



## General Assembly

Twentieth session

Victoria Falls, Zambia/Zimbabwe, 24-29 August 2013

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### **Appointment of the Secretary-General for the period 2014-2017 on the recommendation of the Executive Council**

#### **I. Introduction**

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1. At the ninety-fifth session of the Executive Council, held at Belgrade, Serbia, on 27-29 May 2013, and on the basis of decision 17(XCIV) laying down the rules of procedure for the appointment of a nominee to the post of Secretary-General, 28 out of 28 Council members present and voting cast their ballots to unanimously recommend Mr. Taleb Rifai as a nominee for the post of a Secretary-General for the period 2014-2017. Council decision 16(XCV) reads as follows:

“The Executive Council,

Recalling Article 12(c) of the Statutes and rule 29(1) of its Rules of Procedure,

Having heard the presentation of the candidate,

Having held a private meeting in accordance with rule 29(2) of its Rules of Procedure and the relevant provisions contained in document CE/95/4,

Having heard the designation by its Chairman of the representatives of Serbia and Spain as tellers to count the votes,

Having held a secret ballot during this meeting in accordance with the guiding principles for the conduct of elections by secret ballot annexed to the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly,

Noting that the ballot gave 28 votes to Mr. Taleb Rifai (Jordan),

Also noting that Mr. Taleb Rifai received in the first ballot the required majority by unanimous vote of the Council Members,

Recommends the General Assembly to appoint Mr. Taleb Rifai for the period 2014-2017.

2. The curriculum vitae of Mr Taleb Rifai is contained in the Annex to this document.



**II. Actions to be taken by the General Assembly:**

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3. The General Assembly is requested to decide on the recommendation made to it by the Council and to appoint the Secretary-General for the period 2014-2017 in accordance with Article 22 of the Statutes.

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## Annex. Curriculum vitae of Mr. Taleb Rifai

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### A. Brief biography

Taleb Rifai (Jordan) was elected as Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) at the General Assembly (October 2009) and began his four-year term on 1 January 2010.

From January 2006 to March 2009 he was Deputy Secretary-General of UNWTO after which he assumed the functions of Secretary-General a.i. till December 2009.

Prior to assuming his current post, he was the **Assistant Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO)** for three consecutive years. His responsibilities included the overall supervision and implementation of the International Labour Standards, as well as advising on labour markets and employment policies, particularly in the Middle East region.

From 1999 to 2003, Mr. Rifai served in several ministerial portfolios in the Government of Jordan, first, as **Minister of Planning and International Cooperation** in charge of Jordan's Development Agenda and bilateral and multilateral relationships with donor countries and agencies. He was subsequently appointed **Minister of Information**, in which capacity he was in charge of communication and public media and restructured the Jordan Television Network. In 2001, his portfolio was expanded to include the **Ministry of Tourism and Antiquity**.

During his term as **Minister of Tourism and Antiquity**, Mr. Rifai established Jordan's first Archaeological Park in the ancient city of Petra in collaboration with UNESCO and the World Bank. He also realized several grand projects in Jerash, the Dead Sea and Wadi Rum. As Minister of Tourism, he was also the **Chairman of the Jordan Tourism Board, President of the Ammon School for Tourism and Hospitality** and was elected **Chairman of the Executive Council of the UNWTO in 2001**.

In the three years preceding his service in the Jordanian Cabinet, Mr. Rifai was the **CEO of the Jordan Cement Company**, one of the country's largest public shareholding companies with over 4,000 employees. During his term he successfully led and directed the first large-scale privatization and restructuring scheme in Jordan by bringing in the French cement company Lafarge in 1998 and continued to serve as CEO under the new Lafarge management.

From 1993 to 1997, Mr. Rifai was actively involved in policymaking and developing trade and investment strategies, initially in his capacity as **Director of Jordan's Economic Mission to Washington DC** promoting trade, investment and economic relations between Jordan and the USA. In 1995 he became the **Director General of the newly established Investment Promotion Corporation**, responsible for developing and implementing policies aiming at attracting Foreign Direct Investment into Jordan.

From 1973 to 1993 Mr. Rifai was involved in research, teaching and practicing Architecture and Urban Design in Jordan and the United States. He was a **professor of Architecture at the University of Jordan** and taught several courses in **Philadelphia, Chicago and Cambridge**. As an architect, he won several international competitions and supervised numerous projects, particularly in the rehabilitation of old urban centres.

**Mr. Rifai received his PhD in Urban Design and Regional Planning from the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia in 1983, his Master's degree in Engineering and Architecture from the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) in Chicago in 1979, and his BSc in Architectural Engineering from the University of Cairo in Egypt in 1973.**

Mr. Rifai, a Jordanian national born in 1949, has travelled and lectured extensively, and received several distinguished decorations including one of Jordan's highest medals for public service, Al Kawkab, as well as several high-level decorations from France, Italy and many other countries.

**B. Experience and skills**

- Mr. Rifai's background combines solid political experience and technical knowledge in the field of tourism, as well as experience in the work and functioning of international organizations. His background also provides him with extensive economic, business and academic experience.
- Throughout his professional career, Mr. Rifai has been a **reformer** and a **consensus builder**: two important qualities in effecting **sustainable change**. His ability to introduce fresh thinking and to work closely with people in order to ensure buy-in and to achieve enduring reforms is evident in all his endeavours, notably, restructuring the Jordan Television Network, privatizing the Jordan Cement Company and introducing fresh thinking to the UNWTO where he was the principal author of the "White Paper", a blueprint for reform in 2009.

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