

29 April 2016

United Nation Secretary General and Bureau of COP UNFCCC
United Nations Headquarters
New York, NY 10017, USA

SUBJECT: Civil Society Recommendation on criteria for selection of UNFCCC Executive Secretary

Dear H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon and members of Bureau of COP UNFCCC,

We, Climate Action Network (CAN), a worldwide network of over 950 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in more than 110 countries, are writing to you in regards to the upcoming selection of the UNFCCC Executive Secretary.

CAN believes that the role of the UNFCCC Executive Secretary is crucial for efficient and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement as well as for ensuring that the ultimate objective of the UNFCCC – ‘stabilization of greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system’ – is fulfilled.

In light of this, CAN would like to outline some of the qualities required for the selection of the incoming UNFCCC Executive Secretary:

- **Trusted:** The incoming Executive Secretary should be trusted across the spectrum of countries. She/he should have the ability to build bridges across different countries and manage their competing demands. The Executive Secretary should also promote transparent practices and procedures to enable honesty and trust amongst Parties and Observers.
- **Bold and Visionary:** The incoming Executive Secretary should have considerable expertise in facilitating effective intergovernmental processes and a clear vision for how to facilitate the acceleration of action on climate change as necessitated by science. The Executive Secretary must stand in solidarity with vulnerable peoples and the evidence in order to stand up against the pressures of the fossil fuel industry and climate skeptics.
- **Global Ambassador for Climate Action:** The Executive Secretary should be a recognised ambassador for accelerating climate action amongst the broader international community, in particular to new audiences like the financial community and other international forums, such as the G20.
- **Values Civil Society:** The Executive Secretary should be respectful of civil society and their role in international negotiations. She/he should hold civil society’s role in high regard and understand the valuable role civil society plays at the international, national and local levels.
- **Sensitive to the needs of the most vulnerable:** The incoming Executive Secretary should be able to identify with the plight of vulnerable communities and should be able to steer UNFCCC towards greater ambition and an enabling framework that helps these communities in their struggle.
- **Institutional Knowledge:** The incoming Executive Secretary should have experience of the UNFCCC negotiations, internalise the political spirit witnessed in Paris, and have an excellent network of support from participants within the negotiations.
- **Confidence in delivering multi-layered diplomacy:** She/he should have the confidence and competence to undertake multi-layered diplomacy with both state and non-state actors, complemented with continued engagement with leaders, CEOs, Mayors, etc. to help connect the international space for accelerated national ambition.
- **Excellent Communication skills:** The incoming Executive Secretary should have the ability to communicate to a variety of constituencies and transcend different audiences. Post Paris, a new and refreshing narrative will be required to reinvigorate accelerated action on climate change.

- **Deep domestic climate action expertise:** She/he should be rooted in national context and challenges in order to navigate and leverage greater action. Greater knowledge of national context as well empathy towards respective government decisions and choices will help in delivering the required global transition towards complete decarbonisation.

We hope that these recommendations can be taken into account during the course of the selection procedure for the new Executive Secretary. We, as CAN, are ready to support the incoming Executive Secretary in meeting the challenge of generating greater climate action at the national and international level.

Sincerely,

Climate Action Network



Wael Hmaidan
International Director
Climate Action Network