

**Thematic debate of the Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the  
Work of the General Assembly on the “Selection and appointment of  
Secretary-General and other executive heads”  
Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) statement  
Delivered by H.E Mr. Rein Tammsaar, Permanent Representative of  
Estonia  
20 February 2025, New York**

President,

I am honoured to take the floor on behalf of the 27 members of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) Group<sup>1</sup>.

I thank the Co-Chairs, Ambassador Mathu Joyini, Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa, and Ambassador Cornel Feruță, Permanent Representative of Romania for convening today’s timely thematic debate.

In view of the upcoming SG selection process, in this year’s AHWG resolution we must build on important progress made<sup>2</sup> and lessons learned to strengthen the selection and appointment process even further. The ACT Group calls for:

**An early call for nominations and clear timeline**

The PGA-PSC joint letter which begins the process should outline: a clear timeline, that candidates must be nominated **by at least one Member State**, and it must define the **selection criteria** to ensure a merit-based, transparent and inclusive process.

**1. Timeline**

We believe that defining in advance a **clear and transparent timeline** would ease procedural burdens and improve clarity of the entire process. We therefore propose the following timeline:

- October of the year preceding appointment: **Joint letter** from the PGA and the PSC to all Member States encouraging nominations of candidates.
- 1 April of the appointment year: **cut off time** for the submission of candidatures
- End of June of the appointment year: completion of General Assembly **hearings** with all candidates.

---

<sup>1</sup> Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, Gabon, Ghana, Hungary, Ireland, Jordan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Maldives, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Portugal, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay, and my own country Estonia.

The ACT Group promotes a more transparent and efficient United Nations. We believe that the process of the Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly constitutes an important avenue towards this goal.

<sup>2</sup> ACT recognises the creation of repository on past SG selection processes.

- 1 October: **deadline** for the Security Council recommendation to allow due time for consideration, and appointment by the General Assembly, and allow the SG-designate sufficient time to prepare for the job.

## 2. Participation of women

Our previous resolution, and the Pact for the Future have underscored the regrettable fact that there's never been a **women Secretary-General**<sup>3</sup>. Since then, CEDAW's 165 States Parties have determined to reach "the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision making systems". The ACT Group calls on Member States to consider only nominating women candidates, and an encouragement of women candidates be included in the joint letter

## 3. List of candidates

Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council should continue to jointly circulate candidatures received. Additionally, they should be communicated publicly, on a rolling-basis once nominations are presented, containing the names (in alphabetic order), the member state or states nominating the candidacy, vision statements, CVs and disclosure of funding sources relating to their candidature<sup>4</sup>, making use of the repository on SG selection processes for this purpose.

The ACT group expects all candidates to **disclose any funding sources** relating to their candidature.

## 4. Role of the General Assembly

The General Assembly should exert a **stronger, more assertive, and decisive** role in the selection and appointment of the SG. We call the President of the General Assembly (PGA) to engage directly with candidates, and the Security Council towards a more inclusive and transparent selection process.

We insist that all States strictly observe Art 100 of the Charter.

We encourage discussion on the prospect of **multiple candidates**, being nominated by the Security Council for the General Assembly's consideration.

We recommend that the General Assembly elaborates a detailed **contingency plan** for a possible interruption to a SG's term of office, preferably before the appointment of the next SG.

---

<sup>3</sup> resolution 77/335, in paragraph 77: "Notes that there is yet to be a woman Secretary-General, and strongly encourages Member States to bear this in mind during the next and in subsequent selection processes, when nominating candidates for the position of Secretary – General. The Pact of the Future built on this by "encourag(ing) Member States to consider nominating women as candidates".

<sup>4</sup> As per resolution 77/335 paragraph 64

## 5. Informal dialogues/candidate hearings

We reiterate the value of the interactive hearings of the GA with candidates, which are enriched by the full participation of civil society, as exemplified in the 70<sup>th</sup> session.

We recommend **improving the format** of the informal dialogues by making them more interactive and increasing the role of the PGA.

We strongly encourage the consideration of other possible ways to **assess the level of General Assembly's support** for the candidates throughout the process, notably secret advisory votes or a similar quantifiable mechanism.

Before making a final decision to appoint the next Secretary-General, the General Assembly **should hold additional hearings** with candidates recommended by the Security Council.

## 6. Term

We invite all Members States to consider the merits of establishing a **single, non-renewable term of seven years** for future Secretaries-General.

## 7. Straw Polls

We call on the **Security Council to enhance transparency** during its deliberations on candidates. We encourage regular updates from the President of the Security Council and official announcement of the results of any deliberative mechanism.

## 8. Civil society

We strongly encourage continued contributions by civil society and other stakeholders and advocate for an enhanced role for civil society and other stakeholders, including in identifying qualified candidates.

**Co-chairs,**

**Finally, on the selection and appointment of executive heads of the United Nations.** The best practices established in the selection of the SG and full transparency should be also applied in the **selection and appointment of executive heads of the United Nations**, including the avoidance of monopolies of States on senior posts.

You can find the **full list of ACT proposals** in the ACT 2025 Non-paper, which we will circulate after this meeting.

The ACT group looks forward to continuing discussions on this topic.