



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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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, CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I.

Co-Chairs,

Liechtenstein aligns itself with the statement delivered by Estonia on behalf of ACT and would like to add the following points:

The **election of the next Secretary-General** will be among the most important decisions to be taken by the Assembly in 2016. In resolution 69/321, the Assembly laid down the framework for a more transparent and inclusive selection process. Further changes to the appointment process are necessary, but the majority of these do not require more legislation. The Assembly simply needs to implement the Charter and reassert its rightful role in the appointment process.

The joint letter by the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council was an important first step in the election process. We look forward to participating in the informal dialogues with candidates and hope that civil society will be able to participate in these important meetings as well. All potential candidates should be aware of the strong expectation of Member States that *all* candidates undergo the process set out in the joint letter. The enhanced transparency and involvement of the membership is best achieved if *all* candidates

voluntarily subject themselves to this process, as a clear expression of the intention to serve as the Secretary-General of all Member States.

As important as last year's resolution was, further issues need to be discussed, including the term of office. We strongly believe that the next Secretary-General should be elected for a single, non-renewable term of seven years. This proposal is also supported by The Elders, a group of eminent stateswomen and statesmen under the leadership of Kofi Annan. A decision to this effect would liberate any future Secretary-General of concerns about reelection, rendering her or his work more independent and effective, and offering a clear timeframe for the implementation of her or his vision. This would also lead to more frequent geographical rotation in the position of Secretary-General, which would be passed on every seven years instead of every ten years. We are looking forward to an open discussion on this issue, based on the mandate given to us by the resolution,¹ and expect that this year's resolution will reflect this discussion.

Other issues such as the allocation of senior management positions should also be discussed, both here as well as in the conversation with candidates for Secretary-General. Like many others, we look forward in particular to the candidatures of women for the position of Secretary-General.

The indictment of John Ashe, President of the 68th session, has demonstrated the **need for enhanced accountability by the Office of the President of the General Assembly**. It goes without saying that such alleged behavior reflects badly on the United Nations as an organization. We welcome the pro-active manner in which the current President has approached this incident and opened up the finances of his office to greater scrutiny. We hope that such arrangements can be formalized through a Code of Conduct or similar arrangement. However, the current measures in place would probably not have prevented the alleged

¹ A/RES/69/321, paragraph 44.

conduct in question. We would therefore encourage the Office of the President of the General Assembly to work together with the Secretariat, Member States and other stakeholders to propose additional measures to improve transparency and accountability.

We are also open to further discussing the question of the **resources allocated to the Office of the President**, as some of our colleagues have suggested. Our impression is, however, that the current staff situation is satisfactory, including from the perspective of a small State. It has never been difficult for any incumbent to attract secondments from the membership – a practice which has many benefits, among them a more international and cross-regional character of the office, capacity-building in a significant number of States and the strengthening of institutional memory. The one aspect that merits further discussion is the period of transition, which the Office of the President has explained to be a time period of high workload and limited staff.

Let me finally say a few words about the **election of the President of the General Assembly** itself. While we agree that it is high time for a woman to be elected Secretary-General, we should not lose sight of the fact that in electing Presidents of the General Assembly, our gender record is appalling. Only three of the 70 Presidents so far have been women. We all have an important role within our respective regional groups in ensuring that qualified women are nominated to the head of our Assembly. There is no reason why we should not have gender parity among Presidents of the General Assembly from this point forward. Why? As Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau would have said: *Because it's 2016.*

I thank you.