

**Group of Friends of Mediation
9th Ministerial Event
New York, Thursday, 27 September 2018**

Co-Chairs' Summary

The Group of Friends of Mediation organized a high-level event in the margins of the United Nations 73rd General Assembly opening week on 27 September 2018. The theme of the event was “Engaging youth in mediation – a step towards lasting peace”.

The event was co-chaired by H.E. Timo Soini, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland and H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. The keynote speakers included H.E. Ana Maria Menéndez, Under-Secretary General, Secretary General’s Senior Advisor on Policy and H.E. Jayathma Wickramanayake, United Nations Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth.

H.E. Soini started his opening remarks by noting that given the increasing interest and need for wide support for UN mediation efforts it had been decided to open the discussion to the whole membership of the United Nations. He was pleased to recognize that conflict prevention including mediation has become a top priority on the United Nations’ and its Member States’ agenda and that the Secretary-General himself has made way to this approach by highlighting the importance of preventive diplomacy. H.E. Soini pointed out the four UNGA Resolutions adopted by consensus and called for the need for their implementation. He stressed the importance of youth as a positive force towards peace and emphasized the role young men and women could play in conflict prevention and resolution, including mediation. In this regard he noted the UN Symposium on the role of youth in peace processes that will be held in Helsinki in March 2019, co-hosted together with Colombia and Qatar. He also informed that Finland has launched a process for drafting a National Action Plan for the implementation of Resolution of 2250. Minister Soini concluded his remarks by underlining the need for inclusive mediation processes and empowerment of the young women and men to make peace.

H.E. Çavuşoğlu started his opening remarks by drawing attention to the central role the UN Group of Friends of Mediation has played in spreading international awareness on mediation, by noting for example its catalytic/lead role for the four UNGA Resolutions on mediation. With reference to the theme of the event, he mentioned that the Group has emphasized the involvement of women and youth in peace processes and highlighted that the involvement of the youth is important for three reasons: Firstly, youth have a high stake in the peace and prosperity of their societies; secondly, we are facing the largest generation of youth in history; thirdly, and most importantly, youth are under-represented in the processes that make or break peaceful and prosperous societies. H.E. Çavuşoğlu stressed that we need to better include and learn from the fresh perspectives of young peace-makers. He informed that Turkey is aiming to develop the mediation capacity within the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and as a part of these efforts, the OIC Contact Group of Friends of Mediation was recently founded (in September 2018). H.E. Çavuşoğlu noted

that to build capacity by training young peace-makers, Turkey has launched a “Mediation for Peace Certificate Program” for young diplomats from the OIC Member States in September 2018. He mentioned that with this training program, Turkey is aiming to raise the next generation of mediators across the OIC geography. He ended his opening remarks by noting that a UN Youth Organization, as proposed by the President of the Republic of Turkey, would significantly help to improve youth inclusion across the board.

In her remarks H.E. Menéndez noted the innovativeness and positive energy of youth and underlined the importance to partner with them. She referred to the independent progress study launched earlier that week and proposed to find synergies between the 1325 and 2250 agendas, especially regarding young women. H.E. Menéndez called for the UN and the member states to create spaces to harness youth as they are custodians for peace as well to provide political and financial support for youth.

H.E. Wickramanayake called for a comprehensive approach to facilitate the participation of youth in peace processes. This means broadening the approach on youth in mediation; insider mediation is becoming more and more important. She also underlined the need to align and synchronize formal and informal processes so that youth can be better involved.

The importance of the youth’s participation in peace processes was echoed in the statements from the floor and the topic of the event was considered very relevant. Young women and men can bring positive energy and use their networks in conflict prevention. Inclusiveness and the role of young women was raised in many statements specifically.