

**A Comprehensive Guide to Questioning Candidates
for the Post of
Secretary-General of the United Nations**
www.UNSGSelection.org

Introduction

1. In what ways have your past experiences, positions, and duties promoted or demonstrated a commitment to the principles of the United Nations?

Role of the Secretary General:

2. Over the course of UN history, Secretaries-General have utilized their authority in various capacities, taking on a range of priorities and roles. Do you see the Secretary-General primarily as an administrator, a head diplomat or a chief executive of the United Nations?
3. Based on your assessment of previous Secretaries-General as well as your own areas of expertise, how would you prioritize the administrative, managerial and diplomatic responsibilities? How independent is the office of the S-G? To whom is s/he primarily responsible?
4. Progress on key issues is often undermined by tension between developed and developing countries. What role can the Secretary-General play in addressing that divide? What experience do you have that would aid you in the considerable task of achieving the compromises and building the consensus necessary for meaningful action?
5. Should the Secretary-General be given more authority to redeploy posts and reallocate savings from vacant posts?
6. How would you distinguish between the roles of the Secretary-General and the Deputy SG? What qualifications would you look for in a candidate for DSG? Do you already have anyone in mind for the post?

Vision and Priorities for the UN:

7. What do you see as the UN's key thematic, normative, and operational priorities?
8. In what areas does the UN hold a comparative advantage to other international actors or institutions?
9. What do you believe are the UN's greatest strengths and weaknesses? What steps can the Secretary-General take to capitalize on the strengths and address the weaknesses?

10. What are the key challenges facing the international community today and what are the best ways to enhance the UN's efficiency and effectiveness in responding to contemporary challenges?

Peace and Security

Conflict Prevention:

11. What steps can be taken in the Secretariat to create a culture of prevention and strengthen capacity to develop coherent and integrated strategies for the prevention of armed conflict?

Peace and Security:

12. In the past two decades, the UN's peacekeeping operations have grown to become one of its largest and most prominent functions. What aspects of the current debate on peacekeeping, as reflected, *inter alia*, in the Brahimi Report on Peacekeeping Operations, are especially important for creating more accountable and effective forces in addressing the most severe challenges to peacekeeping and peacebuilding?

Peacekeeping:

13. How important is it that the UN establish a capacity for rapid deployment and a standing police capacity, as outlined in the World Summit Outcome Document? How do you envision institutionalizing this?

Peacebuilding:

14. What are the key challenges and gaps that the UN can and/or should address in post-conflict peacebuilding, and what role do you think the newly inaugurated Peacebuilding Commission can play in this regard?

Genocide prevention:

15. How can the UN equip itself to prevent genocide? What tools does it need to do so?
16. The current Secretary-General has appointed a Special Advisor on the prevention of genocide. Do you think the creation of such posts is useful?

Terrorism:

17. What do you see as the key elements of a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy?
18. How important and achievable is an international definition of terrorism? What are the major obstacles to defining terrorism?

Disarmament and non-proliferation:

19. What institutional changes are needed within the UN, in particular the role of the Secretariat, to improve capacity to respond to global challenges posed by nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, missiles and other means of their delivery, and the risk of their acquisition by terrorists?

Human Rights

Human Rights Council:

20. What were the main shortcomings of the Commission on Human Rights and what is your assessment of the new Human Rights Council? What steps should be taken in the coming years to ensure that it is an improved body?

Human Rights and Reform:

21. During his term, Kofi Annan has initiated and supported substantial reform of the UN's human rights machinery in order that human rights could be given its rightful institutional emphasis as one of the three pillars of the United Nations. If you were selected as his successor, what specific steps would you take to follow on his processes?

Protecting Civilians:

22. The UN Charter opens with, "We the peoples of the United Nations," yet the organization remains a primarily intergovernmental body. The UN Secretary-General therefore is responsible to both the citizens of the world and the Member States. Where is the threshold between the UN's (and the Secretary-General's) obligations to protect civilian populations and to respect national sovereignty?

Development

Development Strategies:

23. How would you evaluate the success, to date, of the Millennium Development Goals? How would you oversee this effort?
24. What are the UN's most important contributions and comparative advantages in development and how can the UN enhance its role in this area?
25. In your opinion, what are the main elements of an effective development strategy? Many economists, as well as UN programs and agencies, assert that "development" means much more than GDP growth and poverty eradication. Can you highlight some other key aspects of development and how the UN system can support them?
26. What role can the UN play in enhancing aid effectiveness?
27. Does the recent failure of the WTO's "Development round" place any new responsibilities on the UN?

Economic and Social Council:

- 28. In which areas should ECOSOC, as opposed to international financial institutions, play a leading role? What specific role should the Secretary-General play in promoting this development agenda?
- 29. What do you believe are the key elements to ECOSOC reform, to make it a more effective organ?

System-wide Coherence:

- 30. The current Secretary-General has appointed a panel to carry out a study on system-wide coherence. Based on your understanding of the UN's programmatic activities, what recommendations do you have to enhance operational coherence at the country level?

Gender

- 31. How important is it to increase the gender distribution within the UN, especially the Secretariat? What do you envision as a realistic date for the UN to reach its goal of 50/50 gender balance in the Secretariat?
- 32. What is your assessment of the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security?
- 33. What are your views on the role of the Gender Advisor to the Secretary-General?
- 34. Many, including current Secretary-General Kofi Annan, have pointed to problems caused by a lack of meritocracy in the UN hiring system. How do you balance the demands of gender and regional distribution with the importance of "choosing the right person"?
- 35. Do you think that the UN needs a single international agency for women to focus on women's rights, health and security?

International Justice

- 36. What do you think are the most practical ways to strengthen the international rule of law? Is there any way to increase accountability and adherence without violating state sovereignty?

International Criminal Court:

- 37. How familiar are you with the Rome Statute and the International Criminal Court, including the key gender provisions?
- 38. Have you had any involvement in promoting ratification and implementation of the Rome Statute in his/her home country?

39. How will you support and strengthen the UN's and Member States' commitment to international justice mechanisms such as international criminal tribunals, including the International Criminal Court (ICC)?

40. What is your opinion of the ICC to date?

UN Governance and Reform

Democratic Framework:

41. Originally, the UN had to compromise between equal representation for all states and giving the bigger powers an incentive to be involved with the organization. Do you think a more democratic framework would make the UN more effective in its work? How do you strike a balance between international legitimacy and encouraging powerful nations to continue to be involved in the UN system?

42. Do you believe that financial contributions should determine a Member State's influence in the decision-making functions of the UN?

43. Given the current criticism of the UN for a lack of transparency, accountability and democracy, what are the key opportunities in the UN system for increased democratic governance, allowing all actors – Member States, international organizations, and NGOs – fair representation while ensuring effective decision-making?

Role of the General Assembly:

44. The General Assembly is the UN's decision-making and legislative arm. What steps should it take to enhance and revitalize its role within the UN framework?

Security Council reform:

45. How would you encourage consensus on highly contentious issues such as Security Council reform? How would you represent the interests of smaller states while ensuring that the big powers remain involved in the UN system and devoted to multilateralism?

46. Is the current structure and membership of the Security Council appropriate, or should it be enlarged to better reflect modern geopolitical realities? Should the Security Council take any further steps to enhance the transparency and accountability in its working methods?

UN Reform:

47. The UN has been involved in reform discussions for the past two years. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the current Secretary-General's reform recommendations (i.e. "In Larger Freedom," March 2005)? What are the most important reforms, and what role should the Secretary-General play in promoting those reforms?

Civil Society Involvement

48. Is the Secretary-General responsible primarily to the citizens of the world or to the states of the world? How would you go about addressing the frequent divergence between the two when governments often fail to protect the best interests of their people?
49. Does the current UN infrastructure have sufficient mechanisms to incorporate the views and expertise of civil society? Does it need to either streamline or strengthen the voice of such stakeholders?
50. What role should civil society and other non-state stakeholders play in the work of the UN? Do you support a greater consultative role for NGOs in intergovernmental decision-making processes, or a decreased role? What measures should a Secretary General take to improve UN-civil society relations?

Environment

51. Does the United Nations need a single and strengthened environmental body/organization?
52. How can the UN provide more comprehensive and coherent management and monitoring of the multilateral environmental agreements? How can the UN strengthen a sustainable development-oriented agenda throughout both the Secretariat and at the country level?