



Finland to the UN Security Council in 2013-2014



Statement on behalf of the
Group of Friends of Mediation

by

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and

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September 13, 2012

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor speak on behalf of the group of Friends of Mediation co-chaired by Finland and Turkey. The Group of the Friends of Mediation currently consists of 32 Member States, the United Nations and 7 regional organizations and other international organisations; namely Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Costa Rica, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Philippines, Qatar, Romania, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Uganda, African Union, Arab League, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, European Union, Organization of American States, Organization of the Islamic Conference, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations.

As highlighted in the introduction of Secretary-General's report, "Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution", the 65th General Assembly took the landmark step of adopting, by consensus, its first resolution on mediation (A/RES/65/283). The aim of the resolution was to consolidate the normative basis, reinforce support to mediation activities and enhance Member States engagement in mediation efforts.

Resolution 65/283 requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the progress made on its implementation to the 66th session of the General Assembly. The Friends of Mediation warmly thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/66/811), including its annex I "United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation".

We find the **Secretary-General's report** comprehensive and useful. We appreciate the report's detailed account of the implementation of resolution 65/283. The implementation is well underway, and we believe that mediation has gained more political attention. Further strengthening of United Nations' mediation capacity and enhancing the mediation efforts of the United Nations is our common goal. This is of utmost importance today, especially when we take into account that after nearly two decades of decline, the number of conflicts is on the rise again, as noted in the report. Proper resourcing of United Nations mediation efforts is also vital in order to solve these new, as well as older, low-intensity conflicts.

As the report points out, resources for the majority of United Nations mediation activities and good offices work come from voluntary contributions. We call on Member States to continue to provide voluntary contributions to these activities. We also welcome the efforts of Department of Political Affairs to further broaden its donor base. Providing predictable financing needs to be discussed further in the near future.

The Friends of Mediation note with satisfaction the positive achievements in the field of partnerships and coordination. Enhanced partnerships and better coordination remain key objectives for the future work. Regional and sub-regional organizations are important players and partners, and provide valuable contributions to mediation. Mediation often means team work.

We welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to strengthen the collaboration of the United Nations with all relevant actors working on mediation issues. We appreciate the holistic approach to mediation which acknowledges the different actors involved in mediation. **Promoting contacts and links between mediation communities and networks is essential in order to improve the coordination and cooperation, and to address the challenges of a diverse and crowded field of mediation.**

The Friends of Mediation highly appreciate Secretary-General's efforts to increase women's involvement in all stages and levels of peace-processes in line with Security Council Resolution 1325. We endorse the four targets set for the United Nations. Progress has been made, but a great deal remains to be done. We encourage efforts to enhance the participation of women in peace processes.

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Annexed to the report is a milestone document which deserves much attention: the **United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation**. As you will recall, resolution 65/283 also requested "the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States and other relevant actors, to develop guidance for more effective mediation, taking into account, inter alia, and lessons learned from past and ongoing mediation processes".

The Friends of Mediation welcome the publication of the Guidance with appreciation. We value the efforts of the Secretariat to produce the Guidance through a comprehensive, inclusive and transparent consultation process. We value the opportunities given to Member States, regional organizations and the civil society, to provide their inputs to the Guidance.

Due to the diversity and complexity of conflicts requiring mediation, there is no one-size-fits-all formula to successful mediation. However, there are certain guiding principles that are common in mediation processes. In this context the Friends of Mediation appreciate that the Guidance discusses the main issues that every mediator and his or her team should take into consideration. We find that the Guidance is a practical reference document for mediators, as well as those involved in mediation processes.

The Guidance highlights that achieving peace is a complex challenge. One of these challenges is the multiplicity of actors involved in mediation processes. As a result, a successful outcome often requires combined efforts. A multi-stakeholder effort can only work if the actors involved work together with coherence of purpose and some level of coordination. During the past years, there have been many initiatives to improve cooperation and coordination in mediation-related issues, such as the Friends of Mediation. Yet much more work needs to be done.

The Friends of Mediation are glad to note that the Guidance underlines the importance of inclusiveness, including the participation of women in mediation processes and of the gender dimension, throughout the Guidance, as well. The UN plays a central role in standard-setting on

participation of women in peace processes and in best practices in ensuring that a gender-perspective is present throughout all phases of mediation.

The Friends of Mediation would like call on all member states, regional and subregional organizations and civil society to disseminate and use, as widely as possible, the United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation in mediation processes around the world.

The United Nations Secretary-General, together the Friends of Mediation, will launch the United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation, on Thursday, September 27th. A high level panel will discuss the Guidance and mediation-related issues, in an interactive manner. All Member States and observers, as well as the accredited civil society representatives and media are invited to participate. Further details will follow.

Mr. President,

The Friends of Mediation would like encourage all parties to make better use of the means for the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution, including mediation. The UN, having more experience, expertise and resources than any other organization in mediation and implementation of peace agreements, has a central role to play. In this context, we view the Secretary General's report and the Guidance for effective mediation as key documents which reflect and aim to improve this role.