

APPOINTMENT OF THE NEXT DIRECTOR-GENERAL – FURTHER PROCESS

INFORMAL GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING AT THE LEVEL OF HEADS OF DELEGATIONS

TUESDAY 19 MARCH 2013, 4 P.M., COUNCIL ROOM

Good afternoon. I would like to welcome you to this informal meeting of heads of delegations.

As you will recall, we had a productive session at our informal meeting last week on 12th March. I very much appreciate all the constructive statements that were made at that meeting following this exchange of views with the members of the Audit Committee. I am sure that the members of the Committee will be able to provide the points made and discuss them with you in the coming days to announce the organization of work for the week ahead.

Before I do that, let me recall that, in accordance with the Rules for the Appointment of the Director General adopted by the General Council in December 2012 and contained in the Rules, the process started in October 2012 when delegations were provided with information on the nomination phase of the process following the close of the nomination period on 10 December. The nine candidates nominated were invited to meet with members at a formal General Council meeting held on 2 January this year. The candidates have until 12 March to make themselves known to members and to engage in discussion on the pertinent issues facing the Organization.

As outlined at our meeting last week, the Rules do not allow a candidate to enter the final two appointment processes under the Rules. The General Council is invited in this phase to proceed through a process of consultation to narrow the field of candidates and to arrive at its choice for appointment. In line with the Rules, the ultimate aim of the consultation process will be to identify the candidate around whom consensus can be built. In order to do this, the Rules specify that it may be necessary to conduct a series of consultations to identify the candidate or candidates least likely to attract a consensus. The process is to conclude with a General Council meeting convened not later than 12 March at which a decision to appoint a new Director General must be taken.

Let me note here that the Rules specifically require that all members, including

non-residents, are fully committed to meeting this requirement and to abstain on all delegations to assist by coming forward to meet with candidates to establish contact with non-resident members and to encourage them to take the opportunity of the General Council later in April, to meet with the candidates.

As you are all aware, the Rules are formally adopted by the General Council, and they are the product of lengthy and detailed consultation. At our meeting last week I highlighted that, thanks to the support and advice provided by all of you, the appointment process is progressing in a transparent and smooth manner, as per the timeframes set out in the Rules. At that meeting virtually all delegations also expressed that the process should be led only by the existing Rules while also offering suggestions for clarity on paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Rules and remain firmly committed to continuing to adhere to the Rules and timeframes and to inform you on how we intend to conduct the further process.

In the interests of transparency, let me inform you that, before today's meeting, all members who have nominated candidates are fully aware of the organization of work

In setting out the elements of the organization of work for the weeks ahead, we were guided by Members' views expressed last week, which included *inter alia*:

- Members stressed the importance of strict adherence to the 2002 Procedures in this exercise, and of moving rapidly towards narrowing the field of candidates.
- A large number of Members preferred having three, or at most four rounds of consultations, recognizing that, as a practical reality, given the time we have, four rounds of consultations is the absolute maximum.
- Another element that emerged clearly was Members' preference for having only two candidates in the final round, in order to facilitate the building of consensus. In this regard, and again considering the limited time available as well as the number of candidates, a number of Members mentioned the need to reduce the slate of candidates efficiently, and provided us with suggestions on how many candidates may be expected to withdraw at the end of each round. This means that by the time we reach the final stage, seven candidates would be expected to withdraw.
- Many Members, with a view to the need to reduce the slate of candidates efficiently, highlighted the importance of showing restraint in the number of preferences to be expressed.

Guided by your views, I will now inform you of the different elements of the organization of work.

First, on the matter of the number of rounds of consultations, we will aim at having three rounds of consultations. It is our hope and intention that a fourth round will not be necessary, but we cannot, of course, at this stage *a priori* preclude that a fourth round may be required by unexpected circumstances, depending on the preferences you, the Members, express.

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Sixth as you know, paragraph 18 of the agreed Procedures also requires that: "The outcome of the consultations shall be reported to the membership at each stage." Accordingly, the outcome of this first round of consultations will be reported to all Members at an open-ended meeting of Heads of Delegation to be held as soon as possible following the conclusion of the first round of consultations. In respecting the dignity of the candidates and the Members nominating them, Members who nominated candidates will be informed of the outcome immediately after each round and before the rest of the membership.

This process will be repeated after each round of consultations, so as to ensure transparency, inclusiveness and full participation in every step of the process.

Finally, regarding the organisation of our work, taking into account the Easter break, the first round of consultations will start on Tuesday 2 April, as announced in the fax I sent last week. We will aim at finishing the first round in 6 working days, i.e. on 9 April. My colleagues and I, jointly, will be available to receive individual delegations in room 2011 at the WTO, for 10 minutes each. We will send out a fax shortly specifying the exact times at which we are available and urge all delegations to come forward and make appointments. As I said earlier, we will be contacting non-resident delegations directly, who will have the possibility to express their preferences by a dedicated fax or e-mail.

Once the first round of consultations has been finalised, we will convene an open-ended meeting of Heads of Delegations to present the outcome of the consultations, the new slate of candidates, and the timetable for the second round of consultations which will begin promptly thereafter. Please be aware that, due to time constraints, this meeting may be convened at short notice.

I would also like to stress once again that the Facilitators and I will act at all times strictly within the agreed Procedures. Our aim, as set out in paragraph 6 of the Procedures, is to encourage and facilitate the building of consensus among Members, and assist you in moving from the initial field of candidates to a final decision on appointment.

As I said at our meeting last week, this process is your process: the decision to appoint the new Director-General is yours to make. Our task is to help you, and you can count on us at all times to carry out that task with objectivity and impartiality. You have also re-affirmed your trust and confidence in us, and we take the trust you have placed in us most seriously and are very grateful for that. I am sure we can equally count on the full and constructive engagement of Members so