

United Nation Security Council Straw Poll Number Four
Statement from the WomanSG Campaign
September 9, 2016

More Reason to Stay in the Fight

Again the recent September 9 straw poll demonstrates the volatility and unpredictable nature of the Security Council's thoughts and evaluations of the now ten candidates. All the candidates, both men and women, either stayed the same or went up. The only two who retained their previous scores are Irina Bokova and Susana Malcorra; all the others saw their numbers rise, including the remaining three women candidates: Helen Clark, Christiana Figueres and Natalia Gherman. Of concern to those of us who support a woman for UN Secretary-General is that this time the top four positions are all occupied by men, but as we have continued to see, that can change. Nevertheless, this repeats the continued discrimination against these highly qualified women, reaffirming that women are measured with a different yardstick and held to a higher standard than the men.

Some had commented before today's poll that the two or even four at the bottom should drop out. However, the straw polls have proven to be volatile, demonstrated last time by Lajcak's sudden rise from the basement to number two and today by the dramatic improvement of most of the candidates. No one really knows which specific countries are voting to encourage or discourage. So, for example, if the encourage votes are somewhat lower for a specific candidate but reflect the support of any of the Permanent Five members, why would anyone ever consider giving up? This is just hypothetical, but part of the ongoing mystery of this closed-door process.

Reflecting on the current results of the fourth straw poll, WomanSG considers it even more important to stay in the fight. Irina Bokova is still in the top five, and even though she and Malcorra dropped relative to the others, everything is still in a state of flux. We urge the Security Council to encourage the women and move them to positions at the top, befitting their qualifications.

Our message is that the UN needs a new Secretary-General that is inspiring and exciting, something fresh and new. A woman at the top would generate tremendous excitement around the world, as witnessed already by the media coverage from Beijing, to Moscow, to the United States, to Latin America, etc. If the Security Council once again chooses another man after eight male Secretaries-General, it will seem to the world that the UN is unable to change, is still caught up in the past, and not ready to enter the Twenty-First Century. We are fully confident that the five remaining women would not only grasp that excitement but would also be able to sustain this enthusiasm and capture the needed legitimacy that can put the UN back at the center of the global agenda.

WomanSG will not be intimidated and we will never give up the fight.

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