

REFERENCE: EOSG/SLA/2024/2

## **Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel**

The United Nations welcomes applications for the position of Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, Office of Legal Affairs. This position is at the Under-Secretary-General level and is based at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The Secretariat welcomes applications to supplement the Secretary-General's search and consultations and would especially welcome the applications from women candidates.

**Applications must be submitted through the link to the Senior Leadership Vacancies online form located at the following web address: <https://www.un.org/sg/en/vacancies/index.shtml> by Monday, 10 June 2024 (midnight New York time).**

Further information on OLA is available in the Secretary-General's Bulletin ST/SGB/2021/1 and on the following website: <https://www.un.org/ola/en>

---

The Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel is a member of the Secretary-General's [Senior Management Group](#), and serves as a role model for the United Nations Values (Inclusion, Integrity, Humility and Humanity) and Behaviours (Connect and Collaborate; Analyse and Plan; Deliver Results with Positive Impact; Learn and Develop; Adapt and Innovate) Framework, and the desired behaviours of the [United Nations System Leadership Framework](#).

### ***Background***

The Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) of the United Nations was established in 1946 (General Assembly resolution 13(I) of 13 February 1946) as the Legal Department in the United Nations Secretariat. In 1954, the Legal Department was reorganized into the Office of Legal Affairs to more accurately reflect its role in providing legal advice to the Secretary-General and acting on the Secretary-General's behalf in legal matters.

OLA is the central legal service of the Organization and performs the following functions:

- (a) Provides legal advice to the Secretary-General, Secretariat departments and offices, funds and programmes and other United Nations organs, including in support of the Organization's efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals as reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- (b) Represents the Secretary-General in legal conferences and in judicial proceedings;
- (c) Performs substantive and secretariat functions for legal organs involved in public international law generally, as well as those involved in the law of the sea and ocean affairs and international trade law;

and (d) Performs the functions conferred on the Secretary-General in Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations, in the Statute of the International Court of Justice and in other relevant instruments of international law.

### ***Duties and Responsibilities***

The Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, the United Nations Legal Counsel, is accountable to the Secretary-General, and:

is the senior legal adviser to the Secretary-General, the Secretariat, funds and programmes and other organs of the United Nations. The legal advice the United Nations Legal Counsel provides relates to matters including public international law and the internal administrative law of the United Nations, as well as private international law;

heads the Office of Legal Affairs, is responsible for the leadership, management and administration of the Office and reports directly to the Secretary-General;

is responsible for ensuring efficiency, transparency and accountability in the work of the Office;

is a member of senior-level advisory bodies established by the Secretary-General;

leads the coordination of the system-wide legal advisers networks, composed of (a) legal advisers of specialized agencies and related organizations, (b) legal advisers and legal liaison officers of entities including United Nations offices away from Headquarters, funds and programmes, regional commissions, ad hoc tribunals and non-judicial accountability mechanisms and field legal officers for United Nations peace operations (peacekeeping operations and special political missions);

has operational responsibilities, in particular, for supporting United Nations and United Nations-assisted criminal tribunals – including leading their establishment and the implementation of completion strategies – for serving as focal point for cooperation with the International Criminal Court – and for supporting United Nations non-judicial accountability mechanisms, as well as commissions of inquiry, boards of inquiry, investigations and fact-finding missions established by the Secretary-General;

serves as focal point for UN Oceans and

represents the Secretary-General at meetings and conferences of a legal nature, and in judicial and arbitral proceedings, and certifies legal instruments issued on behalf of the United Nations.

### ***Education, Skills and Expertise***

The Secretary-General is seeking an individual with the following attributes:

an advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent degree) in law. A first-level university degree in law in combination with two additional years of qualifying experience may be accepted in lieu of the advanced university degree.

unimpeachable personal integrity and 20 years of proven international legal, diplomatic, policy advisory and advocacy experience, with at least 5 years of high-level experience;

demonstrated leadership experience with strategic vision and proven skills in managing complex legal issues within

