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## Our Vision for the Next Secretary-General of the United Nations

The Secretary-General stands as the guardian of the world's collective conscience—a leader whose wisdom, integrity, and calm authority shape a diplomatic environment where nations find common ground and shared purpose. Embodying the living spirit of the United Nations Charter, the Secretary-General upholds peace, gender equality, and cooperation as the foundation of a more just and sustainable world.

With exceptional skill in mediation and a profound understanding of global complexities, the Secretary-General will strengthen multilateralism by bringing together member states in an atmosphere of trust and respect. By listening deeply and speaking with clarity and fairness, they will transform disagreement into dialogue and dialogue into durable agreements and action. Their leadership reminds the international community that diplomacy, when guided by goodwill and principle, remains humanity's most powerful instrument for progress.

The Secretary-General's vision extends beyond resolving conflict—it is about nurturing a culture of care, peace and nonviolence where negotiation replaces confrontation and where the bonds of multilateralism grow stronger through every challenge faced together. They embody impartiality not as detachment, but as devotion to the greater good, ensuring that every nation—large or small—has a voice in shaping the future we share.

Under such stewardship, the United Nations endures as a forum of dialogue, reason and hope, inspiring cooperation that transcends borders and generations. The Secretary-General's principled leadership calls the world to its highest ideals: to international cooperation for peace and security, protection and promotion of human rights, and sustainable development for all people and the planet. Commitments such as the Doha Political Declaration and its three pillars of eradication of poverty, full and productive employment and decent work, and social inclusion and integration, must be the foundation of the Secretary-General's vision for sustainable social development.

In the context of the polycrisis, the role of the new Secretary-General will be to continue driving the necessary transformation of our economic systems 'beyond GDP', so that at every level economic policy making prioritises the wellbeing of people and the planet

*The NGO Committee for Social Development functions as a substantive committee under the auspices of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the UN (CoNGO), the voice of civil society on social development issues within the United Nations system.*

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over GDP growth and profit maximisation. Their support of the 2026 report of the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights will be instrumental for such transformation.

### **Core qualities**

**Diplomatic credibility and moral authority** The Secretary-General must mediate conflict, navigate competing national interests, and turn disagreement into workable consensus.

**Ability to unite member states** The role depends on earning trust from all 193 member states through consistent practice of honesty and openness in communication and decision-making, thereby creating a diplomatic environment where they can negotiate in good faith.

**Convener of civil society** The UN must be a forum for active civil society participation to ensure perspectives from marginalized and grassroots voices, ensuring no one is left behind. As Chief Executive, the Secretary-General must be a fierce defender of civil society actors facing "pushback and rollback" on gender rights. This involves not only "listening" but also ensuring the UN remains a safe, accessible forum for civil society, especially grassroots organisations from the Global South.

**UN reform instinct** The next Secretary-General will push institutional reform, including a more equal distribution of power within the Security Council representation, and make the organization more responsive to today's crises. While protecting the vulnerable, the Secretary-General will affirm the agency of women, young people, and marginalized communities, and create the political space for them to speak for themselves.

**In conclusion**, the next Secretary-General must serve both as a multilateral convener and an agent of change, elevating diverse voices, bridging divides and ensuring the United Nations remains responsive, transparent, inclusive, accountable and grounded in the realities of those it was created to serve.