



Latvijas Republikas Valsts prezidenta kanceleja
Prezidenta preses dienests

Pils laukums 3, Rīga-50, LV-1900, tālr. 7092122, fakss 7320404,
prese@president.lv, www.president.lv

2006-10-05

Statement by the Press centre of the President of Republic of Latvia

The President of Latvia H.E. Dr. Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga thanks the supporters of her candidacy for the post of Secretary General of the United Nations and the principles upon which it was based, and announces her decision to withdraw her candidature. This decision has been taken in consultation with the leaders and governments of Estonia and Lithuania that proposed her candidature jointly with Latvia.

In connection with the decision on 5 October 2006 to no longer pursue the post of Secretary General of the United Nations, Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga wishes to thank all those who have supported her candidacy. She thanks particularly warmly Estonia and Lithuania for placing exceptional trust in her candidacy. Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga expresses her appreciation to all the countries represented at the Security Council that have supported her candidature in two indicative votes. President of Latvia warmly thanks the leaders of the Eastern and Central European states that expressed their support for her candidature at the UN General Assembly debates last month. Finally, Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga wishes to thank all the representatives of civil society, in particular organizations promoting gender equality, for their heartfelt encouragement.

With her candidacy, the President of Latvia brought to the foreground issues that had not received broad attention in previous elections, thus stimulating wider discussion on the selection of candidates based mainly on their qualifications, rather than restrictive regional or gender criteria. Her candidacy highlighted also the regrettable fact that a woman has never held the post of Secretary General, nor has the Eastern European Group ever been represented at the highest level of the UN. She felt that it was her moral obligation to present a credible alternative, to propose a candidature that would bring both Eastern European perspective and a woman's perspective to the United Nations. The President emphasized the need for a higher degree of democracy, openness and transparency during the selection process of the Secretary General. It is her firm belief that other qualified candidates representing half of humanity and one of the most dynamic regions of the world will eventually succeed in being elected to this august post.

The President of Latvia greatly appreciates the fact that her candidacy has triggered a broad response in academic and non-governmental circles, as well as the mass media, which can only enhance the debate on reform of the United Nations.

The President of Latvia accepts that the fourth indicative vote of the UN Security Council on the candidates to the post of Secretary General, held on 2 October, indicates the likely outcome of a formal vote. The President of Latvia will extend her fullest support and cooperation to the next Secretary General. It is of utmost importance to muster the support of all UN member states for the ambitious UN reforms that are absolutely necessary for the adaptation of this global body to the challenges of the 21st century.