



## Seven candidates compete for top post at UNIDO

BY TONY FLEMING – POSTED ON JUNE 15, 2013

POSTED IN: UNIDO

Mr. Kande Yumkella, incumbent Director General of the [UN Industrial Development Organization \(UNIDO\)](#), will be leaving office on later this month. His second term as head of the organization was scheduled to run through December, but he offered his resignation earlier this year to lead the Secretary General's [Sustainable Energy for All](#) initiative. His resignation was anticipated since Secretary General Ban asked him to take on the role last year.

The post of UNIDO Director General is [limited to two terms](#), so it was already expected to be an open race with multiple candidates. While equitable geographic representation is encouraged for the governing Industrial Development Board, for the staff and in other roles, there is no traditional of regional rotation in the top post. The most recent Directors General came from the Philippines, Mexico, Argentina, Sierra Leone.

The search for Yumkella's successor began shortly after his appointment to the Secretary General's initiative. In October, a review of the [procedures for selecting the new Director General](#) was circulated. It reiterated the provisions from the UNIDO Constitution and the governing Industrial Development Board's rules of procedures. It also outlined a recommendation from the UN's Joint Inspection Unit calling for candidate forums in open contests for senior multilateral posts. At the same time, it noted the short 2-month turn-around between the close of nominations and the election and advised member states to consider if a forum was thus feasible.

The note needs to be highlighted far beyond its relevance to the UNIDO selection however. Almost unique among reviews of selection processes, it provide a brief but comprehensive review of selection processes at other multilaterals – including the FAO, the WHO, WIPO and others. Those provisions should be included in the binder of every election officer at the United Nations and in foreign ministries, not to mention observers, civil society groups and reform proponents.

---

*The note needs to be highlighted far beyond its relevance to the UNIDO selection however.*

---

A [more detailed note on the procedures](#) was circulated in November, specifically to lay out options for the organization given the anticipated resignation of Yumkella prior to the end of his term. The paper noted that the options included the appointment of an Acting Director General for the remaining months as had been done in 1993, or the convening of a special General Conference session. It noted that the cost of a special one-day session would cost the organization approximately €45,000.

The search process began in earnest the following month. A note verbale was circulated to member states' foreign affairs ministries on 5 December 2012 – four and half months prior to the close of nominations – informing members of the procedures for the appointment of the Director-General and inviting nominations. (UNIDO follows a prevalent, but not universal, practice in multilateral leadership selection in limiting nominations to the nominee's home government.)

### Nominations Process

The note pointed out that [nominations were to be received](#) by the President of the Board two months prior to the opening date of the Board's last meeting prior to the session of the organizational General Conference at which the Director General is selected. This year, the Board's forty-first session will be held from 24 June 2013. Accordingly, the deadline for receipt of nominations was 24 April. [Seven nominees](#) were received by the deadline.

- [Sham L. Bathija](#) (Afghanistan)
- [Sok Siphana](#) (Cambodia)
- [Li Yong](#) (China)
- [Diana Battaggia](#) (Italy)
- [Abdufatah Ahmed Altumi](#) (Libya)
- [Marcin Korolec](#) (Poland)
- [Pongsvas Svasti](#) (Thailand)

The names and curricula vitae of candidates received by the President as of the deadline were [circulated to all Member States](#) on 13 May 2013, along with short video comments from each candidates (linked above).

Following the recommendation of the JIU as described in the October 2012 memo, the Board agreed to convene a candidate forum, during which the nominees could present their vision and strategic direction for UNIDO to representatives of all UNIDO Member States. A briefing on [how the forum was conducted](#) was provided on 15 May and the forum held the following week on 21 May. The Board conducted [another briefing for member states on 7 June](#) to ensure member states understood the processes for the election itself.

Candidates are currently reaching out to member states to convey their credentials and qualifications for the post, both in person and via social media. [Sok Siphana](#) of Cambodia and [Diana Battaggia](#) of Italy have both created campaign websites to highlight their candidacies. Siphana also uses a [dedicated Facebook page](#) to provide updates. Battaggia provides updates on updates on [Twitter](#) and has launched a Youtube channel in which supporters ask viewers to ["be part of the solution"](#) with her as the new Director General. (Poland's nominee, Marcin Korolec also maintains a [Twitter account](#), but in his capacity as environmental minister rather than as a candidate.)