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Item 17(d) of the provisional agenda

Administrative, financial and institutional matters

Review of the process established by decision 14/CP.1 relating to the selection and nomination of the Executive Secretary (at the level of Under-Secretary-General) and the Deputy Executive Secretary (at the level of Assistant Secretary-General)

Background information on decision 14/CP.1 and the process to appoint the Executive Secretary

Note by the Executive Secretary

1. A proposal was received from Saudi Arabia to include the review of the process established by decision 14/CP.1 relating to the selection and nomination of the Executive Secretary (at the level of Under-Secretary-General) and the Deputy Executive Secretary (at the level of Assistant Secretary-General) on the provisional agenda for the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties (COP). This note presents background information on that process for consideration by the COP.
2. Decision 14/CP.1 stipulates that the Executive Secretary is appointed by the Secretary-General, after consultation with the COP through its Bureau.
3. Based on decision 14/CP.1, the procedure that has been followed consistently over the past decades for the recruitment and selection of the Executive Secretary entails the following steps:
 - (a) The Secretary-General consults the Bureau of the COP on the criteria for selection of the new Executive Secretary;
 - (b) The Secretary-General establishes a transparent process for recruitment, open to nominations by governments, and a selection process resulting in a recommendation to the Secretary-General;
 - (c) The Secretary-General consults the Bureau on a nominee via the President of the COP;
 - (d) The Secretary-General finalizes the appointment.



4. At the request of the Bureau, the procedure for the appointment of the Executive Secretary was placed on the agenda of COP 8 (October–November 2002), COP 10 (December 2004) and COP 11 (November–December 2005). The President of COP 11 informed the COP that the Bureau had considered a letter from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General that outlined the procedure for the appointment of an Executive Secretary. A copy of the letter had been sent to all Parties on 18 November 2005. The President noted that the procedure to be followed was the one used for all senior appointments in the United Nations. It encouraged nominations by governments and was based on clear selection criteria, with geographic distribution and gender duly considered, and a rigorous interview process. The President further informed the COP that the Bureau had stated its agreement with both the procedure and the selection criteria as outlined in the letter.

5. In December 2008, COP 14 invited the Secretary-General, in consultation with the COP through the Bureau, to undertake an independent review of the secretariat's structure, including an evaluation of the current levels and responsibilities, taking into account the scope and complexity of work.¹ In June 2009, the Subsidiary Body for Implementation, at its thirtieth session, considered this issue in its discussions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010–2011.²

6. The Bureau continued to consider the process for the appointment of the Executive Secretary in subsequent years.

7. Following the upgrade of the post of Executive Secretary to the level of Under-Secretary-General in February 2016, the process outlined in paragraph 3 above was applied to the recruitment for that post.

8. In this context, while strongly endorsing the nominee of the Secretary-General, the Bureau held an extensive discussion on the elements and the transparency of the appointment process, including time accorded to the Bureau to consult with the regional groups on the nominated candidate, the information provided on the shortlist and the time frame for the public announcement of the selection made by the Secretary-General. Some Bureau members observed that the recruitment of the Deputy Executive Secretary represented an opportunity to consider the issue of regional balance in the secretariat's senior management. As a consequence, some Bureau members requested that the process to appoint the Executive Secretary and the Deputy Executive Secretary be reviewed.

9. Decision 14/CP.1 does not address the appointment of the Deputy Executive Secretary, which until recently was a D-2 level post. In line with the Executive Secretary's delegated authority, the Deputy Executive Secretary was in the past therefore appointed by the Executive Secretary.

10. Following the upgrade of the post of Executive Secretary to the level of Under-Secretary-General, the level of the post of Deputy Executive Secretary was raised to Assistant Secretary-General.³ This upgrade entails a change in the process to be followed for the recruitment and selection of the Deputy Executive Secretary, which in future would be subject to the process stipulated by decision 14/CP.1 and, in line with established United Nations practice for Assistant Secretary-General level posts, would follow the steps outlined in paragraph 3 above.

¹ Decision 8/CP.14, paragraph 15.

² FCCC/SBI/2009/2, paragraphs 36–39.

³ At its forty-fourth session, the Subsidiary Body for Implementation considered the upgrading of the posts of Executive Secretary and Deputy Executive Secretary and recommended a draft decision for consideration and adoption at COP 22, as contained in document FCCC/SBI/2016/8/Add.1.

11. More specifically, the process for the selection of the Deputy Executive Secretary, as confirmed with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and reported to the Bureau by the Executive Secretary in a letter dated 24 June 2016, is as follows:

- (a) The functions of the post (and the relationship to the post of Executive Secretary and other senior management posts) are defined;
 - (b) The Secretary-General consults the Bureau on the profile of the post and selection criteria;
 - (c) The post is advertised for 30 days through the usual channels, supplemented by an official communication to permanent missions in New York and national climate change focal points inviting nominations;
 - (d) The shortlist is developed under the responsibility of the Executive Secretary;
 - (e) A panel of senior officials is constituted to interview the shortlisted candidates and make a recommendation;
 - (f) The Executive Secretary transmits the names of the three best-qualified candidates, at least one of them female, to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General;
 - (g) The Secretary-General, following consultations with the Bureau, makes a selection;
 - (h) The selection process is completed and an announcement made.
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