



A Mandate for Renewal: Global Public Opinion on the United Nations and the Selection of the 10th Secretary-General

Leadership Commentary

Ambassador Elizabeth Cousens, United Nations Foundation President and CEO: “In an increasingly turbulent world, we need a multilateral system that delivers. A reenergized United Nations is vital to that task, making the upcoming leadership transition possibly the most consequential in the UN’s history. The selection of a new Secretary-General offers a rare opportunity to define why the institution exists, who it serves, and how it can achieve results in a fragmented world.”

Lord Mark Malloch-Brown, former UN Deputy Secretary-General and UN Foundation Board Member: “While the world still trusts the UN, the global public is eager for change. The next Secretary-General will have an opportunity to connect directly with citizens and show how the UN can turn their expectations into results that matter in their daily lives.”

Sigrid Kaag, UN Foundation Board Chair and former Deputy Prime Minister of the Netherlands: “At a time of profound global uncertainty, the United Nations needs leadership with the resolve to act and the courage to adapt. Restoring confidence will not come from institutional rearrangement alone, but from clear priorities, budgetary discipline, and focus on delivering results. This report makes clear what is needed now: an organization refocused on its core principles, and a Secretary-General with the authority and determination to lead.”

Thant Myint-U, historian and UN Foundation Senior Fellow: “The selection of the next Secretary-General offers an enormous, but fleeting, opportunity to get the world to focus on the future of the UN. As this survey shows, citizens don’t expect miracles, but they do expect the Secretary-General to take risks for peace. If the next leader is irrelevant to wars that threaten us, the decline of the UN may become unstoppable.”

David Steven, UN Foundation Senior Fellow and contributor to UN Foundation/GeoPoll study: “It is unsurprising that the public is not yet following the race to be Secretary-General. It may have been an obsession for UN insiders for months now, but we are only just entering the window when the world starts to pay attention. It is less interesting which candidate gets the nod from the Security Council than whether the winner has the vision, strategy, and team to hit the ground running. Anyone who leads the UN needs a strong start. They will not have long to make an impression before the world’s attention moves on.”

Note for media: Contact press@unfoundation.org with interview requests.