



The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues

May 17, 2016

NGO Open letter to UN Women on the Selection of the Next UN Secretary-General

To: Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Under Secretary-General and Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka,

Eight individuals have served as Secretary-General of the United Nations, a position of great importance and influence. With the power and prestige of this office, the Secretary-General can be a force for peace among nations, equitable distribution of resources, and preservation of the earth as a hospitable environment for humans and other forms of life.

Notably, all of the individuals who have held this office have been male, despite the fact that half of the world's population is female. This situation would be understandable had women proven that they are incapable of leadership in powerful positions. However, many women have served or are serving with distinction as heads of states in the modern era. Consider, for example, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, Angela Merkel of Germany, Michelle Bachelet of Chile, Dalia Grybauskaitė of Lithuania, and Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway. In earlier periods of history, other distinguished female heads of state included, for example, Catherine the Great of Russia and Elizabeth I of England among queens and Golda Meir of Israel and Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom among prime ministers.

As women rise more rapidly into political leadership around the world, choice of a woman as Secretary-General would signal endorsement of this progressive change and validate the aspirations of women for equal participation in politics. Such an appointment would also be consistent with the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), and the Beijing Declaration and Programme for Action (1995). Finally, the four women already nominated for the position have demonstrated extraordinary leadership abilities, extensive

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international experience, and an inspiring vision for the future of the United Nations. Now is the time to choose a woman as Secretary-General.

Yours Sincerely,
On behalf of our 3,000 members worldwide,

Executive Committee, Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues

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