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UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations Security Council reached a consensus on its choice for the next secretary general of the United Nations, António Guterres, a former prime minister of Portugal.

Mr. Guterres, 67, who ran the United Nations refugee agency for 10 years, had been the clear front-runner. The divided Security Council rallied around him was a clear signal that Russia and the West saw him as someone they could work with.

Mr. Vitaly Churkin, Russian ambassador to the United Nations made the announcement outside the Council's chamber flanked by his American counterpart, Samantha Power, in an unusual display of cooperation. The envoys of all the other members of the Council were also there. "In the end, there was a candidate whose experience, vision and versatility across a range of areas proved compelling, and it was remarkably uncontentious, uncontroversial," Ms. Power said. "And I think it speaks to the fact that each of us represents our nation and each of us know how fundamentally important this position is in terms of the welfare of our own citizens.

Mr. Guterres will face a formal Council vote and will then have his name submitted to the 193-member General Assembly for approval. He will succeed the current secretary general, Ban Ki-moon, whose



second five-year term expires at the end of this year. Mr. Guterres was in Portugal when the announcement was made.

Trained as a theoretical physicist, Mr. Guterres is a veteran politician and a member of his country's Socialist Party. His first major diplomatic test will be to rally Russia and whoever wins the presidency in the United States to address the carnage in Syria. He will also face a range of thorny conflicts elsewhere, from South Sudan to Yemen, and nuclear

brinkmanship in North Korea. He will have to repair the United Nations' reputation for peacekeeping, sullied by repeated accusations of sexual abuse, and show that the secretary general's office can stand up to political pressure from rich and powerful countries.

Michael W. Doyle, a former United Nations official who is now a Columbia University professor, said that as the high commissioner for refugees, Mr. Guterres had demonstrated both charisma and an ability to maneuver. "In the agency, he was known as someone who could sit down and hammer out agreements under difficult circumstances," he said. "Moscow has to understand that."