

# Looking Ahead

## Selecting the Next UN Secretary-General

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan will complete his second five-year term on December 31, 2006. The process to elect the next (eighth) Secretary-General is already underway and will likely be decided this fall.

### Formal Framework

The UN Charter states that the Secretary-General is to be appointed by the General Assembly after being nominated by the Security Council. To receive the nomination a candidate must receive at least nine votes and must not be vetoed by any permanent member. The permanent members of the Security Council are China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. This year's rotating members are Argentina, Congo, Denmark, Ghana, Greece, Japan, Peru, Qatar, Slovakia, and Tanzania. The rules of the Security Council dictate that deliberations on the nominee be held in private session. Similarly, General Assembly rules of procedure require the consideration of the Council's nominee to be discussed and voted on in closed session.

### Informal Practices

Much of the deliberation and discussion on the candidates for the Secretary-General post are held in private consultations and meetings. Informal straw polls are held to gauge the viability of candidates. Typically this pre-session maneuvering results in the selection of one candidate who will suit all Security Council members. Subsequently, that candidate is usually nominated by acclamation.

Although there is technically no limit to the number of five-year terms a Secretary-General may serve, by practice, Secretaries-General serve no more than two. Candidacies have traditionally been considered on the basis of regional rotation. Under that system, an Asian is next in line for the post. Citizens from nations with a permanent seat on the Security Council are generally not considered for the post based on the assumption that it would create an imbalance of power and compromise the independence of the office of the Secretary-General.

### Status of the Race

This summer five candidates have officially declared their candidacy. Those candidates are South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon, UN Undersecretary-General for Public Information Shashi Tharoor, Sri Lankan Presidential Advisor Jayantha Dhanapala, Thai Deputy Prime Minister Surakiart Sathirathai, and Jordanian UN Ambassador Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein. Many other contenders have been rumored. The Security Council held its first straw poll in July to assess the four official candidates at the time, which did not include Prince Zeid. Ban Ki-Moon finished first. Shashi Tharoor was a close second. The next Secretary-General may be selected by October to allow for adequate transition time.

For more information on the Secretary-General elections, the candidates, and the positions of Member States, please visit [www.unsg.org](http://www.unsg.org).