



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2 June 2020

**Subject:** Procedure for holding elections by secret ballot without a plenary meeting during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic

Excellency,

In accordance with General Assembly decision 74/557 of 29 May 2020, entitled, “*Procedure for holding elections by secret ballot without a plenary meeting during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic*” and the arrangements set out in the annex of the decision, I am pleased to send you this communication in preparation for the round of secret balloting for the various elections that are scheduled be held in June 2020 by the General Assembly at this seventy-fourth session.

Further to decision 74/577, the election of non-permanent members of the Security Council and the election of members of the Economic and Social Council will be held simultaneously, on 17 June 2020, from 9:00 a.m.

Sequel to my letter dated 1 June 2020, regarding the request for a secret ballot for the election of the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session, and pursuant to decision 74/577 which applies *mutatis mutandis* to other elections of the General Assembly during the seventy-fourth session, this election will also be held simultaneously with the election of non-permanent members of the Security Council and the election of members of the Economic and Social Council, on 17 June 2020, from 9:00 a.m.

Information on the number of vacant seats is provided in the enclosed Annex A. The ballots will be cast in the General Assembly Hall (“the designated venue”).

In preparation for the elections, each Member State is hereby requested to submit the name of the representative, and an alternate, who will cast the ballot of the Member State to the Chief of the General Assembly Affairs Branch. To facilitate this process, an online registration form will be sent from “DGACM-General Assembly Affairs Branch GAAB” [gaab@un.org] for Member States to register. The deadline for registration will be 8 June 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

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

Five working days prior to the elections, I will communicate a specific time slot to each voter, which assigns the time slot the voter will be invited to visit the General Assembly Hall to cast the ballot of the Member State on the day of the election.

An additional time slot will be available to the voters if they are unable to visit the designated venue during the specific time slot communicated to them. No ballots shall be accepted after the last time slot has expired. Additional details concerning the conduct of the elections are enclosed in Annexes A and B.

I will circulate a letter to all Member States, at least one working day prior to the round of secret balloting for the elections, to notify you of the names of candidates communicated to the Secretariat at least 48 hours prior to the elections pursuant to resolution 71/323 of 8 September 2017. As usual, the lists of candidates will continue to be updated on the e-deleGATE portal after the circulation of the letter.

I would like to inform that the casting of the ballots in the designated venue will be webcast. I will oversee the proceedings in the General Assembly Hall and the tellers will also be observing the whole process.

As the situation evolves, I will be pleased to send you relevant and updated information prior to the elections.

I avail of this opportunity to express my solidarity with Member States who are fighting COVID-19 and extend my sincere condolences for their loss.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, featuring a stylized, flowing script that ends in a small loop.

Tijjani Muhammad-Bande

# **ANNEX A**

## **Election of the President of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly**

### **Vacant seat**

1. The General Assembly, under agenda item 4, will hold on Wednesday, 17 June 2020, the election of the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session.
2. In accordance with paragraph 1 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 33/138 of 19 December 1978, the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session should be elected from among the Western European and other States.

### **Required majority**

3. The candidate — not exceeding the number of seats to be filled — receiving the greatest number of votes and a simple majority of those present and voting will be declared elected.
4. If no candidate obtains a required majority of the members present and voting, there shall be an additional ballot. In such a case, pursuant to decision 74/557, the President of the General Assembly shall circulate a letter to all Member States with the date and time of the next round of secret balloting, which shall commence on a working day at most 20 hours after the circulation of the letter. In the letter, the President shall also indicate the candidates that are eligible in that round of secret balloting and any other details concerning the conduct of the secret ballot.
5. Also, pursuant to decision 74/557, in the case of a tie vote, and when it becomes necessary to determine the candidate that will proceed to the next round of restricted balloting, there shall be a special restricted ballot limited to those candidates that have obtained an equal number of votes.

### **Casting of ballots**

6. In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the election will be held by secret ballot.
7. One ballot paper will be given to each delegation.
8. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/323 of 8 September 2017, the names of the candidates that have been communicated to the Secretariat will be printed on the ballot papers. Also, additional blank lines corresponding to the number of vacant seats to be filled, in the present case, one additional blank line, will be provided on the ballot papers for inscribing another name as desirable.

9. The voters will be requested to use only those ballot papers that will be provided to them at the designated venue and to put an “X” in the box next to the name of the candidate whom they wish to vote for, or write the name of an individual from among Western European and other States in the blank line. If the box next to the name of a candidate is checked, the name of that candidate does not have to be repeated on the blank line.

10. Pursuant to decision 74/557, the voter shall receive the ballot paper upon arrival at the General Assembly Hall (“the designated venue”) following the presentation of a valid United Nations grounds pass.

11. Pursuant to decision 74/557, the President of the General Assembly, prior to proceeding with the counting of the ballots, shall ensure that the total number of ballot papers cast in all the ballot boxes amounts to at least a majority of the members of the General Assembly. In the event that the total number of ballot papers cast in all the ballot boxes did not amount to at least a majority of the members of the Assembly, the President shall circulate a letter to all Member States indicating a new date and time for the elections.

### **Invalid ballots**

12. Pursuant to decision 74/557, only ballots cast in the ballot boxes at the designated venue shall be accepted.

13. Ballot papers containing more than one name or containing only the name of a country will be declared invalid.

14. A ballot paper will be declared invalid if it contains the name of an individual who is not from among Western European or other States.

15. If a ballot contains any notations other than votes in favour of a specific candidate, those notations will be disregarded.

### **Results**

16. Pursuant to decision 74/557, upon receipt of the result certified by the tellers, the President of the General Assembly shall immediately circulate a letter to all Member States in order to inform them of the result and to declare elected the candidate that has received the greatest number of votes and a simple majority of the members present and voting. The result will also be announced through the webcast.

17. Also pursuant to decision 74/557, if no candidate obtains a required majority of the members present and voting, there shall be an additional ballot. In such a case, the President of the General Assembly shall circulate a letter to all Member States with the date and time of the next round of secret balloting, which shall commence on a working day at most 20 hours after the circulation of the letter. In the letter, the President shall also indicate the candidates that are eligible in that round of secret balloting and any other details concerning the conduct of the secret ballot.

18. Further pursuant to decision 74/557, in the case of a tie vote, and when it becomes necessary to determine the candidate that will proceed to the next round of restricted balloting, there shall be a special restricted ballot limited to those candidates that have obtained an equal number of votes.

## **Election of non-permanent members of the Security Council**

### **Vacant seats**

1. The General Assembly, under sub-item (a) of agenda item 113, will hold on 17 June 2020 the election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 2020.

2. The five outgoing non-permanent members are:

- Belgium,
- Dominican Republic,
- Germany,
- Indonesia and
- South Africa.

These five States cannot be re-elected. Their names, therefore, should not appear on the ballot papers.

3. Apart from the five permanent members, the Security Council will include the following States in 2021:

- Estonia,
- Niger,
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines,
- Tunisia and
- Viet Nam.

The names of these States, therefore, should also not appear on the ballot papers.

4. Of the five non-permanent members which will remain in office in 2021, three are from African and Asia-Pacific States, one is from Eastern European States and one is from Latin American and Caribbean States.

5. Pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 1991 A (XVIII) of 17 December 1963, the five non-permanent members should be elected according to the following pattern:

- two from African and Asia-Pacific States;
- one from Latin American and Caribbean States; and
- two from Western European and other States.

The ballot papers will reflect this pattern.

6. In accordance with the established practice, there is an understanding to the effect that, of the two States to be elected from among the African and Asia-Pacific States, one should be an African State and one should be an Asia-Pacific State.

## **Required majority**

7. Those candidates — not exceeding the number of seats to be filled — receiving the greatest number of votes and a two-thirds majority of those present and voting will be declared elected.
8. If the number of candidates obtaining a two-third majority of the members present and voting is fewer than the number of members to be elected, there shall be additional ballots to fill the remaining places. In such a case, pursuant to decision 74/557, the President of the General Assembly shall circulate a letter to all Member States with the date and time of the next round of secret balloting, which shall commence on a working day at most 20 hours after the circulation of the letter. In the letter, the President shall also indicate the candidates that are eligible in that round of secret balloting and any other details concerning the conduct of the secret ballot.
9. Also, pursuant to decision 74/557, in the case of a tie vote, and when it becomes necessary to determine the candidate that will proceed to the next round of restricted balloting, there shall be a special restricted ballot limited to those candidates that have obtained an equal number of votes.

## **Casting of ballots**

10. In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the election will be held by secret ballot.
11. Pursuant to decision 74/557, the voter shall receive the ballot papers upon arrival at the General Assembly Hall (“the designated venue”) following the presentation of a valid United Nations grounds pass.
12. Ballot papers marked “A”, “B” and “C” will be provided.
13. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/323 of 8 September 2017, the names of the candidates that have been communicated to the Secretariat will be printed on the ballot papers for each of the regional groups. Also, additional blank lines corresponding to the number of vacant seats to be filled for each of the regional groups will be provided on the ballot papers for inscribing other names as desirable.
14. The voters will be requested to use only those ballot papers that will be provided to them at the designated venue and to put an “X” in the boxes next to the names of the Member States whom they wish to vote for, and/or write other eligible names in the blank lines. If the box next to the name of a candidate is checked, the name of that candidate does not have to be repeated on the blank line.
15. The total number of checked boxes and/or handwritten names should not exceed the number of vacant seats to be filled as indicated on the ballot paper.

16. Pursuant to decision 74/557, the President of the General Assembly, prior to proceeding with the counting of the ballots, shall ensure that the total number of ballot papers cast in all the ballot boxes amounts to at least a majority of the members of the General Assembly. In the event that the total number of ballot papers cast in all the ballot boxes did not amount to at least a majority of the members of the Assembly, the President shall circulate a letter to all Member States indicating a new date and time for the elections.

### **Invalid ballots**

17. Pursuant to decision 74/557, only ballots cast in the ballot boxes at the designated venue shall be accepted.

18. A ballot paper will be declared invalid if it contains more names of Member States from the relevant region than the number of seats allocated to it.

- For the ballot papers marked “A” for African and Asia-Pacific States, the total number of checked boxes and/or handwritten names should not exceed two.
- For the ballot papers marked “B” for Latin American and Caribbean States, the total number of checked boxes and/or handwritten names should not exceed one.
- For the ballot papers marked “C” for Western European and other States, the total number of checked boxes and/or handwritten names should not exceed two.

19. A ballot paper will be declared invalid if none of the names of the Member States on that ballot for which votes were cast belongs to the relevant region.

20. If a ballot paper of a region contains one of the following, the ballot will remain valid but the vote for these Member States will not be counted:

- Member States that do not belong to the region concerned; or
- Member States that are outgoing non-permanent members of the Security Council or that will continue to be members of the Council next year.

21. If a ballot contains any notations other than votes in favour of specific candidates, those notations will be disregarded.

### **Results**

22. Pursuant to decision 74/557, upon receipt of the results certified by the tellers, the President of the General Assembly shall immediately circulate a letter to all Member States in order to inform them of the results and to declare elected those Member States that have received the greatest number of votes and a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. The results will also be announced through the webcast.



23. Also pursuant to decision 74/557, if the number of candidates obtaining a required majority of the members present and voting is fewer than the number of members to be elected, there shall be additional ballots to fill the remaining places. In such a case, the President of the General Assembly shall circulate a letter to all Member States with the date and time of the next round of secret balloting, which shall commence on a working day at most 20 hours after the circulation of the letter. In the letter, the President shall also indicate the candidates that are eligible in that round of secret balloting and any other details concerning the conduct of the secret ballot.

24. Further pursuant to decision 74/557, in the case of a tie vote, and when it becomes necessary to determine the candidate that will proceed to the next round of restricted balloting, there shall be a special restricted ballot limited to those candidates that have obtained an equal number of votes.

## **Election of members of the Economic and Social Council**

### **Vacant seats**

1. The General Assembly, under sub-item (b) of agenda item 113, will hold on 17 June 2020 the election of eighteen members of the Economic and Social Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 2020.
2. The eighteen outgoing members are: Belarus, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Ireland, Japan, Malawi, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, Philippines, Spain, Sudan, Togo and Uruguay.
3. As of 1 January 2021, the following States will be represented on the Economic and Social Council: Angola, Armenia, Australia, Bangladesh, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, Gabon, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Kenya, Latvia, Luxembourg, Mali, Montenegro, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and United States of America.

The names of these thirty-six States should therefore not appear on the ballot papers.

4. In accordance with paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 2847 (XXVI) of 20 December 1971, and taking into account the number of States that will remain members of the Council after 1 January 2021, the eighteen members should be elected according to the following pattern:

- five from African States;
- three from Asia-Pacific States;
- one from Eastern European States;
- four from Latin American and Caribbean States; and
- five from Western European and other States.

The ballot papers will reflect this pattern.

### **Required majority**

5. Those candidates —not exceeding the number of seats to be filled —receiving the greatest number of votes and a two-thirds majority of those present and voting will be declared elected.
6. If the number of candidates obtaining a two-third majority is fewer than the number of members to be elected, there will be additional ballots to fill the remaining places. In such a case, pursuant to decision 74/557, the President of the General Assembly shall circulate a letter to all Member States with the date and time of the next round of secret balloting, which shall commence on a working day at most 20 hours after the circulation of the letter. In the letter, the President shall also indicate the candidates that are eligible in that round of secret balloting and any other details concerning the conduct of the secret ballot.

7. Also pursuant to decision 74/557, in the case of a tie vote, and when it becomes necessary to determine the candidates that will proceed to the next round of restricted balloting, there shall be a special restricted ballot limited to those candidates that have obtained an equal number of votes.

### **Casting of ballots**

8. In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election will be by secret ballot.

9. Pursuant to decision 74/557, the voter shall receive the ballot papers upon arrival at the General Assembly Hall ("the designated venue") following the presentation of a valid United Nations grounds pass.

10. Ballot papers marked "A", "B", "C", "D" and "E" will be provided.

11. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/323 of 8 September 2017, the names of the candidates that have been communicated to the Secretariat will be printed on the ballot papers for each of the regional groups. Also, additional blank lines corresponding to the number of vacant seats to be filled for each of the regional groups will be provided on the ballot papers for inscribing other names as desirable.

12. The voters will be requested to use only those ballot papers that will be provided to them at the designated venue and to put an "X" in the boxes next to the names of the Member States whom they wish to vote for, and/or write other eligible names in the blank lines. If the box next to the name of a candidate is checked, the name of that candidate does not have to be repeated on the blank line.

13. The total number of checked boxes and/or handwritten names should not exceed the number of vacant seats to be filled as indicated on the ballot paper.

14. Pursuant to decision 74/557, the President of the General Assembly, prior to proceeding with the counting of the ballots, shall ensure that the total number of ballot papers cast in all the ballot boxes amounts to at least a majority of the members of the General Assembly. In the event that the total number of ballot papers cast in all the ballot boxes did not amount to at least a majority of the members of the Assembly, the President shall circulate a letter to all Member States indicating a new date and time for the elections.

### **Invalid ballots**

15. Pursuant to decision 74/557, only ballots cast in the ballot boxes at the designated venue shall be accepted.

16. A ballot paper will be declared invalid if it contains more names of Member States from the relevant region than the number of seats allocated to it.

- For the ballot papers marked "A" for African States, the total number of checked boxes and/or handwritten names should not exceed five.

- For the ballot papers marked "B" for Asia-Pacific States, the total number of checked boxes and/or handwritten names should not exceed three.

- For the ballot papers marked “C” for Eastern European States, the total number of checked boxes and/or handwritten names should not exceed one.
- For the ballot papers marked “D” for Latin American and Caribbean States, the total number of checked boxes and/or handwritten names should not exceed four.
- For the ballot papers marked “E” for Western European and other States, the total number of checked boxes and/or handwritten names should not exceed five.

17. A ballot paper will be declared invalid if none of the names of the Member States on that ballot for which votes were cast belongs to the relevant region.

18. If a ballot paper of a region contains one of the following, the ballot would remain valid but the vote for these Member States will not be counted:

- Member States that do not belong to the region concerned; or
- Member States that continue to be members of the Council.

19. If a ballot contains any notations other than votes in favour of specific candidates, those notations will be disregarded.

## **Results**

20. Pursuant to decision 74/557, upon receipt of the results certified by the tellers, the President of the General Assembly shall immediately circulate a letter to all Member States in order to inform them of the results and to declare elected those Member States that have received the greatest number of votes and a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. The results will also be announced through the webcast.

21. Also pursuant to decision 74/557, if the number of candidates obtaining a required majority of the members present and voting is fewer than the number of members to be elected, there shall be additional ballots to fill the remaining places. In such a case, the President of the General Assembly shall circulate a letter to all Member States with the date and time of the next round of secret balloting, which shall commence on a working day at most 20 hours after the circulation of the letter. In the letter, the President shall also indicate the candidates that are eligible in that round of secret balloting and any other details concerning the conduct of the secret ballot.

22. Further pursuant to decision 74/557, in the case of a tie vote, and when it becomes necessary to determine the candidate that will proceed to the next round of restricted balloting, there shall be a special restricted ballot limited to those candidates that have obtained an equal number of votes.