



STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MATHU JOYINI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AT THEMATIC DEBATE OF THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON THE REVITALISATION OF THE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ENTITLED, “SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND OTHER SENIOR EXECUTIVES”

23 APRIL 2021

We thank the Co-chairs for convening this important debate. We also wish to thank the Office of the Human Resources of the Secretariat for a detailed and informative briefing.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and would like to make the following additional comments.

Co-chairs,

South Africa joins the majority of member states in reaffirming the important role played by the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) in the context of the global challenges facing the world today, and in the implementation of the pillars of the United Nations, namely: Peace and Security, Human Rights and Sustainable Development. In this regard, we commend the current SG’s leadership in the face of the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic and in this context, we wish to underscore that an urgent coordinated global vaccine plan is essential to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. My delegation stresses the importance of the full implementation of the provisions of resolution 69/321, on the revitalisation of the work of the General Assembly as it pertains to the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General in accordance with the provisions of Article 97 of the Charter of the United Nations and guided by the principles of transparency and inclusivity.

South Africa welcomes these significant reforms that have been implemented thus far and have contributed to underlining the importance of the role of the General Assembly in the selection and appointment process of the Secretary-General.

South Africa would also like to see the previously agreed Ad Hoc Working Group recommendations on General Assembly reform institutionalised and that the Working Group should resume a process of consolidation and further improve the present reform proposals without delay. The guiding principles in the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group include that of striving for greater and improved transparency, fairness and inclusivity when it comes to the work of the General Assembly, including in the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General. We should not wait till the end of the Secretary-General's term before we consider how to strengthen the system.

Co-chairs,

We believe that we made concrete progress for the 2016 Secretary-General selection and appointment process through the distribution of the joint letter of the Presidents of the General Assembly (PGA) and Security Council dated 15 December 2015, inviting member states to present candidates for the post to the Presidents of both organs for circulation to the broader membership. The subsequent informal dialogues and interaction with prospective candidates convened by the PGA in a timely manner, was indeed a groundbreaking development and my delegation reiterates its belief that this innovative approach should become institutionalised practice. In this regard, we commend the current PGA for implementing these recommendations.

However, we believe that the process can be further improved and we support the call that the Ad Hoc Working Group continues discussions on three important areas, namely: a) that upon recommendation of the Security Council, the Secretary-General should ideally be appointed through a secret ballot in the General Assembly; b) that the Security Council in the future be encouraged to submit more than one name for the General Assembly's consideration; and c) that the General Assembly in future seriously reflect on and consider appointing future Secretaries-General for a longer, but single, non-renewable term. None of these proposals require an amendment to the Charter and we

believe that these provisions will not only fully democratize the process but will also enable future Secretaries-General to execute their mandates in a more independent and accountable manner.

Co-chairs,

Regarding the appointment of other executive heads, my delegation wishes to underscore the utmost importance of ensuring that the Executive Heads and Senior Management of the United Nations Secretariat reflect a balanced gender and equitable geographical representation. South Africa therefore supports the request from the Secretary-General for member states to submit names and resumes of nationals that may be considered for such positions, as a welcome development.

It is noteworthy that Mr. Guterres was able to achieve full gender parity in the United Nations Senior Management Group within a year. We further note that the Secretary-General has made a commitment to reach parity at the full senior management level by the end of 2021 and across the Organisation well before 2030. We view this as important as we approach the 80th anniversary of the formation of the UN in 2025, the 25th anniversary of 1325 and the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Plan of Action on Women.

In conclusion, Co-facilitators, my delegation stands ready to work with you and other delegations in ensuring that this Working Group achieves further progress in this regard during this session.

I thank you.