

H.E. Volkan Bozkir
President of the General Assembly
United Nations Headquarters
New York, NY 10017, United States

28 January 2021

Dear Mr Bozkir,

I am writing on behalf of 1 for 7 Billion, a civil society campaign that contributed to securing a more open and inclusive process for selecting the UN Secretary-General in 2015/16. Your predecessor, Mogens Lykketoft, was instrumental in driving change five years ago, and we are delighted to see you taking forward this work through your leadership to date.

We welcome your strong commitment to consolidating the improvements achieved through GA Resolution 69/321, as expressed in your letter to Member States dated 11 January 2021. We also welcome the swift follow-up action you have taken on crafting a joint General Assembly / Security Council letter to inform Member States about the timeline and process for soliciting and engaging with candidates. In 2015, this letter marked the formal start of the improved process and we hope that it will be finalised soon to allow sufficient time for all Member States to engage.

We further welcome your recognition of the positive role played by civil society in the 2015/16 process. 1 for 7 Billion is proud to have generated public awareness of, and engagement with this process and through it, the United Nations. By the time the appointment was made, our coalition comprised over 750 NGOs from all regions representing more than 170 million supporters. We organised public events with candidates and surveyed over 35,000 people across 160 countries on their priorities for the next Secretary-General.

We were also delighted to have worked closely with Mr Lykketoft on proposals for strengthening the existing process, many of which were reflected in Resolution 69/321 and all of which gained traction with the UN's membership. And we were pleased that the process is widely seen to have contributed to the revitalization of the General Assembly -- the UN's chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ.

As the 2021 selection process gets underway, we very much hope we can continue our productive partnership with the OPGA and support your important work in ensuring that the hard-won gains of 2015/16 are built upon.

We firmly believe that the last process represents the baseline for what must happen this year, and we hope that further opportunities to strengthen the process and the General Assembly's role will be found. These include, for example: clarity on the schedule of the appointment process; more streamlined informal dialogues to avoid repetition of questions; greater civil society involvement in the informal dialogues; dedicated town halls with candidates; and media partnerships to ensure the global public is informed and engaged.

We would be delighted to have the opportunity to discuss these ideas in more detail with you and your team.

Your sincerely,



Ben Donaldson on behalf of the 1 for 7 Billion team