



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON THE REVITALIZATION  
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
(ON THE QUESTION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF FUTURE SECRETARY GENERALS)

STATEMENT

BY

H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



Co-Chairs,

Today's debate is very timely indeed and one of the best ways to revitalize the General Assembly through simple practical measures and much more valuable than talking about revitalization. The debate on the relationship between the GA and the SC tends to end up in a self-repeating loop, peppered by terms such as encroachment and others. However, it does in the end very little to make the GA the chief deliberative body of the organization, while dealing with issues of high relevance such as the one on the agenda today goes a long way to remedy the current situation of institutional imbalance.

The GA has, through resolution 51/241, a clear mandate to play an enhanced role in the appointment of the Secretary-General. This resolution has never been applied, simply because no appointment has taken place since the adoption of the resolution. We can thus address simultaneously two issues which have time and again been identified as needed when it comes to revitalizing the General Assembly: The consideration of issues of high relevance to the organization and the implementation of past resolutions.

The question of who heads the organization is of course an issue of vital importance on which the membership as a whole must have a say. It is therefore not sufficient for the General Assembly to merely rubber-stamp a recommendation that has been reached earlier on by the Security Council, as has for the most part been the case in the past. As on other occasions, it is both feasible and desirable to enhance the role of the General Assembly, without at the same time diminishing the functions assigned to the Security Council through the process foreseen in article 97 of the Charter. This article of course does not address the question of appointment of the Secretary-General in any detail, which is why the General Assembly already in 1946 adopted a resolution (A/RES/1/11) that contained at least some detail of the process of appointment. However, this resolution does not cover all aspects of appointment, especially given the changed nature and dramatically increased importance of the position of Secretary-General.

In tackling the question before us, we find a solid basis in resolution 51/241. In concrete terms, this resolution contains among other things the mandate to make full use of the power of appointment enshrined in the Charter, gives the President of the General Assembly the competence to consult with Member States to identify potential candidates endorsed by a Member State and to forward the results of his or her consultations to the Council. Also, the resolution states in clear terms that the duration of the appointment, including the option of a single term, shall be considered before the appointment of the next Secretary-General. To our mind, it is advisable to follow the letter of the said resolution as closely as possible and to decide on a course of action for its implementation. The overall goal, as stipulated in the resolution itself, must be to make the process of selection more transparent.

Co-Chairs,

We hope that this general exchange of views can quickly be followed by a number of meetings dedicated to certain aspects of the question of appointment, based on resolution 51/241. Whether this is done in this group on revitalization or in a separate process under the relevant agenda item is a question we should discuss today and decide quickly. We are more attached to a clear and efficient process than to a procedural discussion on where to hold the discussion. However, it is worth pointing out that resolution 51/241 itself makes reference to the agenda item "Appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations", which makes it meaningful to establish a process under that item.

We are of the view that a two-track process is needed to address this important matter: First, we need to implement para. 57 of resolution 51/241 through practical measures. The idea of holding open hearings for the declared candidates in an informal meeting of the General Assembly is particularly attractive. Such a format would allow those who have officially declared their willingness to serve as the next Secretary-General to first present their vision for the future of the organization and then engage in an informal and interactive debate with the membership they wish to serve. Such hearings can be convened as part of the consultations to be held by the GA President and their outcome could possibly be forwarded to the Security Council. We appreciate that the Presidents of the Security Council and the General Assembly are already engaged in an exchange of information on the question of appointment of the SG and believe that this exchange could easily encompass also information on hearings held by the General Assembly.

In more general terms, we need a discussion on some aspects that are of relevance for all future appointments. The issue of term limits and of regional rotation must be part of such a general discussion, since they are mentioned in resolution 51/241. We would also advocate for the inclusion of the question whether a candidature for Secretary-General should be presented in tandem with one for the post of Deputy Secretary-General. The largely complementary nature of the two positions make a clear case for such a discussion, and the conclusions of the IIC on the Oil-for-Food Programme make an additional case for such a debate.

Whether or not the consideration of these three aspects – and possibly more – will result in a resolution on the question of appointment of course depends on the nature of the discussion and its results. We encourage you to hold informal consultations, including bilateral ones, and to suggest a process which allows us to address this matter of vital interest in a constructive and efficient manner.

Thank you.