to organise a Global Townhall meeting in partnership with the Al-Jazeera Media Network. Inviting all declared candidates to participate in the debate, broadcast live across the world, brought the process out to a broader public and allowed for a more interactive format with all candidates at the same time.

### **The value of a transparent and inclusive process**

The informal meetings with candidates and the overall transparent and inclusive nature of the process to date have been of significant value.

First, through generating some of the best discussions I believe have occurred among the membership about the role of the United Nations and its Secretary General in addressing our many global challenges, the process has shone light on the individual and collective aspirations for the organization.

Second, building on the public participation process for agreeing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, this process has transmitted a critical message to the wider world: the United Nations wants to hear from you, benefits from hearing from you, and is ultimately accountable to you.

Third, the process thus far has demonstrated the capacity of the General Assembly to fulfil its role as envisaged in Article 97 of the UN Charter as well as the ability of the Assembly and the Council to work effectively together in a complementary fashion.

Fourth, a number of key messages resonated throughout the dialogues in terms of what the overall membership is seeking in the next UN Secretary-General, messages that I believe the Council must now give due consideration to in its own deliberations.

Member states expressed, for example, a clear desire to see a strong, independent and courageous UN Secretary-General who will make full use of the powers provided for in the UN Charter. Likewise, a strong call was made to welcome the first ever female Secretary-General and, more broadly, a person who is committed to ensuring that the UN both promotes and embodies gender equality at all levels – a call that I personally support. Through the many questions on substantive, organizational, administrative and financial matters, the membership is evidently looking for a candidate who has the skills to transform the UN's tools, capacities and culture in order to respond to today's major challenges – threats to peace and security; implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement; greater enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms; and the prioritization of the world's most vulnerable countries and peoples throughout.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this revitalized process has significantly improved our prospects of securing the best possible candidate to lead this Organization. We have attracted 6 male

and 6 female candidates from across three geographical regions – the largest number of formally presented candidates ever nominated for this position. And to this date, 9 are still taking part in the process. Each candidate has strengths and weaknesses and many of these were highlighted through the informal dialogues. Both the Council and the Assembly are therefore entering the closing stages of this process with their eyes very much wide open.

### **Scope for further improvement**

While the selection and appointment process thus far has been significantly improved when compared with previous processes, there remains considerable scope for improvement.

The issue of providing adequate lead-in time for proper preparation and hand-over to the incoming Secretary-General, for example, could be addressed through the setting of some form of deadline and a more specific timeline for the overall process. For instance, it would seem both desirable and feasible for the membership to commit to concluding the process on entering the final quarter of the calendar year preceding the beginning of the new Secretary-General's term. A commitment to such a time line would necessarily have implications for the timing of all steps now established as integral parts of the process.

In addition, the new standard of transparency and inclusivity should be seen as the bar not the ceiling and should be maintained throughout the entirety of the selection and appointment process. For example, as I have made clear in my statements in connection with each of the informal straw polls of the Council, I have been disappointed by the lack of transparency exercised by the Council in its subsequent communication about the straw polls. It is neither respectful of the rest of the UN membership nor fair to the candidates themselves, for the results to be communicated through leaks from Council members to the world's media.

Lastly, Member States have, in the course of this process, suggested that the General Assembly conduct its own informal straw poll on the candidates who have participated in informal dialogues, before the Council starts its own consideration of the candidates, to link into that process. While I find merit in this proposal, it is also clear that currently no such mandate exists. Going forward, it may be worth considering how to establish such an exercise or exploring other ways to ensure that the membership's assessment of the candidates can feed into the selection process of the Council.

### **The remainder of the current selection and appointment process**

The current selection and appointment process has now entered into a decisive phase and there are a number of pitfalls that both the Council and Assembly must work to avoid.

While Resolution 69/321 allows for the presentation of candidates at any time during the process, through the rounds of informal dialogues, a clear expectation has emerged that any additional candidates should – subsequent to the joint circulation of the letter formally presenting the candidate – participate in a General Assembly informal dialogue as a first step, prior to their inclusion in the Security Council's considerations.

In addition, a large portion of the Assembly has called for the appointment of co-facilitators, preferably before the Council reaches a decision on its recommendation, to draft the General Assembly resolution appointing the next UN Secretary-General. While I understand that such a demand is not popular with some Council members, in my view it is entirely consistent with the spirit of transparency and inclusivity which the process has been imbued with to date. Furthermore, the

purpose of appointing co-facilitators must be to reach a consensus appointment resolution. At the same time, it is critically important that all member states commit to ensuring that the next UN Secretary-General will not be prevented from receiving adequate preparation time before taking office, because of wrangling among member states. In the end, whatever the outcome, the General Assembly must unite around the UN's next Secretary-General.

**Fulfilling our joint responsibility**

As I conclude my mandate as President of the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Council members for their cooperation on this process this session.

I hope that the standard of transparency and inclusivity we have established together will be replicated and built on for future processes and extended to other areas of work of both the Council and the Assembly. I also hope that the good cooperation between the two Organs on this subject can serve as an example for cooperation on other issues of common concern.

Lastly, as the Council deliberates on its recommendation, I sincerely hope that each and every member, permanent and non-permanent, will be mindful of the expectations of the entire membership and the wider global public. I encourage you to do your utmost to fulfil your responsibility in helping the UN General Assembly to secure the best possible candidate to lead this great Organization.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mogens Lykketoft', is positioned above the printed name.

Mogens Lykketoft

H.E. Mr. Gerard van Bohemen  
President of the United Nation's Security Council for the month of September 2016

Cc: All Permanent Representatives  
and Permanent Observers to the United Nations  
New York