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# GENERAL CONFERENCE

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Thirty-fourth regular session  
Item 20 of the provisional agenda  
(GC(XXXIV)/914)

## RULE AND POLICY ON THE APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

### Draft resolution submitted by the Philippines\*)

#### The General Conference,

(a) Taking into account the fact that, under Article VII.A of the Statute of the Agency, the appointment of the Director General by the Board of Governors with the approval of the General Conference is for a term of four years,

(b) Recalling General Conference resolutions GC(XXV)/RES/391 of 1981, GC(XXIX)/RES/440 of 1985 and GC(XXXIII)/RES/505 of 1989, all recommending to the Board of Governors that it pay due regard to the principle of equitable representation of developing and other areas of the world and give particular consideration to candidates from developing areas who meet the requirements of the high office of Director General after the expiry of the term of the current Director General,

(c) Considering that the lack of express policy on the maximum tour of duty of the Director General has resulted in a situation where all the Directors General of the Agency have come from only two Western, developed countries,

d) Mindful of the principle of rotation in the United Nations system that governs the selection of heads of international organizations, and

(e) Convinced of the need to have appropriate procedures to govern such appointments,

1. Adopts the rule and policy on the appointment of the Director General of the Agency under Article VII.A of the Statute to be a maximum of two consecutive terms;
2. Requests the Board of Governors to observe this rule and policy in the appointment of a Director General and to enact appropriate rules of procedure to govern such appointments; and
3. Requests further that the Board inform the General Conference, at its 35th regular session, about the implementation of this resolution.

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\*) An explanatory memorandum submitted by the Philippines is contained in document GC(XXXIV)/913.



Excerpt from the record of the 316th plenary meeting  
of the General Conference, held on Tuesday,  
26 September 1989  
(from GC(XXXIII)/OR.316 and 316/Corr.1)

APPROVAL OF THE APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL (GC(XXXIII)/872)

2. Mr. LAVIÑA (Philippines) said that he had a number of comments to make on the draft resolution before the General Conference. The three preambular paragraphs - especially the third one - were correct, but they contained nothing to support operative paragraph 1, which requested the General Conference to approve the appointment of the current Director General for a third four-year term. In fact, only operative paragraph 2 followed from the preamble. No one doubted that the current Director General's qualifications, capabilities and personal experience made him worthy of a further term, but his reappointment raised an issue which went beyond his person and gave rise to a number of questions.

3. First, why had there been no candidate from a developing country? The main reason might have been that the vacancy for the post of Director General had not been officially announced. In order to meet the objectives of Article VII.A of the Statute, it therefore seemed necessary to circulate an appropriate vacancy notice to all Member States. Secondly, he understood that observers - who might have been able to point out shortcomings in the draft resolution submitted - had been excluded from the Board's deliberations when it had considered the matter of the appointment of the Director General and had decided to reappoint the present incumbent. The text of the Board's decision offered no justification for its main recommendation. The Board could not presume that everybody would approve the appointment of the current Director General for a further term. The appointment of the Director General had to be considered and approved by the General Conference which was the Board's parent body, and had a much larger membership. Even if the Board had had reason to suppose that the General Conference would approve its recommendation, it should have submitted some justification for the appointment, or the approval of the appointment, of the current Director General for a further term. There was nothing to that effect in the records.

4. His delegation had difficulty in approving the draft resolution under consideration for two reasons. The first was the formal defects it contained: the preamble offered no justification for operative paragraph 1. The second pertained to the substance of the draft resolution: since the preamble laid so much stress on the need for appointing a Director General from a developing country, the Board should have explored the possibility of doing so and of thus putting an end to the unfair situation whereby the Director General of the Agency had always come from a developed country of the Western world. Indeed, a single country had provided two out of the three Directors General, with a combined tenure of 28 years to date. That state of affairs was in total contradiction with the unwritten but fundamental principle of rotation in the United Nations system, to which even the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations was subject.

5. Without wishing to question the qualifications of the current Director General, even if it did not always agree with the manner in which he had exercised his discretion, his delegation felt that a candidate from a developing country should have been appointed. Article VII.A of the Statute should be reviewed and re-interpreted so as to limit the term of office of the Director General to an ideal maximum of, perhaps, two consecutive terms. Consequently, if the draft resolution was put to the vote unamended, his delegation would abstain.