



General Assembly

Seventy-first session

27th plenary meeting
Thursday, 13 October 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Thomson (Fiji)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the late King of Thailand

The President: It is my sad duty to pay tribute to the memory of the late King of Thailand, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who passed away on Thursday, 13 October 2016. On behalf of the General Assembly, I request the representative of the Kingdom of Thailand to convey our condolences to the royal family, the Government and the people of Thailand.

May I now invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of the late King.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The President: A formal tribute in the General Assembly will be convened at a later date, to be announced.

Agenda item 113

Appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

**Letter from the President of the
Security Council to the President of the General
Assembly (A/71/531)**

Draft resolution (A/71/L.4)

The President: I now call on the President of the Security Council, who will report to the Assembly on

the work undertaken by the Council on the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): It is an honour for me, in my capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of October, to address the General Assembly in order to convey the recommendation of the Security Council for the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

At its 7782nd meeting, held in private on 6 October, the Security Council adopted by acclamation resolution 2311 (2016) concerning the recommendation for the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

I shall now read out the text of the resolution. Resolution 2311 (2016) reads as follows:

“The Security Council,

“Having considered the question of the recommendation for the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations,

“Recommends to the General Assembly that Mr. António Guterres be appointed Secretary-General of the United Nations for a term of office from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2021.”

In the joint letter of the President of the Security Council and the President of the General Assembly dated 15 December 2015, the Council pledged to conclude its part in the selection process in a timely manner, so that the newly appointed Secretary-General

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would have sufficient time to prepare for the job. The Council is pleased that, by adopting its recommendation for the appointment on 6 October, the Council met that objective. The Security Council believes that early action on the appointment by the General Assembly would provide the new Secretary-General with enough time to prepare for performing his duties.

On behalf of the Security Council, I would like to express appreciation to all Member States that nominated candidates as part of the selection process. I would also like to express appreciation to the candidates who have actively participated in the process. During the informal meetings with each of them, the Council had the opportunity to evaluate their high professional skills and commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

The Security Council adopted resolution 2311 (2016) by acclamation. Accordingly, the members of the Security Council expressed their unconditional support for Mr. António Guterres, who, if appointed today, will head our common Organization.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you, Sir, for having convened this meeting expeditiously following the recommendation made to the General Assembly by the Security Council.

The President: In connection with the recommendation of the Security Council, the General Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/71/L.4. The draft was prepared following extensive consultations between me, special advisers on my behalf, and the United Nations membership. Throughout those consultations, a number of consistent priorities held by Member States emerged, and in that context, I want to thank all of them for their inputs, which were fundamental in the preparation of the text.

During the drafting process, I was conscious of the need to reflect the historic advances that had been made in the process of the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General, in line with resolutions 69/321 and 70/305. That included the acknowledgement of the transparent and inclusive process that was undertaken, from the informal dialogues, which were conducted between the General Assembly and each of the candidates, to the unprecedented level of cooperation between the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

The main task was to reflect, within the framework of the draft resolution on the appointment, the committed support for the process that was undertaken and the expectations of Member States. With the reaffirmation of the role of the General Assembly, the reference to Chapter XV of the Charter of the United Nations and the recognition of resolutions 69/321 and 70/305 as the cornerstones of the process, I am confident that the text before the Assembly fully reflects the views of Member States.

After the extensive consultations that I have had with the membership, it is my understanding that the General Assembly wishes to proceed with the adoption of draft resolution A/71/L.4 by acclamation.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt by acclamation draft resolution A/71/L.4?

Draft resolution A/71/L.4 was adopted by acclamation (resolution 71/4).

The President: I now request the Chief of Protocol to escort the Secretary-General-designate, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, to the platform.

The Chief of Protocol escorted the Secretary-General-designate, Mr. António Guterres, to the platform.

The President: I have the honour to announce that His Excellency Mr. António Guterres has been appointed by acclamation Secretary-General of the United Nations for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2017 and ending on 31 December 2021.

Today is indeed a momentous day. Since 1946, this is only the ninth time that the General Assembly has taken action on the appointment of a new Secretary-General. It is inherently a decision of deep consequence, as the entire membership agrees to the appointment of an individual to lead the United Nations. The process undertaken so as to arrive at today's decision has been a historic one.

It was shaped from the outset through committed engagement on the part of the General Assembly. For the first time in the history of the United Nations, the selection and appointment process for the Secretary-General has been guided by the principles of transparency and inclusivity. The process began with the first-ever joint call from the Presidents of the General Assembly and Security Council formally soliciting

candidates for the job. From the outset, it acknowledged the importance of geographic and gender balance and explicitly invited the candidacies of women.

It was a process that specifically sought out candidates who embody a firm commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, exemplify the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, and have shown proven leadership and managerial abilities, extensive experience in international relations and strong diplomatic communication and multilingual skills.

And throughout it all, the process emphasized the need to secure the best possible candidate for the role. Thirteen candidates of the highest standards were presented for consideration, seven of them women. From the moment of the presentation of their nominations, their candidatures were subject to full public view with the joint circulation of letters, the establishment of a dedicated website and the presentation of each candidate's vision for the Organization. All candidates were given and took the opportunity to participate in informal dialogues with the United Nations membership, a process deeply enriched by the engagement of civil society and the wider global public.

Throughout the process, a number of key messages began to resonate from Member States — the desire to continue to see an independent and courageous Secretary-General who will make full use of the powers provided for him in the Charter of the United Nations; a person who is committed to ensuring that the United Nations both embraces and exemplifies gender equality at all levels; a person with the deftness and skills to innovate and adapt the Organization's structures, capacities, culture and capabilities to respond to today's major challenges; and the acknowledgment of the importance of geographic and gender balance in senior posts.

I congratulate Mr. Guterres on having emerged as the best candidate from such a historic, rigorous and comprehensive process. Mr. Guterres embodies the highest standards of competence, integrity and leadership needed for the position, and he brings with him vast experience from his time as the Prime Minister of Portugal and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. His dedication to the ideals and common values of the United Nations is beyond doubt. I am confident that Mr. Guterres will serve the global community with dedication as a moral authority and

be the voice of our collective conscience and humanity throughout his term.

I assure Mr. Guterres of my full support throughout the seventy-first session of the General Assembly and will do everything within my power to facilitate a smooth transition process. I am pleased to say that he has accepted my invitation to meet with the General Assembly on 19 October in order to begin a dialogue on critical, priority and emerging issues for the Organization. Once again, congratulations to Mr. Guterres.

It is now my honour to give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: Before turning to our agenda item, I would like to offer my deep condolences to the royal family, the Government and the people of Thailand on the passing of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej. His Majesty King Adulyadej was revered by the people of Thailand as a unifying national leader. He was also highly respected internationally. At this time of sorrow and loss, I hope that Thailand will continue to honour King Adulyadej's legacy of commitment to the universal values and respect for human rights.

Above all, to the Secretary-General-designate, I offer my best wishes and congratulations.

I commend the Member States not only for their choice of Secretary-General but also for the way in which they went about making that choice. The first-ever public hearings on the selection of a Secretary-General opened the process to the world. Several highly qualified women and men were given a unique platform from which to share their vision and answer questions from the diplomatic community and civil society. Those new steps established a new benchmark for openness and engagement.

Secretary-General-designate Guterres is well known to all of us in the Hall, but he is perhaps the best known where it counts most — on the front lines of armed conflict and humanitarian suffering. For the past decade, the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other humanitarian actors has provided a lifeline for millions upon millions of people forced from their homes. They also received something else — compassion. The same solidarity was at the heart of the High Commissioner's effective advocacy around the globe.

Mr. Guterres also brings deeds and solid political experience, including his two terms of service as Prime Minister of Portugal. His political instincts are those of the United Nations — cooperation for the common good and shared responsibility for people and the planet. He recognizes the crucial importance of women's empowerment from peace-negotiations tables to the halls of this house. As an active participant in the Senior Management Group and the Chief Executives Board, he understands the inner workings of our Organization. I have long valued his advice and admired his spirit of service. He is a wonderful choice to steer this Organization as we build on the progress of the past decade, while addressing the insecurity and uncertainties of today's world.

The Secretary-General-designate has often shared his feelings on the privilege of being a part of the United Nations. Despite all the challenges, he said, "This is still the best place in the world to work". After 10 years, I could not agree more. Today's ceremony is also poignant for me, since it takes place 10 years after the day of my own election in 2006. As I prepare to hand over the baton of leadership, I know that Member States, the outstanding women and men of the United Nations and the people of the world are all looking forward to his tenure with confidence and excitement.

I congratulate him and wish him great success.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

It is now my honour to give the floor to the representative of the Niger, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Wafy (Niger): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of African States on this important occasion of the appointment of the next Secretary-General, under agenda item 113.

The African Group welcomes the commitment to remaining faithful to the General Assembly's call for increased transparency and inclusivity in the selection and appointment of the next Secretary-General, in accordance with article 97 of the Charter of the United Nations. It therefore fully endorses the approach taken in adopting the President's text by acclamation, which, among other things, appoints Mr. António Guterres as Secretary-General for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2017 and ending on 31 December 2021.

The African Group extends its heartiest congratulations to Mr. António Guterres on his designation to take the helm of the United Nations, bringing on board a wealth of experience in global affairs, and it further assures him of the African Group's full support and commitment in the discharge of his mandate. The African Group is particularly encouraged by the transparency and inclusivity that guided the selection process, which re-enforced the legitimacy of the General Assembly and, indeed, the nomination of Mr. Guterres. Our deepest gratitude goes out to His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session, for his exemplary leadership throughout the selection process, as well as to you, Mr. President, for leading the process to its logical conclusion.

I cannot conclude without seizing this opportunity to commend, on behalf of the African Group, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his laudable achievements, albeit under very difficult circumstances. Particularly notable are his enduring legacies of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

In conclusion, the African Group looks forward to the upcoming informal meeting of the General Assembly plenary with the Secretary-General-designate, to be held on 19 October, as a unique opportunity to further engage on issues of priority and interest to the African Group and more broadly, on how to make the United Nations fit for purpose.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kuwait, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait): I have the honour and privilege today to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States on the occasion of the adoption of resolution 71/4, which endorses the Security Council recommendation to appoint Mr. António Guterres as the ninth Secretary-General for five years beginning 1 January 2017.

I would like to begin by taking this opportunity to thank our current Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, who over the past 10 years has served the United Nations with dignity and humility. We are proud that Mr. Ban is from our region. He has inspired global development for the future by pushing for advancements in the areas of women's empowerment, gender equality, human rights and climate change. His tireless efforts

resulted, inter alia, in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which will enter into force on 4 November. Also highly commendable was his drive to ensure that the work of the Millennium Development Goals would not be lost. He promoted the post-2015 development agenda, which includes the assurance that no one will be left behind, by encouraging Member States to adopt the Sustainable Development Goals to help protect the planet for future generations.

We would like to thank him for his many years of service to the Organization, and we wish him well in all of his future endeavours. We reconfirm our commitment and support for him as he continues to serve out his remaining 78 days in office. In this occasion, we would also like to take the opportunity to thank Mrs. Ban Soon-taek, who has steadfastly stood by her husband during his 10 years as Secretary-General and played an active role by travelling around the world with him to advocate the ideals of the United Nations. She has helped to organize and has actively participated in numerous events to fund humanitarian activities, such as the United Nations International Bazaar. She also worked to advance the rights of children, women and senior citizens by bringing attention to issues such as autism and violence against women, and for that, we truly thank her.

I am pleased and honoured, on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, to extend our sincere congratulations to Mr. António Guterres on his election as Secretary-General. Mr. Guterres' election signals an era of change at the United Nations in the procedure for the selection of the Secretary-General, which this year involved public hearings, informal dialogue, a global town hall meeting and meetings with all United Nations regional groups. Never has the selection process been more open and transparent.

Throughout the six straw polls taken by the Security Council, Mr. Guterres was a clear favourite for the position. Moreover, Mr. Guterres' extensive knowledge and expertise, clearly reflected in the interactive dialogue held with him in the General Assembly, enabled him to gain unanimous support from its Members. Mr. Guterres has presented a clear vision for the role of the United Nations that provides all Member States with renewed hope for the future. He brings to the position a wealth of knowledge, professional skill, vision, experience and wisdom as a veteran politician and leader, showing leadership abilities that will serve him well in the role of Secretary-General.

The Asia-Pacific Group welcomes Secretary-General designate António Guterres and wishes him success in fulfilling that central role at an exceedingly critical time in the history of the United Nations. Mr. Guterres' undeniable commitment is the stronghold of the platform and the priorities that he envisions. The States members of the Asia-Pacific Group pledge their firm support to him in encountering the new and emerging challenges that lie ahead. That unified support embodies the confidence of knowing that the Secretary-General-designate is well suited to head our Organization.

We all aspire to put an end to the prolonged conflicts transpiring in certain parts of our world, which constitute threats to international peace and security. We stand with the Secretary-General-designate in his coming efforts to mediate those grave disputes. We believe that his leadership, together with our collective efforts encompassing the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations as an integral tool, will assist in attaining a peaceful solution and reconciliation.

We remain confident that, in the light of the need to promote development and growth, the Secretary-General-designate will persevere in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, with high hopes for their ultimate realization. His statesmanship and years of diplomacy will foster further strengthening of the structure of the United Nations. While reinforcing multilateralism, Mr. Guterres will, we trust, engage in the ongoing reform of the United Nations, as revitalization will ensure the Organization's resilience in tackling the various challenges faced.

Terrorism, violent extremism, xenophobia, racism, religious intolerance and their ramifications have led to daunting concerns worldwide. They are among the foremost issues on which the Secretary-General-designate needs to raise awareness and counter the resulting threats through international cooperation.

As Mr. Guterres assumes the position of Secretary-General, I wish to quote Sir Isaac Newton, one of the most historically influential people, with the hope that it will serve him well in his effort to pacify social tensions, "We build too many walls and not enough bridges". We, the States members of the Asia-Pacific Group, trust that he will confront relevant issues with resolute determination. It is our hope that, under his leadership, we, as nations united, will build the bridges

needed to pave the way to a peaceful, prosperous and just world.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): I am honoured to make this statement on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States. It is my great pleasure to congratulate His Excellency Mr. António Guterres on his successful completion of the journey to become the next Secretary-General. His outstanding experience in top positions at both the national and the international levels and his vision of effective multilateralism reassure us of his masterly stewardship of the Organization in the years to come. We rely on his courage and wisdom to make an important and lasting contribution to our common

“quest for a peaceful, inclusive and sustainably developed world, in which international law and the dignity and worth of the human person are fully pursued”,

as he stated in his vision statement of 12 April before the General Assembly.

The selection of Mr. Guterres as Secretary-General is even more important owing to the transparent and inclusive process in which he and the other candidates took part for the first time in the history of the United Nations. We acknowledge the highly professional performance on the part of each candidate, including those from the Eastern European Group.

We further look forward to building upon the success achieved through the ground-breaking work on the revitalization of the General Assembly, as reflected in resolutions 69/321 and 70/305, in terms of strengthening the Assembly’s accountability, transparency and institutional memory. We remain committed to exploring ways of further improving the process, including by further promoting gender equality and regional balance in selecting candidates for positions as high-ranking United Nations officials.

The leadership of the Secretary-General will be pivotal as we strive to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and address the question of climate change. His role as the top United Nations diplomat will be crucial in tackling the looming humanitarian crises in the world and in negotiating solutions for countries emerging from conflict, as well as protracted conflicts and sustaining peace.

As the leader serving 7 billion persons around the globe, his determination to foster respect for human rights will be decisive. We fully support the holistic approach of connecting the dots so as to overcome the challenges among the three pillars of the United Nations, namely, peace and security, sustainable development and human rights, by developing policies to further enhance the role and relevance of the United Nations.

We thank the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his tireless work and dedication. The Secretary-General designate, Mr. António Guterres, will be able to count on unsparing support and cooperation on the part of our regional Group.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Chile, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I have the honour to welcome and extend our warmest congratulations to the newly appointed Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres. His stature and diplomatic competence, together with his broad experience in many areas, make him an eminently suitable person for this demanding key position, at a time when the international community has taken the historical commitment to free the human race from poverty, as set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

His 10-year experience as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has become more relevant than ever, as we face large movements of refugees and migrants, one of our most pressing challenges. We are confident that Mr. Guterres will undertake his role in a manner based on independence and committed leadership, thus instilling the highest standards of integrity within the United Nations system, while promoting unity and understanding in seeking the best global solutions. We are also confident that Mr. Guterres will introduce a renewed impetus for promoting the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Latin American and Caribbean Group looks forward to continuing its close and cooperative relationship with the United Nations in various fields, including development, the Sustainable Development Goals, climate change, peace and security, decolonization, human rights and democracy.

Our Group extends its appreciation to all of the candidates that participated in the selection process, including in the interactive dialogues with the General Assembly, contributing to the process' transparency and openness. The Group also highlights the role played by the General Assembly in that process, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and resolutions 69/321 and 70/305, and further stresses the need to ensure the implementation of the provisions, inter alia, on the fair and equal distribution of senior posts, based on gender and geographical balance.

Finally, I wish to convey our Group's deepest appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his continuous efforts and contribution to the success of the United Nations, under his decade-long leadership. We look forward to his ongoing leadership until the conclusion of his term.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): On behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, it is an honour and a privilege to address the Assembly as we welcome the appointment of Mr. António Guterres as the next Secretary-General. Today, Mr. Guterres, the former Prime Minister of Portugal and former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, has been selected to serve as the Head of the Organization. We offer him our warmest congratulations and look forward to working with him from January.

From his first day in office, we pledge to provide our fullest support to Mr. Guterres, and we commit to assisting him in upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We look to him to manage the Secretariat efficiently and effectively and to advance much-needed reforms so as to enhance the ability of the United Nations to face the challenges of the century, and we express our utmost confidence in his experience, ability and skills to lead this Organization over the coming years.

In doing so, we also express our deep gratitude to the outgoing Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, as he concludes his second term at the end of the year. We applaud his leadership on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, on human rights and on so many other issues over the past

10 years, and we look to him to continue his vital work until the end of his tenure.

We also pay tribute to the Assembly for the role it has played in improving the selection process. The enhancements set out in resolutions 69/321 and 70/305, in particular, have brought unprecedented transparency, effectiveness and inclusivity to the selection of the Secretary-General. Moreover, we welcome the fact that it was possible to conclude the process quickly, effectively and consensually in the Security Council, enabling a smooth transition for Mr. Guterres as well as sufficient time for him to prepare for his new role. Together, the Assembly has set a new standard for the process and should continue to encourage more transparency and equitability in the future.

In closing, we offer our congratulations again to Mr. Guterres and look forward to his leadership. His tenure comes at a time when the challenges to this Organisation and the multilateral system as a whole are becoming even more complex. Peace and security crises are having significant humanitarian, human rights and development impacts around the world. A strong United Nations is needed more than ever, and today we have chosen a strong Secretary-General to lead it.

It now falls to us, the Member States, to support Mr. Guterres and to cooperate closely with him on decisions that can maintain, strengthen and solidify the role of the United Nations in addressing the greatest global challenges.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the host country.

Ms. Power (United States of America): As the proud host country of the United Nations, the United States joins all the other delegations in this Hall in welcoming the appointment of António Guterres as the next Secretary-General.

Let me start by saying a word about Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who over the past 10 years has shown that progress can be made by setting ambitious goals and mobilizing Member States to meet them. Secretary-General Ban was instrumental in driving the momentum and the concrete commitments necessary to achieve both the historic Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Goals. They are achievements that — if implemented by Member States — will improve people's lives for decades to

come. The United States is profoundly grateful to Secretary-General Ban for his leadership and his service to our peoples and to our planet.

The selection of António Guterres as the ninth Secretary-General is an extraordinary outcome that matches the world's growing demands for a strong United Nations. It is all the more extraordinary because — let us be honest — all too often at the United Nations, narrow agendas keep us divided and prevent us from taking constructive action. I would like to highlight three ways in which this appointment and the process that gave rise to it exceeded expectations. This should inspire us all going forward.

First, given the well-known divisions in the Security Council, many feared that the Council would fail to reach consensus on the next Secretary-General. I confess that I harboured some of those doubts myself, wondering if I should avoid making Christmas plans with my family in case the process dragged on and I would end up spending Christmas Day on our forty-ninth Security Council straw poll. Others thought — given the polarization of the Council — that we would agree on a recommendation to the General Assembly, but that we would necessarily have to settle for a lowest-common-denominator candidate, someone who would avoid taking stands on the world's most pressing issues.

We have the privilege today of appointing a supremely qualified candidate as Secretary-General, but also one who has a passion for using that office as an independent force to prevent conflict and to alleviate human suffering. The countries of the world — here reflecting, I believe, the longings and the urgent needs of our citizens — are calling on the United Nations, and by extension, the Secretary-General, to do more than this institution has ever done before.

For the United Nations to succeed, we are asking Mr. Guterres to serve as a peacemaker, looking for ways to end the brutal conflicts in places like Syria, Yemen, and South Sudan. We are asking him to serve as a reformer, streamlining the bureaucracy, eliminating redundancies and making sure that peacekeepers are willing and able to protect civilians at risk. And we are asking him to serve as an advocate, rallying the world to respond to humanitarian and man-made catastrophes, and defending the human rights of all people, regardless of their race, creed, nationality, sexual orientation or gender identity. As challenging as

those roles may be, we are confident that Mr. Guterres can fill them with distinction.

Secondly, there were fears that the decision-making process for such a critical position would again end up being narrow, exclusive and shrouded in secrecy. Even though fewer people smoke cigarettes in 2016, the image of a few countries huddled in smoke-filled rooms pervaded. But this year, at long last, the process evolved. For the first time, those vying for the job had to defend their visions for a more secure, just and humane future in informal dialogues that the entire world could watch in real time. And those conversations mattered — there is no question that the dialogues in the General Assembly and elsewhere shaped perceptions and informed the thinking of the Council and the broader United Nations membership from the outset. I thank all of the exceptional candidates who participated in that more inclusive, more transparent process, and the United States thanks all Member States that contributed to making that process so much stronger.

Of course, some envisaged that change would look a little different in the end. Hopes were high that this election process would deliver the first-ever woman Secretary-General. As the only woman Permanent Representative serving in the current Security Council and as one of only 37 women Permanent Representatives out of the 193 Permanent Representatives in the Organization, I joined others in encouraging a level playing field for women. And we should consider that until this year, only three women were ever voted upon by the Security Council as candidates — three women over the course of 70 years. This time, seven out of the 13 candidates voted upon by the Security Council were women. So, over twice as many women were considered in 2016 as in all of the previous years together.

While being a woman is not among Mr. Guterres's many qualifications, he has pledged gender parity at all levels of the United Nations, with clear benchmarks and time frames. That builds upon Mr. Guterres's progress towards achieving gender parity in the workplace as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and back when he was the Portuguese Prime Minister.

Thirdly and finally, there was scepticism that we could find in a single candidate a person who could simultaneously get Heads of State on the phone to mobilize coalitions and be a person of the people, someone who really appreciated — indeed, felt — the pain of the vulnerable. And vulnerable people do not

just want the United Nations to do and be better; they need the Organization and for us to be and do better.

In Mr. Guterres, we have selected a candidate who brings both head and heart to the job. Former staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have described Mr. Guterres as so impatient to find out the facts of a crisis that he never hesitated to call staff in the field, no matter what their rank or their place in the hierarchy. He always asked how UNHCR headquarters could serve their needs, rather than the other way around. When he saw that UNHCR teams in the field were starved for resources, he shifted funds to help refugees in need, instead of adding jobs in Geneva. And he got out from behind his desk. Mr. Guterres travelled to the refugee camps and witnessed for himself the current crises and the pain and suffering of the displaced, even spending the night in tents in the refugee camps. We have selected a candidate who is prepared to cut past the jargon and the acronyms and the sterile briefings, and get real. He knows that the only measure of our work here is whether we are or are not helping and supporting real people.

In closing, in 1953, the first Secretary-General, Trygve Lie, who was heavily criticized by both the Soviet and the United States Governments, was so frustrated by the limits of his office that his parting advice to his successor was, "Welcome to the most impossible job on this Earth". The job has not grown easier with time, but it has arguably become even more important.

I wish to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Mrs. Ban again for their tireless, tremendous service and for their sacrifice. I thank the Secretary-General designate, Mr. Guterres, for taking on this monumental responsibility. We hope that the unity that we see today can be sustained, the inclusivity and transparency of the process extended and the passion of the Secretary-General-designate and that of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon embodied in the daily work of the Organization. We look forward to a partnership that pays dividends to the people out there who count on us.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General-designate, to make a statement.

Mr. Guterres: When I heard the Security Council's decision to recommend me to the General Assembly, my feelings could be described by just two words: gratitude and humility. It is with the same gratitude and humility

that I stand before the Assembly today; those feelings are now joined by a profound sense of responsibility.

I am grateful, first of all, to the General Assembly and the Security Council for entrusting me with the position of Secretary-General of the United Nations in a remarkable demonstration of consensus and unity. I am also grateful for the transparency and openness of the selection process and to the many competent, thoughtful and dedicated candidates who came forward. I believe that the new selection process has meant that the true winner today is the credibility of the United Nations. The process has also made it very clear to me that, having been chosen by all Member States, I must be at the service of them all equally and with no agenda but the one enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

I want to express my deep gratitude for the generous and kind words of the speakers who preceded me, but I must say that I am fully aware of the challenges that the United Nations faces and the limitations surrounding the Secretary-General. The dramatic problems of today's complex world can only inspire a humble approach — one in which the Secretary-General alone neither has all the answers, nor seeks to impose his own views and in which the Secretary-General makes his good offices available, working as a convener, a mediator, a bridge-builder and an honest broker to help find solutions that benefit everyone involved.

Over the past 10 years, I have witnessed at first hand the suffering of the most vulnerable people on Earth. I have visited war zones and refugee camps where one might legitimately ask: what has happened to the dignity and worth of the human person, referred to in the second preambular paragraph of the Charter? What has made us immune to the plight of those who are most socially and economically underprivileged? All of that makes me feel the acute responsibility to make human dignity the core of my work and, I trust, the core of our common work.

It also underscores the importance of gender equality. I have long been aware of the hurdles that women face in society, the family and the workplace just because of their gender. I have witnessed the violence to which they are subjected during conflict or while fleeing violence, just because they are women. I have tried to address that problem through every public office that I have ever held. The protection and empowerment of women and gender parity within the

Organization are and will continue to be a priority commitment for me.

I have faith in the United Nations — a reform-minded United Nations — because I believe in the universal values that it stands for, namely, peace, justice, human dignity, tolerance and solidarity. Based on those values, I believe that diversity in all its forms is a tremendous asset, not a threat, and that in societies that are more and more multi-ethnic, multicultural and multireligious, diversity can bring us together and should not drive us apart. We must make sure that we are able to break the alliance between all those terrorist groups or violent extremists, on one side, and the expressions of populism and xenophobia, on the other. They reinforce one another, and we must be able to fight both of them with determination.

(spoke in French)

Without peace, life is devoid of all its meaning. Without peace, we cannot ensure the sustainable development and respect for human rights that, in turn, underpin peace. Unfortunately, peace today is largely lacking in our world.

Because of its global reach and the principles enshrined in the Charter, the United Nations has the moral obligation and universal right to use diplomacy to achieve peace as its primary responsibility. That diplomacy must be able to promote diversity and the representative character of the United Nations; it must facilitate a forum for dialogue in a public space open to all, so that we can learn to work together and better know and listen to one another; and it must be able to ease tensions and arrive at peaceful solutions to conflicts that prevent so many human beings from leading their lives in a manner worthy of that word.

When I studied history in high school — and I must say that I studied with passion — almost all wars ended with victors. But today's conflicts know only losers. Wars seem endless; they are becoming increasingly complex and interconnected, and fuel hatred and terrorism. At the same time, the suffering that they cause is morally intolerable, and security is threatened everywhere. It is our collective responsibility to end that state of affairs.

I am well aware that among us there are various views and sometimes competing legitimate interests that create division and make our unified efforts towards peace difficult. But the threats to our collective

security, the nature of our societies and the survival of the planet as we know it are such that our common interest must prevail against all that divides us. Let us unite for the sake of peace. That is the most urgent demand of the citizens of the world that we are here to serve.

(spoke in Spanish)

I would like to convey my appreciation for the tireless efforts of the peacekeepers who, deployed far from their homes, defend the principles of the United Nations. I also would like to call on all Member States and structures of the Organization for their support in not allowing repugnant behaviour to damage the reputation of the heroic efforts carried out in the service of the United Nations. It is within the United Nations and under its blue flag that the world can meet together and build peace, with determination, creativity, solidarity and compassion.

(spoke in English)

Allow me, before finishing, to salute the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon. I had the honour of working with him throughout many years and have witnessed his unfailing dedication to the cause of international public service. I will do my utmost to honour Mr. Ban Ki-moon's legacy. What he has achieved, in particular in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, is absolutely remarkable, and I will do my best to support the efforts necessary to fully implement what has been accomplished thus far, thanks to his guidance and leadership.

I also want to express my admiration for the dedication and commitment of the United Nations staff. Having been a staff member for over a decade, I am thrilled with the prospect of becoming a colleague once again.

(spoke in French)

The dream of the founders of the United Nations has yet to be fulfilled. Much has been accomplished, but the road ahead remains long. We must embark on that road together, we, the people, in our various roles, because the goal is within reach — the well-being of humankind.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General-designate for his statement, and I request the Chief of Protocol to escort him to room GA-200.

The Secretary-General-designate was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The President: Before proceeding further, I would like to inform members that the oath of office ceremony will take place at a later date, to be announced. I would also like to inform members that the Secretary-

General-designate will be in the West Foyer in 10 minutes to receive felicitations.

We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda item 113.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.