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Annan Taps Dervis for Development Program

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UNITED NATIONS -- Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Tuesday nominated former Turkish finance minister Kemal Dervis to lead the U.N. Development Program, breaking with a tradition of giving top U.N. posts to major contributor nations.

Dervis, the architect of Turkey's IMF-backed economic recovery program, must now be approved by the U.N. General Assembly.

Dervis would replace Mark Malloch Brown of Britain, who was named Annan's chief-of-staff last December. Before that, all five previous chiefs of the U.N. Development Program had been Americans.

The U.N. Development Program chief is the third highest ranking official in the United Nations, behind Annan and the deputy secretary-general, currently Louise Frechette.

The selection process that ended with Dervis was part of new U.N. efforts to attract a wider range of candidates instead of limiting the field to leading contributors such as the United States.

Dervis, 56, held positions at the World Bank for 22 years, and is a member of the Turkish parliament. He was Turkey's finance minister in 2001-2002.

If approved, Dervis would take office sometime before mid-September.