



Finland to the UN Security Council in 2013–2014



United Nations Security Council Arria Formula Meeting

on

***The Peaceful Settlement of Disputes, Conflict Prevention and Resolution:
Mediation, Judicial Settlement and Justice***

Statement on behalf of the

Group of Friends of Mediation*

by

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May 30th, 2012

Mr President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to thank Azerbaijan for organizing today's important meeting. Turkey and Finland would like to seize this opportunity to address the Council on behalf of the Group of Friends of Mediation*, and contribute to the thought-provoking discussions.

Since the adoption by consensus of the UN General Assembly resolution (A/RES/65/283) entitled "Strengthening the role of mediation in peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution" in June 2011, the Group of Friends of Mediation has remained engaged on the issue. The Group has focused its activities specially on supporting the UN in the development of the "Guidance for more effective Mediation", mandated by the resolution. This document that will be published soon is expected to be an important reference document for all mediators and mediation support teams, when preparing and conducting a mediation process.

Here are some of the activities of the Group of Friends, since the adoption of UNGA Resolution 65/283:

- The Friends of Mediation actively participated in the Informal meeting organized by the President of the General Assembly in November on "United Nations Mediation: Experiences and Reflections from the Field", and issued a non-paper on the activities and focus of the Group.
- The Friends organized an Informal Panel Discussion on the role of "Regional Organizations in mediation: views on the guidance for more effective mediation" in January to provide the regional organisations that are members of the group (Arab League, ASEAN, AU, EU, OAS, OIC, OSCE) a platform to share their valuable insight regarding the guidance, as well as to inform UN Member States about their mediation related activities.
- In February, the Turkish Ministry for Foreign Affairs organised the Istanbul Conference on Mediation, with the theme "Enhancing peace through mediation: new actors, fresh approaches, bold initiatives". Members of the Group of Friends of Mediation attended the Conference together with representatives from the United Nations, regional organizations, non-governmental organisations and academia. (A/66/800)
- In March, the Friends of Mediation delivered a joint statement at the Security Council Arrria Formula Meeting on "Women's role in mediation and post-conflict resolution".
- The Friends also developed a joint written input to the "Guidance for more effective mediation" being currently developed by the Secretary General. The Group chose to focus this joint input on aspects related to cooperation between actors involved in a mediation process, due to the fact that it is a geographically diverse group of countries and organizations, who actively cooperate to promote more effective mediation. This joint input is being circulated to all Member States.
- The Permanent Missions of Germany, Norway and Sweden to the UN, members of the Group of Friends of Mediation, have organized various events to contribute to mediation.
- At the General Assembly informal meeting on mediation organized by the President of the General Assembly on May 23, 2012, 9 out of the 11 high level participants were members of the Group of Friends of Mediation. Several new initiatives were announced by these

members including a joint initiative for the promotion of mediation in the Mediterranean by Morocco and Spain, and the proposal to establish UN Mediation Centers by Turkey.

Mr. President,

No effort should be spared to optimize the use of mediation in all circumstances, as a necessary step in the fulfillment of the obligation to settle disputes peacefully, in accordance with Article 33 paragraph 1 of the UN Charter. Although mediation can take place during any of the stages of a conflict, prevention is the best policy. It is an emphasis on preventive diplomacy that reduces the risk of armed conflict, as well as human and economic costs associated with it.

I would like to highlight some of the issues that the Group of Friends of Mediation thinks are important in terms of cooperation between actors involved in mediation processes, in order to increase the effectiveness of mediation.

- The Friends emphasize the importance of coordination and conveying a unified message, as there are often various actors involved in the same mediation effort. However, the Friends stress that there must be a balance between coordination and the need for flexibility and prudence.
- Each conflict is unique, and thus necessitates a distinctive approach.
- The Friends stress that, for mediation to succeed, it must also be guided by a lead actor. Regardless of who is in the lead, there is a need for other actors to support the process in a coherent manner, on the basis of mutual respect for the differing roles and capabilities.
- The Friends also agree that the UN should have a central role, at least in coordinating different mediation actors, even though it may not always be in the lead. The UN has more experience and expertise in mediation and in the implementation of peace agreements, than any other party.
- Friends of Mediation support strengthening the role of the mediation capacities of the UN system, in particular the Mediation Support Unit of the Department of Political Affairs. The UN Mediation structure, starting with the MSU, should be strongly supported and sufficiently funded.
- Regional and sub-regional organizations often play very important roles in preventing and resolving conflicts. Endowed with local knowledge and expertise, they emerge in some cases as the ideal players to be in the center of an overall mediation effort.
- There was a clear consensus in the Group that interaction between the UN and regional organizations should be further enhanced. Memorandums of understanding and a regular dialogue can be a useful tool. This could also assist in having more clarity of the role of each organization in a given conflict.
- The involvement of civil society is fundamental in a mediation process. There should be more engagement with track II actors. The starting point of this engagement process is to respect these actors and their comparative advantages.

- Local actors should also be empowered as they generally have in-depth knowledge of the conflict dynamics, a high level of commitment, preparedness to take personal risks and are capable of drawing from a broad network of personal relationships.
- The Friends of Mediation emphasise the need for full and effective participation of women at all stages and all levels of conflict resolution as well as the provision of adequate gender expertise throughout peace processes for mediators and their support teams is as crucial element of successful mediation.
- Finally, It is also essential to harness the expertise of elders, religious leaders, and faith and interfaith based initiatives without forgetting the voices and aspirations of the youth.

Thank you for your attention.

** The Group of the Friends of Mediation was founded in September 2010 to promote and advance the use of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution, as well as to generate support for the development of mediation. The group is co-chaired by Finland and Turkey and consists currently of 28 UN Member States, the United Nations and 7 regional organizations (Finland, Turkey, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Costa Rica, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Norway, Philippines, Qatar, Romania, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Uganda, African Union, Arab League, ASEAN, European Union, OAS, OIC, OSCE, United Nations).*