



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON THE REVITALIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

STATEMENT BY MR. STEFAN BARRIGA

MINISTER, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

Mr. Co-Chair,

The selection and appointment of the Secretary-General is one of the most important tasks of the Member States of this Organization. Over the past seven decades, the scope of the office has expanded significantly; in many ways, the person appointed by the General Assembly will be the leader and the face of the United Nations. Each Member State thus has a legitimate expectation that it can participate meaningfully in this process – it is imperative that we get it right. Liechtenstein is a member of the ACT Group and fully endorses the statement delivered by Estonia on behalf of the Group, as well as the ACT paper that was distributed.

The ACT paper contains a number of concrete suggestions for both this Assembly and for the Security Council, with the ultimate aim of improving the transparency of the selection process and giving opportunity for the 188 States that are not permanent members of the Security Council to voice their opinion. It builds on existing General Assembly resolutions and is in full conformity with the United Nations Charter. What we ask for is not a revolution, but merely a series of small but meaningful changes in practice.

Mr. Co-Chair,

The President of the General Assembly plays a crucial role in this regard. Existing General Assembly resolutions already mandate the PGA to play an active role in the identification of the candidates for the position of Secretary-General. In the ACT paper, we call on the PGA and the President of the Security Council jointly to invite UN Member States to present nominations for the post of Secretary-General, also fixing a deadline by which to do so. Upon expiration of the deadline, a list of candidates would then be circulated as a document of both the General Assembly and the Security Council. The PGA could then organize hearings to allow Member States to interact with nominees and give input into the process.

Additionally, Liechtenstein would like to stress the paramount importance of electing the most qualified individual for the job. This should be the main goal, even above other important aspirations such as regional and gender equity. In order for the General Assembly to fully assert its role as outlined in the Chart, it would also seem right to have a proper election in the General Assembly, as has been the case in the past. Finally, we would encourage Member States to consider whether the Organization might not better be served by giving the Secretary-General a single, longer term of seven years instead of the current practice. A decision on the length of the term is, in any case, one for the General Assembly to take.

If we wish to have a meaningful impact on the selection procedure of the next Secretary-General, we must act now. The longer we delay action, the more likely that this selection process will fall into the established rut and that we, the 188, find ourselves voiceless once again. Liechtenstein calls on the PGA, together with the President of the Security Council, to issue the call for nominations before the end of his term. His successor would then be in a position to hold hearings with candidates at the beginning of 2016, leaving enough time for a meaningful procedure in the Security Council that would empower the elected members to participate actively in reaching a recommendation in accordance with Article 97 of the Charter.

Mr. Co-Chair,

The leader of the world's premier peace, development and human rights organization should not be chosen by representatives of five states in a back room. The 1 for 7 billion campaign is but one sign that the world's people will no longer support such a practice. I suspect that, as we approach the election of the next Secretary-General, we will be hearing quite a bit more from civil society representatives, academics and ordinary citizens who demand real change. Let us not disappoint them.

I thank you.