

Principles and Recommendations – a Commentary

The principles outlined and recommendations made in the Policy Platform **1 for 7 Billion – Find the best UN leader** are based on authoritative sources: resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly, reports by the UN Secretary-General and the UN Joint Inspection Unit, and other relevant reports and documents by intergovernmental organizations and senior UN experts, as well as good practices in making senior UN and top international appointments.

This document provides a commentary listing these sources for each of the seven principles on which the reform process for the selection of the UN Secretary-General must be based and for the ten specific recommendations for action¹. All General Assembly resolutions cited in this document were adopted by consensus, and therefore enjoy the support of all UN member states—including the permanent members of the Security Council.

I - Principles

The following principles constitute the central criteria on which any future reform proposals will be judged to determine whether they suitably improve the selection procedure.

Reflecting best practices in the selection of other top public leaders², the selection process for the next UN Secretary-General should:

- **a - be focused on producing the best possible candidate**

The 1945 UN Preparatory Commission report holds that “the Secretary-General, more than anyone else, will stand for the United Nations as a whole. In the eyes of the world, no less than in the eyes of his own staff, he must embody the principles and ideals of the Charter to which the Organization seeks to give effect.”³

*Several **GA resolutions** have emphasized that the primary criterion in the selection process is the search for the best candidate (**resolutions 51/241 A 59, 60/286 A18 and 64/301 para 14**). Regional rotation and gender equality are also listed as factors to be taken into account, but not given overriding place. Indeed, on most occasions when a Secretary-General was selected, candidates from multiple regions were presented and seriously considered⁴.*

¹ For easy reference, commentary is listed under each specific principle and recommendation. The commentary is repeated in this document where principles and recommendations overlap.

² Security Council Report Special Research Reports No.1: Appointment of a new Secretary-General - (February 2006) and No. 3 Appointment of the UN Secretary-General (May 2011).

³ United Nations Preparatory Commission report, “The Secretary-General: Functions, Term of Appointment and Procedure of Appointment” (December 1945), Chapter VIII, Section 2 B para 17.

⁴ Colin Keating, *Selecting the World’s Diplomat, in Secretary or General? The UN Secretary-General in World Politics*, edited by Simon Chesterman, Cambridge University Press, 2007, page 58.

Regional rotation is in itself not inconsistent with finding the best candidate and can be a factor in deciding among equally strong candidates.

In a 2011 report by the UN's independent Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), the Inspectors recall being told that the primary consideration in hiring Under Secretaries-General/Assistant Secretaries-General is "merit-based, followed by gender and geographic balance, which are considered to be of equal importance" (JIU/REP/2011/2 para 68).

Adopting a merit-based approach to the selection would reflect the original principles included in the Preparatory Commission report, as well as the stated aim of the UN's membership. It would also bring the Secretary-General's appointment process in line with current practice for recruiting senior officials within the Secretariat.

- **b - be held in a timely and structured manner**

*There is no time table for the selection of the Secretary-General apart from a vague provision in **GA resolution 51/241 para 61** and subsequent resolutions that the Secretary-General should be appointed as early as possible, preferably no later than one month before the date on which the term of the incumbent expires. Using the last appointment as an example, agreement was reached in April 2006 by the Presidents of the Security Council and the General Assembly that the recruitment process for the position – falling vacant on 31 December 2006 - would start in June/July and be completed by September/October⁵. The current Secretary-General was appointed on 13 October 2006.*

In the 2009 JIU report, the UN inspectors noted that the FAO, IAEA, ILO, ITU, UNESCO, UNIDO, WHO and WIPO, all UN system organizations, have detailed timelines for the selection of their executive heads established by their legislative bodies. They hold the view that the establishment of clear timelines for the selection process would minimize delays in appointing a new executive head and allow for a smooth transition. They recommend that legislative bodies of UN system organizations that have not yet done so – which includes the General Assembly – should establish timelines for the selection process of their executive heads ending at least three months before the expiry date of the mandate of the incumbent, to ensure a smooth transition (JIU/REP/2009/8 paras 54-58). Senior expert observers have pointed out that the adoption of a timetable for the entire procedure is essential for the General Assembly to carry out its actual responsibility to appoint the Secretary-General⁶.

The 2011 JIU report includes a guideline on selection and appointment of senior managers that a dedicated UN website should include an expected time-line specifying a deadline for applications, the date when candidates selected for interviews will be contacted, when interviewed candidates will be informed of the results of the recruitment process, when

⁵ Security Council Report Special Research Report No.2: Second Report on the Appointment of the UN Secretary-General - (June 2006).

⁶ Highlighting the lack of adequate time for the UN membership as a whole to carry out its responsibilities in appointing the UN Secretary-General, Urquhart and Childers recommend that the General Assembly should adopt a timetable for the entire procedure and should be ready to properly review and reject a Security Council recommendation that the General Assembly considers inadequate. (Brian Urquhart and Erskine Childers, *A World in Need of Leadership: tomorrow's United Nations – A fresh Appraisal*, Dag Hammarskjold Foundation, Uppsala, Sweden, 1996, pages 28-29).

consultations are expected to be conducted and when the final selection is announced (JIU/REP/2011/2 para 88(e)).

Applying a similar approach to the Secretary-General's appointment would provide clarity to candidates, UN Member States and interested observers, support a smooth transition and help bring the selection process in line with UN system organizations and high-level international appointments.

- **c - be based on formal selection criteria and qualifications**

Criteria for the Secretary-General

It is not clear which selection criteria, if any, the Security Council applies in selecting its candidates. The UN Charter, in **Article 97**, simply requires the Secretary-General to be the "chief administrative officer of the organization". However, the UN recognized early on when it was founded that this was an important question that had to be addressed and that the Secretary-General's role went beyond the administrative role reflected in Article 97.

Important is the far sighted **1945 report by the UN Preparatory Commission (P/C 20 of 23 December 1945, Chapter VIII, section 2 B)**. The Commission drafted a list of principal functions assigned to the Secretary-General "explicitly or by inference" by the Charter, grouped under six headings: general administrative and executive functions, technical functions, financial functions, organization and administration of the Secretariat, political functions and representational functions.

The Commission described skills and qualities that the candidates should possess, including administrative and executive qualities to integrate the whole complex of United Nations organs, leadership qualities to determine the character and efficiency of the Secretariat, skills to lead a team from many different countries and build the necessary team spirit. The Secretary-General should be a person with moral authority to model the independent role envisaged in Article 100 of the Charter. He or she should have the ability to act as a mediator, the capacity to act as an informal adviser or confidant to many governments, and possess the highest qualities of political judgement, tact and integrity and communication skills to present the United Nations to the public at large.

Unfortunately, the list was never formally adopted. Nor does the description fully reflect the current requirements for the position which has increased considerably in complexity and has assumed foremost importance for world peace and security given the Secretary-General's powers under Article 99 of the Charter to draw the Security Council's attention to threats to international peace and security.

The **Delphi Symposium** held in honour of the UN's fifth Secretary-General in May 2010 (including former foreign ministers, ambassadors and secretariat officials) identified important qualities needed by a strong and independent Secretary-General in dealing with the enormous challenges posed in the 21st century. These include integrity, independence and moral courage, capacity for moral, intellectual and political leadership, sophisticated diplomatic skills essential for a mediator and crisis manager, apart from managerial capacity, charisma and contemporary media skills. The General Assembly has outlined some very

broad criteria for candidates in its **resolution 60/286** in which the **GA (in A 22)**: “... emphasizes the importance of candidates for the post of Secretary-General possessing and displaying, *inter alia*, commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, extensive leadership, and administrative and diplomatic experience...”.

However, these broadly defined terms fall far short of the specific criteria and qualifications now specified for international executive head positions including several in the UN system, such as the World Health Organization (**WHO Executive Board, resolution EB97.R10**), UNESCO (**UNESCO document 180 EX/28, Appendix**), and the International Civil Aviation Organization (**Doc 7559/8- Rules of Procedure for the Council, Appendix C**). The World Trade Organization has outlined five broad selection criteria for the appointment of its Director-General (**Procedures for the appointment of Directors-General, WT/L/509, para 9**).

Criteria as part of the process

The UN inspectors observe in their 2009 report that the UN Secretary-General has put in place, in 2005, a new selection process for all senior UN officials, “aimed at ensuring a much wider search for qualified candidates and allowing for a rigorous, open process against predetermined criteria”. The UN inspectors recommend that the Secretary-General establish criteria and terms of reference, including required competencies, qualifications and experience, expected from candidates for the posts of executive heads of UN funds, programmes and other subsidiary organs and entities (**JIU/REP/2009/8 para 42 Recommendation 2**).

It is now practice for the Secretary-General to set predetermined criteria to evaluate candidates for UN senior managerial positions (at the level of Under Secretary-General, Assistant Secretary-General and Special Envoy) and to convey these criteria to Member States when soliciting nominations (**Report of the Secretary-General, A64/640 para 43**).

The UN inspectors note that UNESCO and WHO have set a precedent within the UN system organizations to establish criteria for candidates running for the post of executive head. The UN Inspectors recognize that any criteria established for the UN Secretary-General need to take into account the broad-ranging nature of his or her mandate, role, and responsibilities. Yet they also believe that the adoption of criteria by legislative bodies of the UN system could enhance accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of the selection process and the search for the best candidate (**JIU/REP/2009/8 paras 48-53**).

We believe that it is only logical that such good UN and other international practice should now also apply to the selection of the UN’s top position, its Secretary-General.

- **d - be designed to promote gender parity and grounded in best practice on equality and diversity including encouraging candidacies from all regions**

The Preamble to the Charter emphasizes the equal rights of men and women, and Article 8 of the UN Charter states that men and women are eligible to participate in the UN’s principal

and subsidiary organs on an equal basis. **GA resolution 51/241** and subsequent **resolutions (60/286, 64/301 and 68/307)** require that due regard is given to gender equality when identifying and appointing the Secretary-General. Yet no Secretary-General has been a woman and women candidates were almost never considered⁷.

The Delphi Symposium recommended that far more effort should be made to include women among the candidates for Secretary-General.

Good practices already exist within the UN system. In the **2011 JIU Report (para 69)** the Inspectors report being informed that the Secretary-General “insists that the interview panel (for under Secretaries-General and Assistant Secretaries-General) should submit to him a choice of at least three candidates for any position, at least one of which is a woman. If this is not the case, he will return the proposed list and ask for a new search”. They further report that the Secretary-General “recognizes that on occasion, it has to be accepted that a female candidate cannot be found, but there must be valid justification and the Secretary-General must be satisfied that a proper search effort was made”. This process is also described in the Secretary-General’s report “Towards an accountability system in the United Nations (**A/64/640 para 43 c**). The current Secretary-General has pointed out that, as a result of such recruitment practices, “I have appointed a record number of women to high-level positions. I did not fill jobs with women just for the sake of it – I looked for the best possible candidate and I found that if you strip away discrimination, the best possible candidate is often a woman.”

Furthermore, in its most recent resolution on Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, the Assembly “Encourages Member States to seek gender balance in the distribution of Chairs of the Main Committees and in the position of the President of the General Assembly” (**resolution 68/307 para 23**).

- **e - be transparent to the wider UN membership**

The General Assembly, in **resolutions 51/241, 60/286, 64/301 and 67/297**, all adopted without a vote, emphasized, bearing in mind the provisions of Article 97 of the Charter, that the process to select the Secretary-General has to be inclusive of all Member States and made more transparent.

The **2011 JIU Report** includes several recommendations that seek to enhance transparency in the appointments of UN system heads that reflect the 10-point programme below, such as conducting hearings or meetings with candidates and establishing timelines. Transparency also requires prohibiting the practice of job reservations for certain Member States in return for candidacy support.

- **f - be transparent to civil society, the general public and media**

⁷ The only female candidates known to have been considered are Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit in 1953, Gro Harlem Brundtland in 1991 and Vaira Vike-Freiberga in 2006 (Colin Keating, Edited by Simon Chesterman, Op.cit. page 65).

GA resolutions 51/241, 60/286, 64/301, 65/315, 66/294, 67/297 and 68/307 all state, in general terms, that the selection process should be made more transparent, without restrictions (thus also covering transparency to civil society, the general public and the media).

The Charter of the United Nations, in its preamble, is declared in the name of ‘We the Peoples of the United Nations’. They deserve no less than transparency of the selection process of its top official, who, as the UN’s chief officer, embodies the UN’s values more than anybody else, as the 1945 Preparatory Commission also underlined.

In “We The Peoples”, former Secretary-General Kofi Annan reiterated this message saying “the United Nations exists for, and must serve, the needs and hopes of people everywhere”. More recently, on 21 September 2014, the present Secretary-General underlined his position’s function as serving people world-wide when he said: “I felt that I had become a Secretary-General of the people. I am the Secretary-General of the United Nations; I am now working for the people.”

- **g - be inclusive for all members of the General Assembly and open to appropriate input from civil society.**

*The General Assembly, in **resolutions 60/286 Annex para 18, 64/301 Annex para 14, 65/315 para 22, 66/294 para 26, 67/297 para 24 and 68/307 para 26**, all adopted without a vote, emphasized, bearing in mind the provisions of Article 97 of the Charter, the need for the process to select the Secretary-General to be inclusive of all Member States.*

*The 2011 JIU Report has recognized the need for input from civil society as valuable in the process of making senior UN appointments. The UN inspectors recommend that a dedicated website on senior appointments in the UN should include “an indication of intent to advertise in the print media as well as an indication of the need for input from civil society so as to cast the net more widely” (**JIU/REP2011/12 para 88 (d)**). Leading UN experts recommend “a process for contribution of suggestions for the office by all governments, parliaments and the public and for their comments on the short list” from the first stage of work by the Security Council⁸.*

*In practice, candidates for the position of Secretary-General have increasingly engaged with civil society including with NGOs in the course of the selection process. In August 2006 several candidates responded to detailed NGO Candidate Questionnaires soliciting their views on their background and vision for the position (**UNSGselection.org / Questionnaire Responses**).*

Civil society organizations are sometimes consulted directly in the selection process of senior UN officials. The UN’s Senior Management Group reported that Navi Pillay had been appointed as the new High Commissioner for Human Rights on 28 July 2008 ‘at the end of an extensive selection process, which included consultations with Member States and with the broad-based non-governmental organization community’. Another example of good

⁸ Urquhart and Childers, Op.cit., page 33.

practice is that some states now invite proposals from civil society for good candidates for top human rights positions (such as the High Commissioner for Human Rights).

II Process – Ten point programme

A comprehensive reform of the selection process for future UN Secretaries-General should include all of the following ten points:

1. The position and qualifications should be advertised in all countries with a call for nominations by Member States, parliaments and civil society organisations and a closing date for nominations.

*Advertising: It is UN practice to place advertisements of senior positions ‘as needed’ in the print media and on UN websites (**Secretary-General’s report A/64/640 para 43 (c)**). This should now also apply to the position of UN Secretary-General.*

*The 2011 JIU Report includes the guideline that vacancy announcements be issued for all positions (except special envoys and personal advisers) as soon as it is known that there will be a vacancy and that they be published on a dedicated website (**JIU/REP/2011/2 para 87 (b) and para 88**).*

*Nomination: All UN member states have allocated a consultative role to the President of the General Assembly in the nomination process: “Without prejudice to the prerogatives of the Security Council, the President of the General Assembly may consult with Member States to identify potential candidates endorsed by Member States and, upon informing all Member States of the results, may forward those results to the Security Council” (**resolutions 51/241 para 60, 60/286 para 19, and 64/301 para 14**). Moreover, in its most recent resolution of 10 September 2014 on revitalization, the General Assembly “encourages... the President of the General Assembly to actively support this process in accordance with the role accorded to him or her by relevant resolutions” (**resolution 68/95 para 27**).*

In order to find the best candidates and to enhance inclusivity of the process, not only Member States, but also parliaments and civil society have an important contribution to make in the nomination process⁹. The Security Council and the General Assembly should rescind the rule introduced in 2006 to restrict candidacies to only those presented by Member States¹⁰. This is an unnecessary obstacle to considering all strongly qualified candidates for the post, including those who may not have been able to get endorsement from their own or another government

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⁹ See also Urquhart and Childers, Op.cit., page 33.

¹⁰ Letter of the President of the Security Council to the President of the General Assembly, dated 2 June 2006. The practice is also reflected in General Assembly resolution 60/286, para 19.

advertise in the print media as well as an indication of the need for input from civil society so as to cast the net more widely” (JIU/REP2011/12 para 88 (d)).

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2. The UN should publish a formal list of selection criteria; these criteria should stress that the best person, male or female, should be chosen irrespective of their region of origin (annex 1).

Criteria for the Secretary-General

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Important is the far sighted **1945 report by the UN Preparatory Commission (P/C 20 of 23 December 1945, Chapter VIII, section 2 B)**. The Commission drafted a list of principal functions assigned to the Secretary-General “explicitly or by inference” by the Charter, grouped under six headings: general administrative and executive functions, technical functions, financial functions, organization and administration of the Secretariat, political functions and representational functions.

The Commission described skills and qualities the candidates should possess, including administrative and executive qualities to integrate the whole complex of United Nations organs, leadership qualities to determine the character and efficiency of the Secretariat, skills to lead a team from many different countries and build the necessary team spirit, moral authority, the ability to act as a mediator, the capacity to act as an informal adviser or confidant to many governments, the highest qualities of political judgement, tact and integrity and communication skills to present the United Nations to the public at large.

Unfortunately, it was never formally adopted. Nor does the list fully reflect the current requirements for the position which has increased in complexity and has assumed foremost importance for world peace and security given the Secretary-General’s powers under Article 99 of the Charter to draw the Security Council’s attention to threats to international peace and security.

The **Delphi Symposium** held in honour of the UN’s fifth Secretary-General in May 2010 (including former foreign ministers, ambassadors and secretariat officials) identified

important qualities needed by a strong and independent Secretary-General in dealing with the enormous challenges posed in the 21st century. These include integrity, independence and moral courage, capacity for moral, intellectual and political leadership, sophisticated diplomatic skills essential for a mediator and crisis manager, apart from managerial capacity, charisma and contemporary media skills.

*The General Assembly has outlined some very broad criteria for candidates in its **resolution 60/286 of 8 September 2006** in which the **GA (in A 22)**: “... emphasizes the importance of candidates for the post of Secretary-General possessing and displaying, inter alia, commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the UN, extensive leadership, and administrative and diplomatic experience...”.*

*However, these broadly defined terms fall far short of the specific criteria and qualifications now specified for international executive head positions including several in the UN system, such as the World Health Organization (**WHO Executive Board, resolution EB97.R10**), UNESCO (**UNESCO document 180 EX/28, Appendix**), and the International Civil Aviation Organization (**Doc 7559/8- Rules of Procedure for the Council, Appendix C**). The World Trade Organization has outlined five broad selection criteria for the appointment of its Director-General (**Procedures for the appointment of Directors-General, WT/L/509, para 9**).*

Criteria as part of the process

*As stated above under c, the UN inspectors observe in their 2009 report that the UN Secretary-General has put in place, in 2005, a new selection process for all senior UN officials, “aimed at ensuring a much wider search for qualified candidates and allowing for a rigorous, open process against predetermined criteria”. The UN inspectors recommend that the Secretary-General establish criteria and terms of references, including required competencies, qualifications and experience, expected from candidates for the posts of executive heads of UN funds, programmes and other subsidiary organs and entities (**JIU/REP/2009/8, para.42 Recommendation 2**).*

*It is now practice for the Secretary-General to set predetermined criteria to evaluate candidates for UN senior managerial positions (at the level of Under Secretary-General, Assistant Secretary-General and Special Envoy) and to convey these criteria to Member States when soliciting nominations (**Report of the Secretary-General A64/640, para 43**).*

*The UN inspectors note that UNESCO and WHO have set a precedent within the UN system organizations to establish criteria for candidates running for the post of executive head. The UN Inspectors recognize that any criteria established for the UN Secretary-General need to take into account the broad-ranging nature of his or her mandate, role and responsibilities. Yet they also believe that the adoption of criteria by legislative bodies of the UN system could enhance accountability, efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of the selection process and the search for the best candidate (**JIU/REP/2009/8 paras 48-53**). This also applies to the General Assembly, appointing the Secretary-General.*

It is only logical that such good UN and other international practice should now apply to the selection of the UN's top position, its Secretary-General.

3. A clear timetable for the selection process should be made public as early as possible by the President of the General Assembly and President of the Security Council to coincide with the call for nominees.

*As stated above under b, there is no time table for the selection of the Secretary-General apart from a vague provision in General Assembly **resolution 51/241 (para. 61)** that the Secretary-General should be appointed as early as possible, preferably no later than one month before the date on which the term of the incumbent expires. Using the last appointment as an example, agreement was reached in April 2006 by the Presidents of the Security Council and the General Assembly that the recruitment process for the position – falling vacant on 31 December 2006 - would start in June/July and be completed by September/October.¹¹ The current Secretary-General was appointed on 13 October 2006.*

*In the **2009 JIU report**, the UN inspectors noted that the FAO, IAEA, ILO, ITU, UNESCO, UNIDO, WHO and WIPO, all UN system organizations, have detailed timelines for the selection of their executive heads established by their legislative bodies. They hold the view that the establishment of clear timelines for the selection process would minimize delays in appointing a new executive head and allow for a smooth transition. They recommend that legislative bodies of UN system organizations that have not yet done so – which includes the General Assembly – should establish timelines for the selection process of their executive heads ending at least three months before the expiring date of the mandate of the incumbent, to ensure a smooth transition (**JIU/REP/2009/8 paras.54-58**). Senior expert observers have pointed out that the adoption of a timetable for the entire procedure is essential for the General Assembly to carry out its actual responsibility to appoint the Secretary-General¹².*

*The **2011 JIU report** includes a guideline on selection and appointment of senior managers that a dedicated UN website should include an expected time-line specifying a deadline for applications, the date when candidates selected for interviews will be contacted, when interviewed candidates will be informed of the results of the recruitment process, when consultations are expected to be conducted and when the final selection is announced (**JIU/REP/2011/2 para 88(e)**).*

Applying a similar approach to the Secretary-General's appointment would provide clarity to candidates, UN Member States and interested observers, support a smooth transition and help bring the selection process in line with UN system organizations and high-level international appointments.

4. A list of all the official candidates and their CVs should be published by the President of the General Assembly at the end of the nomination phase and by the President of the Security Council when it considers its list of preferred candidates.

¹¹ See footnote 5 above

¹² See footnote 6 above.

*General Assembly resolutions encourage the President of the General Assembly to consult with Member States to identify potential candidates endorsed by a Member State and forward the results to the Security Council (**resolutions 60/286 annex para 19 and 51/241 annex para 60**). The active role of the President of the General Assembly in this process was reinforced in the GA's most recent resolution (**68/307 para 27**).*

As stated above under 1, the Security Council and the General Assembly should rescind the rule introduced in 2006 to restrict candidacies to only those presented by Member States¹³. This is an unnecessary obstacle to considering all strongly qualified candidates for the post, including those who may not have been able to get endorsement from their own or another government.

5. The President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council should be jointly responsible for regularly updating the UN membership and general public on the selection process once the full list of candidates has been announced.

*This practical arrangement reflects the shared responsibility for the Secretary-General's appointment accorded by the UN Charter to the Security Council and the General Assembly (**Article 97**).*

6. All candidates should make clear their leadership vision and goals for the position. This should include policy priorities and a commitment to selecting senior UN officials on the basis of merit, irrespective of their country of origin.

Several international organizations request candidates for top positions to articulate their vision for the post at formal or informal meetings. For example, the World Trade Organization (WTO) invites candidates shortly after the closing of the nomination period to present their vision of the WTO, followed by a question and answer session.

*In the course of the last selection process of the Secretary-General several candidates gave substantive responses to a detailed NGO questionnaire requesting them to explain their vision and policies (**UNSGselection.org / Questionnaire Responses**).*

A commitment to select senior UN Officials on the basis of merit, irrespective of their country of origin, flows from Article 101(3) of the Charter, stating: "The paramount consideration in the employment of the staff and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity. Due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible."

7. Once the names of all candidates have been announced, the General Assembly should organise a series of open sessions that will enable

¹³ See footnote 10 above.

Member States as well as the public and media to scrutinise candidates and their platforms.

*General Assembly **resolutions 60/168 annex para 20 and 51/241 annex para 60** encourage formal presentation of candidatures for the Secretary-General position in a manner that allows sufficient time for interaction with Member States, and requests candidates to present their views to all States members of the General Assembly.*

The 2009 JIU report recalls that many Member States welcome having hearings/meetings with candidates, provided there is full compliance with Articles 7, 27 and 97 of the Charter. The JIU inspectors highlight that UN specialized agencies, including UNESCO, the WHO and WIPO have introduced hearings/meetings of their legislative bodies with candidates running for executive head positions (in closed meetings) as an integral part of the selection process. They report that other international organizations, including the Comprehensive Nuclear-test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization also have such formal or informal meetings with candidates by their legislative bodies.

The inspectors recognize that the election of the Secretary-General is unique in nature compared to the election of other senior UN officials but nevertheless believe that prevailing practice elsewhere in the UN system is also suitable for the election of the Secretary-General. They consider this to be useful and best practice that increases the transparency and credibility of the selection process (JIU/REP/2009/8, paras 32 – 35).

This view is shared by many UN Member States. Heads of State and Government of the Non Aligned Movement, at their 16th Summit meeting in August 2012 “agreed that formal presentation of candidatures for the position of Secretary-General should be done in a manner that allows sufficient time for interaction with Member States in the General Assembly and the Security Council and requested that during the selection process of the SG, the PGA convenes a meeting of the General Assembly for an exchange of views and dialogue with all candidates” (Tehran Draft Final Document para 88).

The public and media should also be able to scrutinize candidates. There is good practice for candidate judges for the International Criminal Court being questioned by diplomats and NGOs as happened in September 2014 in New York. Most candidates running in the 2006 elections for Secretary-General participated in questions and answer sessions before a selected audience at the International Peace Institute in New York. More recently, the eight shortlisted candidates for the post of Director-General of the World Health Organization participated in a two hour global public question and answer session linked across the world via video and tele-conferencing. At the UN, a formal or informal meeting could be convened by the General Assembly broadcasting a dialogue with candidates worldwide.

- 8. The General Assembly and Security Council should insist that candidates do not make promises to individual countries on senior appointments and Member States should undertake not to seek such promises.**

Not making promises to individual countries by candidates is in the spirit of the UN Charter. The Charter emphasizes the independence of the Secretary-General and the duty of Member States not to seek to influence him or her: **Article 100 (1)** states : “In the performance of their duties the Secretary-General... shall not seek or receive instructions from any government or from any other authority external to the Organization..... **(2)** Each Member of the United Nations undertakes to respect the exclusively international character of the responsibilities of the Secretary-General and the staff and not to influence them in the discharge of their responsibilities”.

In the **2011 JIU report** the UN Inspectors observe that the information presented in Annex II of the report shows that certain positions in the UN Secretariat are reserved for certain member States and that “no Secretary-General has been immune to political pressure in this regard” (**JIU/REP/2011/2 para 81 and Annex II**, which contains a detailed list of individuals that have held the most senior UN positions and their nationalities).

The UN Inspectors recommend in their **2009 JIU report** that, for the purposes of accountability, ethics and transparency of the selection, the legislative/governing bodies of the UN system organizations should condemn and prohibit unethical practices such as promises, favours, invitations, gifts etc. provided by candidates for the post of executive head or their supporting governments during the selection/election campaign, in return for favourable votes for certain candidates (**JIU/REP/2009/8, para.88**).

Those rules must now also apply to the selection of the UN Secretary-General.

9. The General Assembly should request the Security Council to present two or more candidates for the General Assembly to consider [when appointing the Secretary-General].

The UN Charter states that “the Secretary-General shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council” (**Article 97**). However, the number of candidates to be considered is a matter that the General Assembly has addressed and feels competent to address, as is clear from the wording of resolution 11 (1) adopted in January 1946 which states: ‘It would be desirable for the Security Council to proffer only one candidate for the consideration of the General Assembly....’ (emphasis added). Many Member States, including all members of the Non Aligned Movement, have argued in discussions in the Ad Hoc Working Group on Revitalization of the General Assembly that the resolution is outdated and that the General Assembly should request to be presented with more than one candidate before making an appointment.

The 2009 JIU Report recalls that many Member States expressed the view that the Security Council may change its mind and recommend more than one candidate to the Security Council (**JIU/REP/2009/8, para 27**).

The Delphi Symposium recommended that the Security Council should consider forwarding more than one name as candidate for the General Assembly to select.

For the Security Council to present more than one candidate to the General Assembly means that the General Assembly will effectively make the appointment, but in fact will only be able to choose a candidate who has the support of the Security Council. The authority of the General Assembly to make substantive decisions on the appointment of a Secretary-General was evident in 1950 when it extended the term of the first UN Secretary-General, Trygve Lie, without a recommendation from the Security Council. The General Assembly was faced with the inability of the Security Council to make any recommendation on extension and there was no other candidate¹⁴.

10. The term of the Secretary-General should be limited to a single and non-renewable period of seven years.

*A General Assembly resolution of January 1945 specifies that the first Secretary-General shall be appointed for a five-year term, with an option for extension of another five years, adding that: "... The General Assembly and the Security Council are free to modify the term of office of future Secretaries-General in the light of experience" (**Resolution 11(1) paragraphs 3 and 4(a)**). In a resolution of 22 August 1997, the General Assembly stressed that the option of a single term must be considered by the General Assembly before the appointment of the next Secretary-General: "The duration of the terms of appointment, including the option of a single term, shall be considered before the appointment of the next Secretary-General (**resolution 51/241 Annex paragraph 58**). However, the General Assembly never did so before the then next Secretary-General was appointed in October 2006. It must consider the option of a one term appointment now.*

Furthermore, the Delphi Symposium was widely supportive of a single term of office, perhaps of seven years duration, as it would strengthen the position and independence of the Secretary-General and give him or her a clear run to achieve long term goals. Former senior UN officials have recommended one seven-year term as effective¹⁵.

¹⁴ Keating, Editor Chesterman, Op.cit. page 49

¹⁵ Urquhart and Childers, Op.cit., pages 60 - 61.

Annex: Selection Criteria for Choosing the UN Secretary-General

The UN should adopt a set of formal criteria and qualifications. They should be made public and guide all stakeholders in proposing candidates and in selecting the best-qualified individual to become Secretary-General of the United Nations.

These should include:

- A comprehensive understanding of, and demonstrated commitment to, the purposes and principles of the UN Charter including peace and security, human rights and development.
- The possession and display of the highest qualities of moral authority, independence, integrity and courage.
- A demonstrated capacity for moral, intellectual and political leadership of an international organisation and capacity to provide leadership to the wider UN system.
- A proven ability to manage a complex international organization.
- Sophisticated diplomatic, mediation and problem-solving skills.
- Speaking and media skills required to be an effective and inspiring global communicator.
- Proven multicultural understanding and sensitivity to equality and diversity.
- A track record showing a willingness to work with civil society and all other relevant stakeholders