

19 March 2008

Mr. Ban Ki-moon
United Nations Secretary-General
United Nations, Room S-3800
New York, NY 10017

Mr. Secretary-General,

We write to stress the need to find highly qualified candidates – through an enhanced and more accountable procedure – to fill vacancies required by the imminent departure of three of your most able Under-Secretaries-General, High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs Nicolas Michel, and Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Marie Guéhenno.

These are positions of the highest importance in the UN system. The individuals who hold them are crucial leaders in the international legal order.

Mr. Secretary-General, we again appeal to you to adopt procedures that other international organizations have adopted for making high-level appointments.

In these recommended practices:

- The vacant position is announced publicly, along with the qualifications sought, as well as the timeline and decision-making procedures to be used in filling the vacancy;
- Once candidatures have been gathered, a short-list should be made and circulated;
- Governments and other appropriate stakeholders should have adequate time to consider and comment on the short-listed candidates prior to the final decision.

In a letter to you of 8 December 2006, the Institute for Global Policy described the UNelections.org initiative and its campaign for more democratic, transparent, and effective selection and election procedures at the UN. As Secretary-General, one of the most important actions you could take would be to establish provisions for the appropriate selection of high-level officials throughout the UN system. Appointing your top officials by finding the most qualified individuals from all backgrounds and regions, not based on reciprocal agreements, ensures that you will be supported by a team of unbiased, expert advisors.

Recent selection processes on the part of UN-affiliated organizations set important examples. The World Intellectual Property Organization currently is considering candidates for its next Director General. Upon the resignation of the incumbent (Kamal Idris) in November 2007, WIPO circulated the procedures that govern WIPO's selection of a Director General – which provide for the creation of a short-list – as well as a call for candidatures from any Member State, received until a specified date (February 13, 2007). On that date, it announced the candidates and made their CVs publicly available, and it established a formal timeline for the remainder of the selection process. All of the steps taken to date are consistent with widely recommended "best practices" in high-level, international appointments.

The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund also set a positive example in July 2007 when it established a candidate profile for the Managing Director of the Fund. The Board agreed that the successful

candidate for Managing Director would have: a distinguished record in economic policymaking at senior levels; an outstanding professional background; demonstrated managerial and diplomatic skills needed to lead a global institution; nationality from any of the IMF's 185 members; the ability to provide strategic vision for the work of a high quality, diverse, and dedicated staff; a firm commitment to advancing the IMF's goals by building consensus on key policy and institutional issues, including through close collaboration with the Executive Board; proven understanding of the IMF and the policy challenges facing its diverse global membership; and effective communication skills.

Based on the values, principles and priorities of the UN, it is important that the selection processes you undertake in appointing high-level UN officials be guided by the principles of gender equality and geographic balance, in addition to ensuring that candidates meet the highest professional qualifications. We are confident that highly-qualified individuals can be found from every region, political background, gender and race.

It is our view that your commitment to key procedural reforms at the UN, which you have demonstrated in myriad ways since taking office last year, are consistent with improvements in selecting under-secretaries-general. Just as you have instigated changes to the very culture of UN management and staffing, the entire UN system would benefit from your enunciating the procedures employed in selecting your most important advisors and administrators.

We are anxious that you demonstrate your thorough commitment to such improvements by: announcing key vacancies, requesting input on candidatures, and committing to publish a short-list of candidates. In this way the Secretariat would avoid any appearance of engaging in reciprocal agreements with particular Member States or individuals.

We call on you to select the new Under-Secretaries-General according to the very highest procedural standards.

Please do not hesitate to contact us through William Pace at the Institute for Global Policy at (646) 465-8531.

Sincerely,

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