

Summary by the co-chairmen

Friends of Mediation Ministerial meeting in New York

Thursday 27 September 2012 at 8.00-9.00 AM

Permanent Mission of Finland to the UN

The Friends of Mediation met for the third time at ministerial level in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly on September 27th, 2012. The meeting was hosted by the Finnish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Erkki Tuomioja, and co-chaired together with the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ahmet Davutoglu. The Foreign Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Morocco, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, Tanzania (United Republic of) and the Deputy Foreign Ministers of Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Nepal, Norway, Spain, Uganda as well as UN Deputy Secretary-General, Secretary-General of the OSCE, Commissioner of the AU, Deputy Secretary-General of the OAS participated in the meeting. The meeting was also attended by representatives from Belgium, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Panama, Philippines, Switzerland, the EU, the OIC as well as Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, LAS-UN Joint Special Representative for Syria. Welcoming remarks were given by H.E. Mr. Sauli Niinistö, President of the Republic of Finland.

The discussion focused on two agenda items. First, the report of the Secretary General entitled “Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution” (A/66/811) and its annex “United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation” were discussed in the light of how to further promote and utilize mediation as a key tool in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution. Secondly, the future activities of the Friends of Mediation were debated.

Promoting and utilizing mediation

Several key points were addressed:

- The report of the Secretary General and the UN Guidance for Effective Mediation were warmly welcomed. They, together with UN General Assembly resolutions “Strengthening the role of mediation in peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution A/RES65/283 adopted by consensus in June 2011 and A/RES/66/L.60 adopted by consensus in September 2012, create a firm normative basis for mediation.
- Strong support was expressed to the efforts of the Secretary General and the UN to further advance its mediation capacities, structures and activities. The work done so far was welcomed with appreciation.
- Regional, sub-regional, national and local level mediation activity and ownership were strongly emphasized. Ownership increases the effectiveness of mediation. Appreciation was expressed to the initiative by Morocco and Spain on Mediation in the Mediterranean Region as an example of the broadening of the activities of Friends of Mediation at the regional level.

- The further enhancement of cooperation and coordination between different actors involved in mediation was stressed. The importance of civil society and independent actors in mediation was acknowledged. It was highlighted that strong, recognized leadership and coordinated action together with existing political will are key preconditions for successful mediation.
- The role of women in mediation was strongly emphasized. The full and effective participation of women in all phases of conflict prevention and resolution is vital. Support was expressed to Secretary General's concrete targets to increase the role of women in mediation, especially that of appointing a female UN Chief Mediator. In addition, the importance of youth involvement in mediation was highlighted.
- The cost-effectiveness of mediation compared to other forms of conflict management was emphasized. It was stressed that mediation requires proper resourcing, including predictable and stable funding.

Future activities

In addition to existing activities, several ideas and proposals for new types of activities for the group of Friends of Mediation were presented:

- The Friends of Mediation and other mediation actors were encouraged to disseminate and promote the use of the UN Guidance for Effective Mediation as well as to conduct Guidance related capacity-building.
- The Permanent Representatives in New York were tasked to prepare concrete proposals on improving the financing of mediation for the next ministerial meeting in autumn 2013. There are several options available, such as broadening the donor base of voluntary contributions and increasing funding through the regular budget.
- The Friends of Mediation could explore ways how to discuss specific country situations.
- More mediation-related capacity-building is needed at all levels. The use of mediation in managing new types of challenges, such as disputes related to natural resources, energy-security or food-security, requires more attention.