

The UN Secretary-General Selection and Appointment Process: Emerging from the Shadows



The General Assembly held informal dialogues on 12-14 April with nine candidates for the position of the next Secretary-General of the United Nations. (UN Photo/Manuel Elias)

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Security Council Report (SCR) published its first report anticipating this selection and appointment process—Appointing the UN Secretary-General—in October 2015, setting out the history of the process and procedure, and describing previous proposals for change. Our second report—Appointing the UN Secretary-General: The Challenge for the Security Council—examined the major developments from October 2015 to June 2016. Throughout the process, we recorded the developments in SCR's regular

publications, the *Monthly Forecast* and *What's in Blue*. This final report provides a comprehensive account of developments in the Security Council and General Assembly from the beginning to the end of the process, describing the major changes that culminated in the choice of António Guterres as the next Secretary-General. It includes an assessment of the process based on interviews with the key actors from the Council, the General Assembly and civil society, as well as observations and options for improving the process further.

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On 6 October, in a decision which Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin described as “maybe the best success of the Security Council in the past five years,” the Council recommended to the General Assembly that António Guterres be appointed the ninth UN Secretary-General for a term of office from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2021. On 13 October, the General Assembly adopted its resolution making the appointment. The selection process that resulted in this appointment was the culmination of a historic change in a process that had been shrouded in secrecy throughout its history. It also marked the first time since 1950 that the General Assembly played a significant role in the selection of the Secretary-General.

The UN Charter devotes just 16 words to the appointment of the Secretary-General. Article 97 of the Charter states:

“The Secretary-General shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.”

In 1946, General Assembly resolution 11 (I) established ground rules for the appointment process, including terms and conditions of employment, length of term of office—subject to modification—and possibility of reappointment. It also declared that it would be desirable for the Security Council to proffer one candidate only for the consideration of the General Assembly.

For 70 years, the most significant evolution in this process took place within the Council, as it introduced the use of straw polls to determine the viability of candidates ahead of a formal vote. Since 1997, members of the General Assembly have discussed several proposals aimed at improving the transparency and inclusivity of the selection process, and finding a role for the wider membership of the UN, but these discussions led to no change in the process.

Regarding the selection process that was

to culminate in 2016, a strong civil society campaign for change, and a mood among members of the General Assembly that they were not willing to acquiesce quietly in a business as usual exercise after years of increasing frustration at the lack of progress in Council reform, were the drivers behind significant changes in the process. Key roles among member states were played by Costa Rica and Estonia on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) Group, and Croatia, as one of the two co-chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly (hereafter the Revitalization Working Group). A strong president of the General Assembly was crucial to effective implementation of the changes. An active group of elected members ensured that the new mood was reflected in the Council, and permanent members, while retaining ultimate control, accepted that the process had undergone some fundamental shifts as a result of the changes generated by the General Assembly.

The first step was a ground breaking General Assembly resolution, adopted in September 2015, that created the framework for a more transparent process. This led to unprecedented public dialogues with the candidates that tested a broad set of skills, providing the UN membership as well as a global audience with an insight into the thinking of candidates and how they presented themselves in front of a large audience. Council members had to come to their decision on a recommendation to the General Assembly in very different circumstances than in the past. While the modalities in the Council—straw polls and a private meeting to vote on the recommendation—were not much different from past selection processes, the environment created by the preceding transparent process in the General Assembly impacted the Council’s decision-making.

Part I: Achieving Change

Role of Civil Society and Member States

By early 2015, there was growing interest in the process to select the Secretary-General who would replace Ban Ki-moon. The process

got off to an early and active start, partly due to the efforts of ACT—made up of 25 member states from all regional groups—and civil society campaigners, including 1 for 7 Billion—an alliance of NGOs—and The Elders—an

Part I: Achieving Change (cont)

independent group of global leaders working to promote peace and human rights. ACT and 1 for 7 Billion appear to have learnt from the 2006 selection process the importance of starting efforts to improve the transparency and openness of the process as early as possible. They provided specific proposals and raised awareness among member states of the case for reform. Member states and civil society worked together in organising events to publicise their proposals to the UN community, and 1 for 7 Billion lobbied diplomatic missions at the same time as mobilising civil society organisations. Although they did not have common positions on all issues, such as geographic rotation and a single term of office for the Secretary-General, all these groups shared a broad common desire to achieve greater transparency and inclusiveness, based on a timetable for the selection process and dialogues for candidates with all members of the General Assembly.

The General Assembly has an opportunity to discuss the selection of the Secretary-General each year when the Revitalization Working Group considers its annual resolution. In 2015, an early indication that there was beginning to be a groundswell for change was a thematic debate on the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General on 27 April 2015 where 33 delegations spoke, with many calling for specific improvements in the process, particularly in relation to strengthening the General Assembly's role. Other areas covered were regional rotation and gender equality, establishing a clear timetable with early deadlines and a list of candidates, and open exchanges with candidates including through informal meetings of the General Assembly or interactive dialogues. Some members argued for appointment for a single non-renewable term of office, and others for multiple candidates to be recommended by the Council for the General Assembly to decide upon. The UK was the first permanent member of the Council to express support for significant change, including gender equality; a "predictable timetable" with clear deadlines to ensure sufficient time for the engagement of all member states; and greater "transparency and scrutiny of the candidates".

A Landmark General Assembly Resolution

In June 2015, the co-chairs of the Revitalization Working Group, Croatia and

Namibia, began negotiations on a draft text of the annual resolution on the revitalisation of the work of the General Assembly. After intense negotiations, resolution 69/321 was eventually adopted on 11 September 2015. It included new language on themes that had been raised over the years on the issue of the Secretary-General selection process, introducing significant changes. Having repeated long-standing calls for the process to be guided by the principles of transparency and inclusiveness and for the participation of all member states, for the first time joint activity by the General Assembly and Security Council was specified and the General Assembly resolved to hear from candidates itself. The key elements were:

- a call for the Security Council and General Assembly presidents to start the process through a joint letter describing the selection process and inviting candidates to be presented in a timely manner;
- a request for the two presidents to jointly circulate information on candidates on an ongoing basis;
- "equal and fair distribution based on gender and geographical balance" to be taken into consideration, and member states to consider presenting women as candidates;
- the need to ensure the appointment of the best possible candidate who embodies "the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity" as well as demonstrating a firm commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN;
- selection criteria for candidates specified as "proven leadership and managerial abilities, extensive experience in international relations and strong diplomatic, communications and multilingual skills";
- a decision that the General Assembly would conduct informal dialogues or meetings with candidates, without prejudice to any candidate who does not participate; and
- a request for the presidents of the relevant sessions of the General Assembly to actively support this process.

The negotiations on the draft resolution revealed some clear divisions. The co-chairs stressed that nothing in the draft resolution would require any changes to the UN Charter and that its adoption would not impinge on the authority of the Council in the selection process. They emphasised that the resolution

should be adopted by consensus as had been the case in the past, and that the red lines of the permanent members were to be respected. This approach, while requiring compromise on issues that were important to several members, allowed permanent members to eventually support the resolution. In the course of the negotiations, China, Russia and the US favoured the status quo, underlined the Council's primary responsibility in choosing the Secretary-General, and opposed a deadline for nominations. However, with the UK and to a lesser extent France favouring more transparency, the US was eventually willing to accept some reform of the process. China did not actively oppose the draft resolution, leaving Russia isolated. Although the draft resolution was eventually adopted by consensus, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) had raised the possibility of putting the resolution to a vote. The fact that it had the authority of a General Assembly consensus behind it was significant for its implementation.

ACT members as well as NAM played an important role in shaping the resolution and were successful in getting a number of their key demands included in the final text. NAM members had some strong views, most notably insisting that multiple candidates be recommended by the Council, but they were not particularly united.

Two areas on which no agreement could be reached were multiple candidates and a single—probably longer—term of office. The NAM group pushed for language on multiple candidates but this was firmly opposed by Russia and the US. Liechtenstein, supported by Costa Rica and other member states, promoted the proposal to limit the Secretary-General's term to a "single, non-renewable period of seven years". Although there was broad support for further discussion of the proposal, it was opposed by some other member states.

The Joint Letter

It was clear from resolution 69/321 that the process would start through a joint letter from the presidents of the Council and the General Assembly to all member states. The resolution asked for the letter to contain a description of the entire process and for candidates to be presented in a timely manner. Soon after the adoption of the resolution, it became clear that a number of Council members were keen to see the text of the letter

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finalised by the end of 2015. Russia, however, preferred to wait until 2016, when the composition of the Council that would recommend the next Secretary-General was in place. The process of drafting a joint letter led to an unusual collaborative process between the Council and the General Assembly, and provided the General Assembly with a bigger role in the process from the outset.

Elements of a draft joint letter were first presented by the president of the 70th session of the General Assembly, Mogens Lykketoft (Denmark)—who assumed office just days after the adoption of the resolution—at the monthly meeting of the presidents of the Council and the General Assembly at the start of the Spanish presidency in October 2015. During the next monthly meeting of the two presidents, the UK, as president of the Council for November, presented for discussion a draft letter, which included the elements suggested by Lykketoft. Further inputs from Lykketoft were incorporated into the draft text, which was circulated to all 15 Council members on 16 November. The first discussion of the draft text in the Council took place on 18 November under “any other business”. This was followed by three revisions of the draft text. It was then put under silence procedure on 3 December, but Russia broke silence. Further negotiations in a meeting on 9 December between Russia, the UK and Lykketoft resolved final issues. Following a further silence procedure commencing on 12 December, the letter was issued on 15 December 2015, signed jointly by Lykketoft and the December Council president, Ambassador Samantha Power (US).

At the start of the month-long negotiations, some members, particularly China and Russia, expressed concern that the initial draft text presented by the UK went beyond General Assembly resolution 69/321. Controversial issues were the inclusion of a timeline for different steps in the appointment process, how to specify the qualities expected of a UN Secretary-General, references to geographic balance or rotation, references to gender, the issue of Council meetings with candidates, and whether only member states could nominate candidates.

With regard to the timeline, China and Russia were of the view that the 2016 process should follow closely that of 2006. That

year, the Council conducted its first straw poll on 24 July and made its decision on its recommendation on 9 October. Russia was also against including specific details for the timing of the nomination of candidates or when the process for the appointment of the Secretary-General should be concluded; the UK pressed for early nominations with a clear deadline, while wanting, like other permanent members, to keep open the possibility of late entrants. The agreed language in the final draft was that the selection process would begin “by the end of July,” and that the Council plans to make its recommendation to the General Assembly “in a timely manner so that appointment by the General Assembly allows the newly appointed Secretary-General sufficient time to prepare for the job.”

The issue of how to refer to geographic balance or rotation was also contentious. It seems that Russia wanted to refer to a “tradition of geographic rotation” rather than to “the need to ensure equal and fair distribution based on...geographical balance”, noting that this latter language was used in resolution 69/321 in reference to the appointment of the executive heads of the UN in general, not the Secretary-General alone. The eventual compromise was to “note the regional diversity in the selection of previous Secretaries-General.” Gender was a less fraught issue, with all members appearing comfortable with a reference to women candidates being encouraged to apply.

Russia strongly maintained that only member states should be able to nominate candidates and wanted this to be clear in the joint letter, while other members were open to the presentation of candidates by other stakeholders. In the end, the joint letter encouraged member states to consider presenting candidates, which was generally interpreted to mean that civil society organisations would not be able to nominate candidates.

A final issue was whether informal dialogues and meetings with the candidates could be organised by Council members other than the president. The UK, which had publicly stated that it proposed to use the Arria-formula format to hold meetings with candidates in early 2016, and did not have a 2016 presidency, was particularly keen to have a formulation which left open this

possibility. The final draft stated that “The President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council will offer candidates opportunities for informal dialogues or meetings with the members of their respective bodies...”. Although this language, consistent with resolution 69/321, left open the possibility that candidates could choose not to meet with the members of the Council or the General Assembly, all the candidates chose to participate in the informal dialogues in the General Assembly and in informal meetings with Council members.

The Nomination Process

Following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 69/321 and with the issuing of the joint letter, a clearly defined nomination process was put in place for the first time, with greater involvement from the General Assembly. The presidents of the Council and the General Assembly jointly notified member states immediately when candidates were formally nominated by circulating letters from the nominating countries. All the candidates provided a curriculum vitae, along with vision statements regarding how they would address the most pressing issues facing the UN, which were posted on a dedicated webpage set up by the president of the General Assembly¹.

This more open selection process saw the largest ever field of candidates formally nominated. There were 13 candidates, with nine from Eastern Europe, the region which was laying claim to the position, and seven women. The chair of the Eastern European Group (EEG) wrote to UN member states in November 2014 recalling that Eastern Europe is the only regional group that has not had a Secretary-General, and maintaining that the “principle” of regional rotation should be respected in the appointment of the Secretary-General. While nine of the 13 candidates nominated were from Eastern Europe, candidates from New Zealand and Portugal (both from the Western European and Others Group or WEOG) and from Argentina and Costa Rica (from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries or GRULAC) also entered the race. The strong advocacy by some groups for a first woman Secretary-General appears to have succeeded in encouraging the nomination of a larger number of women than ever before. In 15 elections held

1. <http://www.un.org/pga/71/sg/>

Part I: Achieving Change (cont)

over the last 70 years for the post of UN Secretary-General, only three women had been seriously considered as candidates: Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit (India) in 1953, Gro Harlem Brundtland (Norway) in 1991, and Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga (Latvia) in 2006.

Even before the joint letter was issued, two candidates had been nominated by their governments, but they had to be re-nominated in accordance with the letter. The first nomination for the post of Secretary-General following the joint letter was received on 18 December 2015, the last on 28 September 2016.

The thirteen candidates were (in order of nomination):

- **Srgjan Kerim** (Macedonia), former Minister of Foreign Affairs and former President of the 62nd session of the General Assembly; nominated on 18 December 2015.
- **Vesna Pusić** (Croatia), former First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs; nominated on 5 January 2016.
- **Igor Lukšić** (Montenegro), Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and former Prime Minister; nominated on 14 January 2016.
- **Danilo Türk** (Slovenia), former President of Slovenia and former UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs; nominated on 3 February 2016.
- **Irina Bokova** (Bulgaria), Director-General of UN Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization and former Minister of Foreign Affairs a.i.; nominated on 9 February 2016.
- **Natalia Gherman** (Moldova), former First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration; nominated on 18 February 2016.
- **António Guterres** (Portugal), former UN High Commissioner for Refugees and former Prime Minister; nominated on 29 February 2016.
- **Helen Clark** (New Zealand), Administrator of UN Development Programme and former Prime Minister; nominated on 4 April 2016.
- **Vuk Jeremić** (Serbia), former Foreign Minister and former President of the 67th session of the General Assembly; nominated on 12 April 2016.
- **Susana Malcorra** (Argentina), Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship, former Chef de Cabinet to the UN Secretary-General; nominated on 18 May 2016.
- **Miroslav Lajčák** (Slovakia), Minister of Foreign and European Affairs and former High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina; nominated on 25 May 2016.
- **Christiana Figueres** (Costa Rica), former Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; nominated on 7 July 2016.
- **Kristalina Georgieva** (Bulgaria), Vice President, European Commission; nominated on 28 September 2016.

Part II: General Assembly Activities

Informal Hearings and Town Hall Meeting

The most significant change to the selection process was the participation of the candidates in the informal dialogue sessions in the General Assembly, in accordance with resolution 69/321. These were generally referred to as “hearings”, although the Revitalization Working Group negotiations had avoided the term.

In 2006, several of the candidates had participated in meetings of regional groups of the General Assembly, or cross-regional meetings such as the Forum of Small States. However, 2016 was the first time that candidates were questioned in public by the full UN membership, and with some civil society participation.

The first round of informal dialogues was held from 12 to 14 April, with the nine candidates² who had been nominated up to that date. Further rounds were held on 7 June³,

14 July⁴, and 3 October⁵ for the four candidates who had entered the race after the April sessions. Each candidate was given a two-hour time slot, opening with a ten-minute presentation, after which they took a wide range of questions from representatives of member states and regional groups, reflecting their current concerns and expectations of the next Secretary-General. Council members participated actively, with the exception of China, which associated itself with the questions by the G77, and Russia. Each candidate also received questions from civil society actors. The UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) solicited questions from civil society via social media or through an online form, and more than 1500 questions were submitted from over 70 countries⁶. A volunteer “Civil Society Committee” worked with UN-NGLS and the Office of the President of the General Assembly (OPGA) to create a

shortlist of questions from many regions, and two or three questions were asked through video-recordings during the hearings. The hearings were webcast and remain accessible online. Candidates were also given an opportunity to do a media stakeout following their session. These hearings provided for the first time a public platform for the candidates to present their visions and ideas for a better organisation to the UN membership, as well as to a global audience. Separately, some civil society groups organised public debates or discussions with the candidates, providing a further opportunity for them to elaborate on their visions for the UN.

On 12 July 2016, the President of the General Assembly organised a Global Town Hall event, which was broadcast live on Al Jazeera TV, and in which ten of the then 12 candidates participated. The reaction from candidates as well as from member states to the Global

2. 12 April: Igor Lukšić (Montenegro), Irina Bokova (Bulgaria), António Guterres (Portugal); 13 April: Natalia Gherman (Moldova), Vesna Pusić (Croatia), Danilo Türk (Slovenia); 14 April: Vuk Jeremić (Serbia); Srgjan Kerim (Macedonia); Helen Clark (New Zealand).

3. Miroslav Lajčák (Slovakia) and Susana Malcorra (Argentina)

4. Christiana Figueres (Costa Rica)

5. Kristalina Georgieva (Bulgaria)

6. <http://www.unngls.world>

Part II: General Assembly Activities (cont)

Town Hall was mixed. Some praised it as an effective way of assessing the ability of candidates to handle tougher questions in front of a global audience, a useful skill for a UN Secretary-General. Others were more critical, suggesting that it was a format that might be suitable for national elections, but not for the Secretary-General selection process. Some candidates found it the most difficult format, while others appeared to relish the challenge.

The exposure of the candidates to the full

UN membership, as well as to a global audience, is seen as having been a crucial factor in creating a more open selection process, as well as one that ultimately had an impact on Council decision-making. The equal access to information about all the candidates created a level of transparency that was in stark contrast to the early decades of the selection of the Secretary-General, where there was no public record of who was being considered for the position, no

written information, and names were simply suggested, almost always by permanent members. The 2016 hearings provided an insight into member states' expectations of the next Secretary-General, as well as an opportunity to assess the approach of each candidate to the challenges facing the UN. While *realpolitik* was no doubt not absent in the selection process, Council positions were shaped by hearing from the candidates in these different settings.

Part III: Security Council Activities

The Early Council Discussions

The Council first discussed the Secretary-General selection process in July 2015 during New Zealand's presidency, at a breakfast among the permanent representatives to discuss the programme of work for the month. At the end of the previous month, under Malaysia's presidency, the issue had been raised by some members during the wrap-up session. On 18 November 2015, Council members discussed the draft joint letter circulated by the UK during consultations under "any other business".

Following the issuance of the joint letter in December 2015, there was a lull in activity in the Council on this issue. However, after the first round of General Assembly informal dialogues in April 2016, Council members were galvanised into considering the next steps for the Council. This led to a series of meetings among the ten elected members (E10), and it seems the five permanent members (P5) discussed the selection process very discreetly a few times. In all these meetings the main focus was procedure. There appears to have been no discussion in any of these meetings of the merits of the candidates.

Members were focused on a number of procedural issues that needed clarification, including the format of Council meetings with candidates; how the straw polls would be conducted—in particular when, or whether, colour-coded ballots to distinguish the votes and potential vetoes of permanent members, would be used; and how to update the UN membership and general public on the selection process. Other issues that were discussed,

particularly by the E10, were the timetable for the selection process, including the proposal that there should be a deadline for the nomination of candidates, and the possibility of recommending multiple candidates to the General Assembly.

The discussions about procedure were needed in part due to a limited understanding of how the process had been conducted in the past. Very few members had participated in a Secretary-General selection process. The then Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, was the only permanent member who had been in the Council during the 2006 process. Council members had access to documents used during the 2006 selection process, including a fact sheet produced by the Secretariat in 2006 based on the 1996 "Wisnumurti Guidelines,"⁷ and a paper produced by France during its presidency in July 2006. They were also briefed by the Security Council Affairs Division (SCAD) on the conduct of the selection process in the past. However, it was clear to many members that as a result of the new elements in the process, these documents needed updating. This led to increased activity among the E10, with New Zealand and Malaysia spearheading meetings to try and obtain a better understanding of pressing issues. The UK also brought together some of the elected members to discuss the possibility of revising the Wisnumurti Guidelines. Although a modified version of the Wisnumurti Guidelines was not issued, over this period a number of non-papers were produced as different

members attempted to address the outstanding procedural issues.

Deciding on Modalities for Meeting with Candidates and Straw Polls

At the start of May 2016, Council permanent representatives agreed at the monthly breakfast on the programme of work that their political coordinators would discuss the way forward for the Council. Among the immediate decisions that needed to be made were the modalities for meeting with candidates, since by then several candidates had requested a meeting with Council members.

Egypt, president of the Council for May, and Spain produced a non-paper on the outstanding issues, which was initially discussed among a small group of like-minded elected and permanent members. The paper focused on a number of key issues, including the modalities for Council meetings with candidates, when the initial round of straw polls should take place, communication with the candidates and the UN membership, and whether a shortlist of candidates should be created. However, in view of clear divisions on several issues, it was decided that it might be best to concentrate on the areas that needed immediate attention. A revised paper focused on next steps was used as the basis for further discussion among the political coordinators on 18 May, following which a summary of the views expressed was circulated.

On 25 May, Egypt raised the issue of the selection process under "any other business", in order to discuss the key points in

7. During Ambassador Nugroho Wisnumurti's (Indonesia) term as president of the Council in November 1996, he submitted a set of guidelines, including the use of colour-coded ballots, to facilitate the process. The "Wisnumurti Guidelines" were agreed on at a Council lunch on 12 November 1996 but were not issued as an official document. In December 1996, after the decision to appoint Kofi Annan had been made, the permanent representative of Italy, who was president for the month, circulated a limited number of copies of the guidelines.

Part III: Security Council Activities (cont)

the summary paper produced by the political coordinators: the timing of the first straw poll, how to communicate to the General Assembly the start of the selection process, and modalities of meetings with candidates. Although no decision was made on the first two issues, members agreed to meet informally with candidates who requested a meeting. The UK had initially proposed to use the Arria-formula format for interacting with candidates but by April most members, including the UK, had moved towards preferring a more confidential, informal format that could allow for a frank exchange of views, and complement rather than duplicate the General Assembly process. One of the concerns raised was that Council meetings with candidates might simply replicate the General Assembly's informal dialogues rather than provide further insights into how a candidate would perform as Secretary-General.

Council members held three informal meetings with candidates in June under the presidency of France, nine in July under the presidency of Japan, and one in October under the presidency of Russia. (See the table on page 15 for details.) These meetings were held at the permanent mission of the Council president of the month, with Council members allowed only two representatives each. The meetings lasted just one hour. It seems that although all Council members attended these informal meetings with candidates, some members were not represented at permanent representative level. The meetings were not followed, immediately or subsequently, by any collective discussion among Council members of the merits of the candidates.

The next issue that required Council attention was the conduct of the straw polls. It appears that there was no resistance to the practice of using straw polls to informally test the viability of the candidates. The use of straw polls in the selection of the UN Secretary-General was an innovation created to break the deadlock in 1981 between Kurt Waldheim (Austria), who after serving two terms as Secretary-General had chosen to run for an unprecedented third term, and Salim Ahmed Salim (Tanzania). Colour-coded ballot papers differentiating between permanent and elected members were used for the first time in 1991; they had previously been used in formal secret ballots, but this was the first time such a system was introduced in the

context of an informal vote. They have been part of every selection process since then.

As Council members moved towards the start of the straw poll stage of the process, the main areas of contention revolved around the appropriate starting date, and when to move to colour-coded ballots, or whether there should be colour-coded ballots at all. In previous selections, the number of colour-coded rounds has varied. In 1991 and 2006 the Council moved to a formal vote after only one colour-coded ballot, whereas in 1996 there were six colour-coded straw polls before the Council recommended Kofi Annan (Ghana) in a formal ballot.

During the discussion on the modalities for meeting candidates on 25 May, Russia circulated a draft letter from the Council president to the president of the General Assembly informing him that the Council intended to start the process of considering the candidates already presented on 21 July. It also circulated a paper on the procedure for straw polls, outlining its views on the modalities of the straw polls, largely based on what had been done in 2006.

On 1 June, when it took over the Council presidency, France circulated its own non-paper on the modalities for the 2016 selection process, which included an annex on the practice related to the straw polls. The non-paper described the main elements of the procedure followed in the Council in previous selection processes and covered the areas that needed to be agreed upon for the process in the Council in 2016, including the need for increased transparency, confidentiality of the process, a deadline for nominations, the start and modalities for conducting the straw polls, and the format for meetings with candidates.

On 7 June, an informal meeting, mainly at the permanent representative level, was held to discuss the French paper. Among the matters considered were the start of the straw polls and modalities for conducting them. The joint letter had indicated that the Council would begin its selection “by the end of July”, leaving open the possibility that it could start earlier. Members were divided between those who favoured starting as soon as possible, given that 11 candidates had participated in informal dialogue sessions by then, and those proposing starting only in late July. Members in favour of an earlier date argued that starting in late July

could result in completing the process at a date which would leave inadequate preparation time for the new Secretary-General, while those in favour of the later timing noted that candidates were expecting the straw polls to start in late July and had arranged their campaign activities around that date. At this meeting, the use of colour-coded ballots was discussed at length, with Spain suggesting that they should not be used at all. While there was no agreement not to use them, there appears to have been a degree of consensus that colour-coded ballots should not be resorted to until late in the selection process. By mid-June, Council members had come to an agreement on the date of the first straw poll, and the president of the Council sent the president of the General Assembly a letter informing him that the Council would start the process of considering the candidates on 21 July.

The series of non-papers produced indicated the intense interest on the part of some members in how the Council should conduct certain aspects of the process. The different papers, none of which became public documents, addressed some of the same issues, but also provided an insight into the perspectives of the members who had produced them. It seems that some members were trying to provide greater clarity on the process, while others may have been trying to influence, and possibly lead, the process by producing guidelines based on their view of how certain aspects should be conducted.

Conduct of the Straw Polls

Japan, as president of the Council for July when the first straw poll would be held, finalised and circulated a paper with the agreed modalities of the straw polls, which was then used for all the straw polls. Between 21 July and 5 October, there were six straw polls, with the first five being undifferentiated, and the final one colour-coded. Straw polls were held on 21 July, 5 August, 29 August, 9 September, 26 September and 5 October. There had been some disagreement over proceeding with straw polls during August, with Malaysia, the president that month, and a few other members having to push hard against the reluctance of some others.

The straw polls were held in the consultations room, with only the permanent representative (or his or her representative)

Part III: Security Council Activities (cont)

plus one other delegation member present. The president and tellers were each allowed two additional members from their delegations. (Two tellers were chosen by drawing lots the day before each straw poll. The president and any member with a candidate—in this selection, only New Zealand—could not be a teller.) No Secretariat officials were present.

For the undifferentiated straw polls, all the ballot papers were identical. In the colour-coded straw poll, the ballot papers of the P5 members were red. There was one ballot paper per candidate in the six UN official languages. Three choices were offered on each ballot paper regarding the candidate: Encouraged/Discouraged/No opinion expressed. Members were given ten minutes to fill in ballot papers by putting a checkmark in a box, using identical pens provided by the president of the Council. If more than one option was ticked off, or there was no mark on the ballot paper, then it was considered invalid. Ballots were cast in the consultations room after each ballot paper was folded three times.

All 12 candidates who had been formally nominated by 21 July were voted on in the first straw poll. Vesna Pusić (Croatia) withdrew her nomination on 4 August, the day before the second straw poll, Igor Lukšić

(Montenegro), withdrew his on 23 August, and Christiana Figueres (Costa Rica) withdrew hers on 12 September. Thus going into the fifth undifferentiated straw poll, nine candidates remained.

In all five undifferentiated straw polls, Guterres was the front runner, while the second spot and at least three of the top five spots were taken by Eastern Europeans. The leading woman candidates were Malcorra and Bokova. In the fifth straw poll, they were in fourth place (tied with Turk) and sixth place, respectively.

After Council members had cast their votes, the president of the Council announced each vote cast, showing the paper to Council members with the two tellers watching. At the end of the counting, the Council president read out the final results for each candidate. No written report of the straw poll was produced. The president filled a tally-sheet which he kept, and all Council members were allowed to fill out their own tally sheets. Results were meant to be kept confidential, and ballot papers were shredded by the president in the consultations room at the end of each straw poll.

Ahead of the start of the straw polls, in June 2016, Council members had agreed not to announce the results of the straw polls. Thus, following each straw poll, the president orally informed the president of the General

Assembly that the vote had taken place but did not communicate its results. The Council president also orally informed the president of the General Assembly of the planned date(s) of future straw polls. The oral statement of the president to the press simply specified which round of straw poll had taken place and that the candidates would be informed of the results through the permanent representatives of nominating member states. The press was also told that the president of the General Assembly had been informed that the straw poll had been conducted. The president then informed each of the permanent representatives of nominating members states of the votes received by the relevant candidate, as well as the highest and lowest numbers of encouraged and discouraged among candidates, without stating to which candidate they applied.

By September, as Council members headed towards the fourth straw poll, the question of when to move to a colour-coded ballot had become a key concern for some members. It was discussed during the monthly breakfast of Council permanent representatives hosted by New Zealand as president of the Council for September. At that breakfast, Council members agreed to have undifferentiated straw polls on 9 and 26 September, followed by the first colour-coded straw poll in early October.

CANDIDATE	FIRST STRAW POLL	SECOND STRAW POLL	THIRD STRAW POLL	FOURTH STRAW POLL	FIFTH STRAW POLL
António Guterres	12-0-3	11-2-2	11-3-1	12-2-1	12-2-1
Danilo Türk	11-2-2	7-5-3	5-6-4	7-6-2	7-7-1
Irina Bokova	9-4-2	7-7-1	7-5-3	7-5-3	6-7-2
Vuk Jeremić	9-5-1	8-4-3	7-5-3	9-4-2	8-6-1
Srgjan Kerim	9-5-1	6-7-2	6-7-2	8-7-0	6-9-0
Helen Clark	8-5-2	6-8-1	6-8-1	6-7-2	6-9-0
Miroslav Lajčák	7-3-5	2-6-7	9-5-1	10-4-1	8-7-0
Susana Malcorra	7-4-4	8-6-1	7-7-1	7-7-1	7-7-1
Christiana Figueres	5-5-5	5-8-2	2-12-1	5-10-0	
Natalia Gherman	4-4-7	3-10-2	2-12-1	3-11-1	3-11-1
Igor Lukšić	3-7-5	2-9-4			
Vesna Pusić	2-11-2				

Votes are in the order of Encouraged-Discouraged-No Opinion Expressed

Part III: Security Council Activities (cont)

New Zealand also announced that since it had nominated a candidate, it would recuse itself from certain activities during its presidency related to the selection process in line with Rule 20 of the Council's Provisional Rules of Procedure⁸, and that it had asked Russia, as the next president of the Council, to manage the conduct of any straw polls in September.

The dates of the straw polls in September took into account the high-level week of the general debate in the General Assembly during the second week of September. A number of members thought it would be useful for their governments to have an updated picture of the position of candidates prior to the high-level week, when discussions about candidates might involve heads of state and government. It seems that Russia was initially sceptical about having a fourth straw poll so close to the third, which had been on 29 August, and preferred to move to a colour-coded ballot more quickly, but was eventually persuaded to accept two more undifferentiated straw polls and the first colour-coded one during its presidency in October.

The other key issue that had arisen during the period of conduct of the straw polls was the confidentiality of the results of the straw polls. The Council faced severe criticism at the lack of transparency in its communication of the results of the straw polls, not only from civil society but also in forthright terms by the president of the General Assembly. Although the polls were meant to be secret, the results of the straw polls had become public very quickly. While several Council members were in favour of greater transparency and felt that the Council should disclose the full results, it seems that Russia in particular was strongly against this. It felt that only Council members should have the information and was adamant that the Council should not release more information than had been agreed on at the start of the straw polls i.e. providing candidates with their own results, and the highest and lowest scores among candidates, and informing the president of the General Assembly only that the straw poll had taken place.

A Late Entrant

On 28 September, two days after the fifth undifferentiated straw poll, the Bulgarian government, which had previously nominated Irina Bokova in February 2016, submitted a letter nominating Kristalina Georgieva as its “sole and unique candidate”. Although Council members had been anticipating a late entry into the race, a new nomination from a government that had already nominated a candidate caused some complications. While there was no explicit impediment to a government nominating two candidates, this development gave rise to several questions, including whether a government could nominate two candidates, and what the status of a candidate was if the nominating government withdrew its support. The 15 December 2015 joint letter from the president of the Council and president of the General Assembly simply invited member states to present candidates for the position of Secretary-General; it suggested that early presentation of candidates would help the Council's deliberations, but did not preclude other candidates coming in “throughout the process, as appropriate”. In previous selections, there had been a straw poll including two candidates from the same country, but it appears that 2016 was the first time that two candidates from one country were nominated by one member state.⁹

It seems that before agreeing to the joint circulation of the letter from the Bulgarian government nominating Georgieva, a number of Council members—Angola, Malaysia, Russia, Uruguay and Venezuela—asked for further clarification that this meant that the Bulgarian government was no longer supporting Bokova. The Bulgarian government's 29 September response made clear that it now supported only Georgieva and that its decision to do so revoked its earlier decision to nominate Bokova. The joint letter from the presidents of the Council and General Assembly announcing the nomination of Georgieva was eventually circulated later on 29 September. Following the Bulgarian government's clarification and after a discussion under “any other business” that day, Council members agreed to retain Bokova

on the ballot. Subsequently, letters from Latvia and Poland conveying support for Georgieva were circulated to Council members. Although Georgieva was a late entrant to the selection process, the procedures established with the other candidates were followed. The General Assembly held an informal dialogue with Georgieva on 3 October, and Council members met with her on 4 October.

The Council Makes a Recommendation

The first and only colour-coded straw poll was held on 5 October. In order to be recommended to the General Assembly, a candidate needed the affirmative votes of nine members, with no negative vote by a permanent member. This colour-coded ballot provided the first clear indication of which candidates could face a veto in a formal vote. The ballot papers for this straw poll had three columns marked “encouraged”, “discouraged” and “no opinion expressed”, as in the undifferentiated straw polls, but the permanent members were given red ballot papers. Although Guterres was the clear leader in all the undifferentiated straw polls, and had received no “discouraged” votes in the first round, he had in other rounds received two or three “discouraged” votes, and before the first colour-coded ballot it was unclear if any of the “discouraged” votes came from a permanent member.

There were ten candidates on the ballot for the 5 October colour-coded straw poll. Guterres emerged as the only candidate with more than nine “encouraged” votes and no “discouraged” vote. All the other candidates had fewer than nine votes, as well as one or more potential vetoes.

On the proposal of Russia, as president, the Council decided that all 15 members would move directly to a press stakeout, where the president announced, “Today after our sixth straw poll we have a clear favourite, and his name is António Guterres.”

It remained for the Council to make the decision indicated by the final straw poll at a formal meeting. In early October, the Secretariat had circulated a non-paper on the procedure for the formal vote at the request of Russia as the Council president. It spelt out

8. Rule 20 states, “Whenever the President of the Security Council deems that for the proper fulfillment of the responsibilities of the presidency he should not preside over the Council during the consideration of a particular question with which the member he represents is directly connected, he shall indicate his decision to the Council. The presidential chair shall then devolve, for the purpose of the consideration of that question, on the representative of the member next in English alphabetical order, it being understood that the provisions of this rule shall apply to the representatives on the Security Council called upon successively to preside.”

9. In 1991, Thorvald Stoltenberg and Gro Harlem Brundtland, both from Norway, became candidates when additional names were allowed to be added on a blank piece of paper during the first proper straw poll in the selection process where Boutros Boutros-Ghali (Egypt) was the eventual winner. The nominations were secret but it appears the two candidates were nominated by different Council members.

Part III: Security Council Activities (cont)

RESULTS OF THE COLOUR-CODED STRAW POLL

CANDIDATE	TOTAL	ENCOURAGED (E10)	DISCOURAGED (E10)	NO OPINION EXPRESSED (E10)	ENCOURAGED (P5)	DISCOURAGED (P5)	NO OPINION EXPRESSED (P5)
António Guterres	13-0-2	9	0	1	4	0	1
Miroslav Lajčák	7-6-2	5	4	1	2	2	1
Vuk Jeremić	7-6-2	5	3	2	2	3	0
Irina Bokova	7-7-1	4	5	1	3	2	0
Helen Clark	6-8-1	5	5	0	1	3	1
Susana Malcorra	5-7-3	3	6	1	2	1	2
Kristalina Georgieva	5-8-2	3	6	1	2	2	1
Danilo Türk	5-8-2	4	4	2	1	4	0
Srgjan Kerim	5-9-1	3	6	1	2	3	0
Natalia Gherman	3-11-1	2	8	0	1	3	1

the procedures based on the Charter and resolution 11 (I) on the terms of appointment of the Secretary-General, and outlined how the Council could hold a formal vote according to various scenarios. The alternatives covered were (i) proceeding with the recommendation of a candidate without a vote (i.e. by acclamation), (ii) voting by ballot on one candidate, and (iii) voting on more than one candidate. If there had been more than one viable candidate, before adopting a resolution recommending a candidate to the General Assembly, the Council might have needed to vote in a secret ballot on the candidates. However, with only one candidate without a potential veto heading

the poll, members agreed that the Council would proceed directly to adopting the resolution recommending Guterres by acclamation. This was the same process used for both Kofi Annan (1996) and Ban Ki-moon (2006) when they were recommended by the Council.

The following morning, Council members met to agree on drafts of the resolution on the recommendation; the communiqué to be issued after the vote, held in a private meeting format (in accordance with rule 55 of the Council's Provisional Rules of Procedure); and the letter communicating the Council's decision to the president of the General Assembly. The draft resolution on the

recommendation contained language specifying a five-year term for Guterres. Although some Council members were interested in exploring the possibility of alternative language or not including any language on the length of term, with the quick turnaround between the colour-coded straw poll and the formal vote, there was little opportunity to consider this. Following the consultations, the Council held a private meeting and adopted resolution 2311 by acclamation, recommending Guterres to the General Assembly for appointment as the next Secretary-General.

Part IV: The Appointment of a new Secretary-General

As the Council moved closer to a decision on its recommendation, members of the General Assembly began to focus on the next steps in its involvement in the process, notably the appointment resolution. Rule 141 of the General Assembly's Rules of Procedure stipulates that when the Council has submitted its recommendation on the appointment of the Secretary-General, the General Assembly shall consider the recommendation and vote upon it in a private meeting. General Assembly resolution 11 (I) also stated that any

discussion of the appointment should be at a private meeting and a vote, if taken, should be by secret ballot. In practice, however, the General Assembly has never held a private meeting, and since 1971 it has not taken a vote by secret ballot, with recent resolutions being adopted by acclamation.

ACT and NAM sent letters to the president of the General Assembly on 18 May and 29 June 2016 respectively, proposing a facilitation process for the appointment resolution. At the invitation of the president of the General

Assembly, the co-chairs of the Revitalization Working Group organised a meeting on 29 August. Twenty-eight delegations participated, with most of them urging the immediate appointment of facilitators to consult member states on the substance of the appointment resolution once the Council made its recommendation. The interest in having co-facilitators to draft the appointment resolution stemmed from the desire of some members to have a substantive resolution which could address issues such as the term of appointment of the Secretary-General

Part IV: The Appointment of a new Secretary-General (cont)

and the appointment of senior officials, and to discuss this before the Council had made its recommendation. Among those who raised concerns about having facilitators and any course of action which they argued might cause division and controversy were China, France, the UK and the US; Russia said it would not oppose the appointment of facilitators.

On 13 September, Lykketoft, the outgoing president of the General Assembly, sent a letter to the president of the Council on the process, citing the cooperation between the Council and the General Assembly and setting out the expectations of the membership for the remainder of the process, as well as offering suggestions for improvements. On the same day, he sent a letter to the incoming president of the General Assembly, Peter Thomson (Fiji), conveying developments relating to the possible appointment of co-facilitators and the appointment resolution.

On 23 September, the new president of

the General Assembly issued a letter informing the membership that he would ask two Special Advisers from his office to consult with member states on the best way forward towards “a judicious and consensual outcome in the General Assembly in line with GA resolution 70/305”. This was the 2016 resolution on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, adopted on 30 September, which commended the key aspects of the new process and the role played by the president of the General Assembly in their implementation, as well as addressing some related issues, including the appointment of senior officials. The president of the General Assembly also announced his intention to convene a meeting of the General Assembly to provide an opportunity to engage in substantive dialogue with the Secretary-General-designate.

On 13 October, the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/4 appointing António Guterres as the ninth Secretary-General of

the United Nations. The resolution included for the first time language welcoming the process of selection and appointment of the Secretary-General, highlighting that it had been guided by the principles of transparency set out in resolutions 69/321 and 70/305, including informal dialogues with all candidates. The resolution also recalled for the first time Chapter XV of the Charter, which includes Article 100 that requires the Secretary-General not to seek instructions from any government and requires an undertaking from all member states not to seek to influence the Secretary-General and the staff in the discharge of their responsibilities. It did not contain any language that could be interpreted as anticipating a move towards a longer, single term of office, simply stating that the appointment would be for a term beginning on 1 January 2017 and ending on 31 December 2021.

Part V: Assessing the Changes

In early 2017, SCR interviewed some 27 participants in the process, comprising members of the Council in 2016, permanent representatives of countries that had nominated candidates, and member states that had been actively involved in General Assembly discussions. We canvassed their views on the new elements to the Secretary-General selection and appointment process.

There was general agreement among the interviewees that while the changes to the process may not be a revolution, they represent a significant evolution of the process, and went further than many had thought possible. The impact of greater transparency and openness was singled out. The informal dialogues and the more public selection process were seen to have made it more difficult for a weak candidate to be chosen or for a strong candidate to be vetoed. Opinion was more divided over whether Guterres would have been appointed in a less transparent process. There was general agreement that he was an outstanding candidate who had widespread support from the early stages, but some believed that without the more transparent process, particularly the public informal dialogues, he might not

have been the chosen candidate. Most of the interviewees were of the view that it would be difficult to revert to a more closed process in the future and that it was important to consolidate the changes.

Role of the General Assembly

By insisting on transparency and openness and embodying these in its hearings for the candidates, the General Assembly set a tone to which Council members needed to respond. Interviewees highlighted General Assembly resolution 69/321 as the key component of change, noting that it had resulted in the joint letter and the informal dialogues, which had subsequently led to Council meetings with the candidates. A lesson from the negotiations of resolution 69/321 was the importance of an early start to improve the process and the key role played by member states, notably ACT and NAM, and civil society groups, notably 1 for 7 Billion, and the cooperation among these groups.

There was general agreement that the informal dialogues were the most important factor in opening up the selection process. They were seen as having shaped opinions,

including those of Council members, and having a definite impact on the outcome of the straw polls. Following the sixth straw poll, then US Ambassador Samantha Power gave voice to this assessment when she attributed the agreement of the Council on Guterres as the candidate they would recommend to the General Assembly to “a much more transparent process, where I think the General Assembly’s will and the kind of zeitgeist out of the General Assembly’s sessions actually translated also into results in the many straw polls that led up to today.”

However, in assessing the conduct of the informal dialogues, there was near unanimous criticism of repetitive, lengthy questions and the lack of time for candidates to respond. It was suggested that future improvements could include more relevant questions built on previous answers, rather than purely scripted questions; longer sessions; or asking some more detailed questions beforehand in writing.

There were more divided views regarding the Global Town Hall event. Some members which had nominated candidates admitted that their candidates found this the most difficult meeting. Others did not like it because it had

Part V: Assessing the Changes (cont)

the potential to become combative and difficult to control. Some others, however, said that the Town Hall meeting was the most important event as it brought candidates together and focused media attention on the process.

Council Interaction with Candidates

The assessment of the majority of Council members and representatives of members with nominated candidates was that the informal meeting between Council members and candidates was not very useful, since it did not add much to what had been learnt about candidates from the informal dialogues. The main criticisms were that the format was too rigid, and that most members simply repeated the questions they had asked in the General Assembly informal dialogues. A few said that they found them useful because they provided the Council with an insight into how the candidates interacted in an informal setting with all 15 Council members, which required different communication skills.

The absence of discussion of the merits of the candidates was highlighted by a number of interviewees. Some would have preferred to have had a discussion after meeting each candidate, but others said it would have been too politically sensitive for Council members to reveal their preferences. As a result of this sensitivity, Council members did not discuss the qualities of the candidates during the process at any of their informal meetings. The fact that one Council member—New Zealand—had a candidate in the race added to the awkwardness of a possible discussion about the quality of candidates, both for New Zealand and for other Council members.

Council members also met with candidates bilaterally and both members and candidates assessed these meetings as very useful, and something that they saw as crucial in spite of the other opportunities to engage with candidates. They were apparently often the most frank encounters Council members had with the candidates. Many candidates travelled to almost all the capitals of Council members, often with repeat visits to the capitals of the P5 members.

Straw Polls

As mentioned above, members interviewed did not question the need for straw polls, but differences arose over when they should begin and at which point they should move to

colour-coded ballots. Some members believed that the move to colour-coded ballots should not take place too quickly, as doing so would diminish the role of the elected Council members. In addition, they felt that a series of undifferentiated ballots could usefully consolidate the positions of stronger candidates. Some interviewees who had been on the Council highlighted the importance of maintaining momentum by not having a long gap between straw polls. There was little criticism of the conduct of the straw polls, although at least one interviewee thought that a second count of the ballots would have been a good idea.

The erratic results of the straw polls were baffling for many interviewees. Most agreed that the first straw poll, when none of the Council members knew how the others would vote, was the best reflection of members' assessment of the candidates, and therefore the most revealing. The absence of negative votes against Guterres in this first straw poll was crucial in setting the stage for him to eventually be selected. The other rounds were seen as involving more tactical voting on the part of members who wanted to see their favoured candidates do well. There was general agreement that having a series of undifferentiated straw polls helped to consolidate the positions of the stronger candidates, possibly influencing the outcome of the colour-coded ballot.

One of the strongest criticisms in evaluating the process from both Council members and those who had candidates in the race was the lack of transparency in the release of the results of the straw polls, which the Council did not make public. Almost all the interviewees felt that the Council needed to reassess this aspect of the process in the future. Some of the Council members who had presided over the straw polls expressed embarrassment at being restricted to providing only minimal information, when the results were promptly made public by the media sometimes even before Council members had exited the consultations room. Similarly, those who had candidates in the race expressed their frustration and embarrassment at seeing the results published before they were given limited information by the president of the Council to be conveyed to their candidates. One P5 member noted that making the poll results public would prevent inaccurate reporting by the media, as happened on one occasion.

The use of colour-coded ballots was raised

as an issue that may need to be addressed in the next selection process. This time there was an attempt, particularly from one Council member, to eliminate the use of colour-coded ballots, but the majority of elected members were not particularly energised around this issue. However, it was suggested that there may be more pushback against the idea of the use of what amounts to a veto in an informal setting in the future.

A related issue raised by some interviewees was whether there should be a return to using formal votes to determine Council members' positions, rather than straw polls. Those in favour of formal votes argue that in this format the P5 have to take responsibility for the use of the veto, and looking at past precedents, it is possible to include information on how members have voted, thus providing some transparency to the vote in spite of it being private.

Regional Rotation and Gender

Regional rotation and gender were a focus at the start of the process, and were to some extent reflected in the range of candidates who were nominated. The large number of candidates from Eastern Europe showed that the view that it was Eastern Europe's turn to provide a Secretary-General was being taken seriously by that region. Similarly, the large number of women candidates pointed to some impact of the call for women candidates and of the highly visible campaigns by groups advocating for a woman Secretary-General. The Campaign to Elect a Woman UN Secretary-General, made up of women academics and other civil society representatives, highlighted a number of well qualified women from different regions who they said would have been worthy candidates. Colombia formed the Group of Friends to Elect a Woman Secretary-General, which included at least 60 states from all regions, and highlighted the need for gender equality. (Since the appointment of Guterres, this group has changed its name to Group of Friends for Gender Parity.)

While the results of the straw polls showed that some Council members were mindful of the Eastern European claim in casting their ballots, women did not fare well in the straw polls. However, the focus on the case for a woman Secretary-General did result in the male candidates stressing the importance of gender parity and it was thus highlighted as an issue within the UN.

Part V: Assessing the Changes (cont)

The choice of Guterres, a Western European man, was seen as indicating that Council members were ultimately influenced primarily by the qualities of the individual chosen, prevailing over gender or regional rotation and recognised by all the interviewees, including those who had Eastern European candidates in the race.

Opinion was mixed as to whether or not the concept of regional rotation is now dead. Some believe quite firmly that regional rotation will

not be a key factor in the selection process in the future, while others, especially from Eastern European countries, believe that the concept of regional rotation should still be adhered to. It is unclear whether this implies a belief that it would be the turn of Eastern Europe or Latin America in the next selection process. Some felt that if Eastern Europe had nominated a smaller number of strong candidates it would have increased the chances of a candidate from Eastern Europe being appointed. However,

others noted that it would have been almost impossible for the EEG to agree on just two or three candidates. Several interviewees suggested that if Russia, which had stated its support for a candidate from Eastern Europe to be chosen, had strongly pressed the Eastern European claim and made clear they would veto any candidate not from the region, as China did in 2006 regarding non-Asian candidates, the Council would have had to select a candidate from Eastern Europe.

Part VI: Observations and Options

Timetable for the Process

The issue of a timeline and deadline for nominations was a contentious one during the negotiations on both General Assembly resolution 69/321 and the draft joint letter. In the absence of agreement on a timeline, the resolution simply invited candidates to be presented in a timely manner. Consistent with this, the joint letter said that early presentation of candidates would help the Council's deliberations; and the Council planned to make its recommendation to the General Assembly in a timely manner to allow the newly appointed Secretary-General sufficient time to prepare for the job. The P5 members generally preferred not to have a firm deadline as they wanted to keep open the possibility of additional candidates being considered if no agreement could easily be reached. As a result, the joint letter included language leaving open the possibility of candidates continuing to come forward throughout the process.

One of the lessons learnt was that entering the race late was a handicap. Most Council members agree that by the time the last candidate, Kristalina Georgieva, came forward, most governments had already made up their minds regarding the candidates. In fact, some members are of the view that her entry, and subsequent poor showing in the colour-coded straw polls, was the catalyst for the quick Council decision on the front runner, Guterres. It seems that this more transparent process does not favour a latecomer, and future candidates may review what happened and decide of their own volition, even in the absence of a deadline, to come forward early in the process. It seems that most

P5 members might in the future be open to setting an initial deadline for nominations in the future, but are likely to still want the possibility of reopening nominations if necessary. Early agreement on a specific timeline, in a future joint letter to member states at the start of the process, would be useful for planning the different steps in the process. It would also facilitate a clearly defined preparation and handover period.

Nominating a Candidate

One of the more difficult issues during negotiations on the joint letter was whether only member states could nominate candidates. The language in the joint letter was carefully chosen to indicate that a candidate could be nominated by a government other than his or her own, although the general view was that in such a case it would be difficult for the candidate to attract much support from members. It seems that one permanent member subsequently went as far as to suggest that it would veto any candidate not nominated by his or her own government. However, some believe that opening up the process and encouraging the nomination of candidates from other stakeholders, such as parliaments or civil society, as well as making clear that candidates do not need to be nominated by their own countries, could encourage a wider pool of good candidates. Other options that may be worth considering include some form of a search committee that could help identify candidates.

Meetings with Candidates

While the general success of the informal dialogues in the General Assembly is beyond

dispute, improvements could be made to the conduct of these sessions. Criticisms about the lack of time to answer questions and the repetitive nature of the questions need to be addressed. Having more general questions answered in writing ahead of the informal dialogue session is a possible option. This could free up time for less scripted oral questioning based on the answers of candidates, which may better test candidates' political judgement as well as their public performance under pressure. A greater variety of questions would also reduce the advantage which later candidates participating in the informal dialogues have from knowing the questions likely to be asked.

Some members of the General Assembly wanted to consider a way of conveying to the Council some collective assessment of the candidates by the General Assembly after the hearings and ahead of the Council's consideration. Although the suggestion of a straw poll in the General Assembly did not gain traction during this selection process, it may be taken up again in the future.

Similarly, if the informal meetings of candidates with Council members are to be retained, further reflection on the purpose of such meetings and how they could be used to provide added value beyond the General Assembly hearings and better assess a different set of skills seems essential. The merits of a private meeting lie in the opportunity to go beyond the questions asked at the public informal dialogues. Council members may in the future want to consider a discussion of their qualities, notwithstanding possible sensitivities, following meetings with candidates.

Part VI: Observations and Options (cont)

Narrowing the Field of Candidates

There were few withdrawals during the polls, with only three candidates—Pusić, Lukšić and Figueres—taking themselves out of the race after the first, second and fourth straw polls respectively. Council members discussed ways of eliminating candidates with low scores and coming up with a shortlist, but there was no consensus regarding acting on any of the suggestions. At the same time, there is recognition of the problems that could arise if a very large number of candidates are nominated. Ahead of the next selection process, a discussion on whether, and if so, how candidates with consistently low scores should be eliminated may be useful.

Withdrawal of Candidates

A related issue is who can withdraw a candidate—the nominating member state, the candidate, or either. Although the joint letter stipulated clearly how candidates are nominated, it was silent on how they might withdraw or be withdrawn. The importance of clarifying this issue was highlighted by the confusion caused when Bulgaria gave its support to a second candidate in October 2016, having first nominated a candidate in February 2016. Eventually, the Council accepted having two candidates from Bulgaria when it was clear that the first candidate, Irina Bokova, did not want to withdraw. Having in place an agreed procedure for the withdrawal of a nominated candidate before the start of the next selection process would help prevent similar confusion in the future.

Making the Recommendation

In the next selection process Council members will again have to decide if straw ballots are to be used to determine the most viable candidate. Although there was general acceptance of the use of straw polls in the 2016 process, elected members were not keen to move too quickly to colour-coded ballots, and at least one member strongly argued against their use at all. Given the negative feedback regarding the lack of transparency in the Council's release of the results of the straw polls, in future selection processes members will also have to decide whether the results should be made public, and if so, how this can be done in a way that is respectful of the candidates. Further discussion of alternatives to straw polls, including the use of a private meeting but with voting information provided

in the communiqué of the meeting would be useful ahead of the next selection process.

Conduct of Candidates

During this selection process, questions were raised by some member states about candidates campaigning for the position of Secretary-General while continuing to hold a senior UN post. They expressed concerns that such candidates may have had access for lobbying that was not available to others, while participating in a competitive race may have an impact on the postholder's ability to satisfactorily carry out a demanding job. There were also questions about the funding of campaigns, by nominating governments or otherwise. A Code of Conduct for candidates, as adopted by some international organisations, could help candidates and governments address these issues.

Applying the New Process to a Reappointment

A key question in looking ahead to the next selection process is whether the requirements of the new open selection process needs to be modified for an incumbent Secretary-General seeking a second term. This may be unnecessary if there are no other candidates, but agreement between the General Assembly and the Council on how to handle the possibility of a competitive second term appointment process is needed.

Having an incumbent run would add to questions already raised regarding candidates in the 2016 selection process who were serving heads of UN agencies. How would an incumbent Secretary-General reconcile his or her heavy continuing responsibilities with campaigning publicly for reappointment? A discussion of how the process could be modified for the reappointment of a Secretary-General would need to start in the General Assembly well ahead of, and at least two years before, the end of the incumbent's term.

Multiple Candidates

Another issue that may continue to be pursued is that of recommending more than one candidate to the General Assembly. Some have argued that it would be contrary to the responsibility given by Article 97 of the Charter to the Council to recommend the Secretary-General, if the General Assembly were to adopt a resolution requesting the Council to proffer more than one name. Others argue that as Article 97 does not make clear what

is meant by "recommendation", the Charter is open to the Council proffering either one or multiple candidates. The fact that General Assembly resolution 11 (I) declared in 1946 that it would be "desirable" for the Security Council to proffer one candidate only for the consideration of the General Assembly appears to imply that it could have done otherwise. During the negotiations on resolution 69/321 there was strong interest by some members of the NAM in having the Council recommend multiple candidates, but given there were differing views within the group as to how strongly they should press this, the proposal did not gain much traction. Members who were not in favour of having multiple candidates recommended, cited the possibility of a new Secretary-General being appointed by a slim majority in the General Assembly, and then having to work with an organisation polarised around the choice. Others noted that past Secretaries-General had been appointed after the Council was polarised to the point of prolonged exercise of the veto or the "red straw ballot" by permanent members, and yet were able to quickly develop working relationships with all the permanent members. This issue may be taken up again by both civil society and member states for further discussion.

Single Term

The possible desirability of a single, probably longer, term for the Secretary-General has been discussed over the years, and in the last selection process was taken up with vigour by some ACT members, notably Liechtenstein and Costa Rica. These members were keen to include more substantive language in the resolution for the appointment of the Secretary-General, including regarding the term of office, but did not garner enough support, either within ACT or the larger General Assembly membership, to pursue this once the process moved rapidly from the Council's recommendation to the appointment resolution. The UN Charter does not specify the term of office, but the General Assembly decided in resolution 11 (1) that the first Secretary-General should have a term of five years, renewable for a further five years. The resolution specifically provided that the General Assembly and the Council are "free to modify the term of office of future Secretaries-General in the light of experience." Some members, as well as civil society groups, are likely to pursue this issue.

Part VII: Consolidating the Process

Many of these issues need to be addressed well ahead of the end of the current Secretary-General's five-year term, taking into account the views which member states express regarding lessons learnt when the Revitalization Working Group holds a thematic debate on the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General on 10 April.

The General Assembly will have to decide how to update and consolidate the changes in the process. The annual resolution on revitalisation of the work of the General Assembly could allow for some of the changes to be codified. However, an alternative option would be a thematic resolution

that would replace resolution 11 (I), which is out of date in several respects, and which would be modified by any change in the term of office or request for recommendation of multiple candidates.

The Council is unlikely to turn its attention to the issue of the selection of the Secretary-General in the next few years, or to formally codify the changes in the process. While some of the Council's practice may be captured in papers by members who were on the Council in 2016—something that Japan has already done—it would be useful for future members of the Council to have access to the non-papers and other

relevant documents from this process as a guide to Council practice in a past selection process. One option would be for the Council's Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Matters to consider if there might be a way of capturing the main elements of the Council's practice in this selection process in a public document that could serve as a reference to those in the Council involved in future selection processes. Members who were actively involved in shaping the 2016 process may also want to consider ways of continuing the discussion of possible next steps in the evolution of the selection process.

Annex I: Timeline of the Selection Process

2015

27 April	Thematic debate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly.
30 June	Secretary-General selection process raised by Council members in the "wrap-up" session.
1 July	Secretary-General selection process discussed during Council breakfast meeting of permanent representatives.
11 September	Adoption of General Assembly resolution 69/321.
16 November	Draft joint letter circulated to Council members.
18 November	Council discussion under "any other business" of the joint letter.
15 December	Joint letter by presidents of the General Assembly and Security Council circulated to member states.

2016

12 April	General Assembly informal dialogues with Igor Lukšić (Montenegro), Irina Bokova (Bulgaria), and António Guterres (Portugal).
13 April	General Assembly informal dialogues with Natalia Gherman (Moldova), Vesna Pusić (Croatia), and Danilo Türk (Slovenia).
14 April	General Assembly informal dialogues with Vuk Jeremić (Serbia), Srgjan Kerim (Macedonia), and Helen Clark (New Zealand).
25 May	Security Council discussion under "any other business" on modalities for meeting candidates.
7 June	General Assembly informal dialogues with Miroslav Lajčák (Slovakia) and Susana Malcorra (Argentina); Informal meeting of the Council with Danilo Turk.
20 June	Informal meeting of the Council with Irina Bokova.
27 June	Informal meeting of the Council with Vuk Jeremic.
8 July	Informal meeting of the Council with Srgjan Kerim.
11 July	Informal meetings of the Council with Natalia Gherman, António Guterres and Vesna Pusić.
12 July	Global Town Hall event with Secretary-General candidates.
13 July	Informal meeting of the Council with Susana Malcorra.
14 July	General Assembly informal dialogue with Christiana Figueres (Costa Rica)

Annex I: Timeline of the Selection Process (cont)

2016

15 July	Informal meetings of the Council with Helen Clark, Christiana Figueres and Igor Lukšić.
21 July	First round of straw polls.
25 July	Council discussion under “any other business” of release of straw poll results and next steps.
4 August	Withdrawal of Vesna Pusić.
5 August	Second round of straw polls
23 August	Withdrawal of Igor Lukšić.
29 August	Third round of straw polls.
9 September	Fourth round of straw polls.
12 September	Withdrawal of Christina Figueres.
26 September	Fifth round of straw polls.
3 October	General Assembly informal dialogue with Kristalina Georgieva (Bulgaria).
4 October	Informal meeting of the Council with Kristalina Georgieva.
5 October	Sixth round of straw polls with colour-coded ballots.
6 October	Adoption of Council resolution recommending Guterres as the next Secretary-General.
13 October	Adoption of General Assembly resolution 71/4 appointing Guterres as the ninth Secretary-General.
12 December	Guterres takes oath of office in the General Assembly.

UN Documents on the Secretary-General Appointment

Security Council Resolutions

[S/RES/2324](#) (14 December 2016) was a tribute to the outgoing Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

[S/RES/2311](#) (6 October 2016) recommended António Guterres as the ninth Secretary-General of the UN to the General Assembly.

Letters

[A/70/623-S/2015/988](#) (15 December 2015) was the joint letter formally inviting nominees for the position of Secretary-General, describing the overall process and establishing a clearly defined nomination process.

[S/2016/784](#) (13 September 2016) was a letter from the president of the 70th session of the General Assembly to the president of the Council on the changes in the selection process and future improvements.

[A/70/878](#) (15 June 2016) was a letter from the president of the Council informing the president of the General Assembly that the Council would start on 21 July the consideration of candidates for the post of Secretary-General.

[A/70/877](#) (25 February 2016) was a letter from the president of the General Assembly to the president of the Security Council defining the format of the informal dialogues.

Security Council Meetings

[S/PV.7836](#) (14 December 2016) was a tribute meeting to the outgoing Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

[S/PV.7782](#) (6 October 2016) was the meeting where the Council adopted by acclamation the resolution recommending that António Guterres be appointed the next Secretary-General.

General Assembly Resolutions

[A/RES/70/305](#) (13 September 2016) was on the revitalisation of the work of the General Assembly .

[A/RES/71/4](#) (13 October 2016) appointed António Guterres the ninth Secretary-General of the UN.

[A/RES/69/321](#) (11 September 2015) was on the revitalisation of the work of the General Assembly containing new language on the Secretary-General selection process.

Other

Letter dated 7 July 2016 was from the president of the General Assembly informing the General Assembly membership of his meeting with Japan as president of the month for July.

Letter dated 15 July 2016 was from the president of the General Assembly forwarding 18 May 2016 and 29 June 2016 letters from ACT and NAM respectively proposing a facilitation process for the appointment resolution.

Letter dated 21 July 2016 was from the president of the General Assembly informing the membership that the president of the Security Council had informed him that the first informal straw poll had taken place that day and that in future information on the straw polls would be communicated via the president of the General Assembly's website.

Letter dated 2 August 2016 was from the president of the General Assembly informing the General Assembly membership of his meeting with the Malaysia as the president of the Council for August.

Letter dated 13 September 2016 was a letter from the president of the 70th session of the General

UN Documents on the Secretary-General Appointment (cont)

Assembly to the president of the 71st session of the General Assembly

Letter dated 23 September 2016 was from the president of the General Assembly informing the membership that he would ask two Special Advisers to consult with member states.

Letter dated 7 October 2016 was from the president of the General Assembly containing the letter from the president of the Council informing him that the Council was recommending that António Guterres be appointed as the next Secretary-General.

Documents on the nomination, withdrawal and vision

statements of candidates for the post of Secretary-General in 2016 can be found on the website of the president of the 71st General Assembly: <http://www.un.org/pga/71/sg/>

Useful Additional Resources

Selection Process of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Achievements and Lessons Learned, Ambassador Koro Bessho (Japan), 1 February 2017

Nudging the Decision on the UN Secretary-General, Huffington Post, Mogens Lykketoft, 1 January 2017

The Procedure of the UN Security Council, Lorraine Sievers and Sam Daws, Fourth Edition, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) and www.scprocedure.org

Secretary or General, The UN Secretary-General in World Politics, Simon Chesterman (Ed), (Cambridge

University Press), 2007

A Man of Peace in a World of War: Kofi Annan, Stanley Meisler, (John Wiley & Sons, Inc), 2007

Selecting the Next UN Secretary-General, A UNA-USA Report, May 2006, New York

Surrender is Not an Option: Defending America at the United Nations, John Bolton, (Simon and Shuster), 2007

Unvanquished: A U.S. - U.N. Saga, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, (Random House), 1999

A Life in Peace and War, Brian Urquhart, (Harper & Row), 1987

In the Eye of the Storm: The Memoirs of Kurt Waldheim (Weidenfeld and Nicolson), 1985

Hammarskjöld, Brian Urquhart (Alfred A. Knopf), 1972

Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969 – 1976, Volume V

Websites

1 for 7 Billion, <http://www.1for7billion.org/>

The Elders, <http://theelders.org/>

Campaign to Elect a Woman Secretary-General, <http://www.womansg.org/>

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Security Council Report Staff

Ian Martin
Executive Director

Joanna Weschler
Deputy Executive Director

Shamala Kandiah Thompson
Associate Director

Astrid Forberg Ryan
Associate Director

Paul Romita
Senior Policy Analyst

Victor Casanova Abos
Policy Analyst

Finnian Cheshire
Policy Analyst

Dahlia Morched
Policy Analyst

Vladimir Sesar
Policy Analyst

Eran Sthoeger
Policy Analyst

Benjamin Villanti
Policy Analyst

Robbin VanNewkirk
Website Manager

Audrey Waysse
Operations Manager

Maritza Tenerelli
Administrative Assistant

Aubrey Bloomfield
Research Assistant

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Security Council Report
One Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza
885 2nd Ave at 48th St, 21st Floor
New York NY 10017

Telephone +1 212 759 6394
Fax +1 212 759 4038
Web securitycouncilreport.org
whatsinblue.org