

The Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers (SBT) is a service of the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) managed by the Mediation Support Unit (MSU) of the Policy and Mediation Division (PMD). It is a specialized resource that can be rapidly deployed on a temporary basis to provide technical advice to UN officials and others engaged in preventive diplomacy or mediation. The SBT's services are available to UN envoys, political and peacekeeping missions and country teams, as well as to regional organizations, Member States and other partners with whom the UN works closely in conflict mediation and good offices worldwide. SBT members can be deployed individually or in small groups, including with MSU staff.

The MSU is “an essential resource to support the good offices, mediation and facilitation work of the United Nations system and its partners. It seeks to get the right expertise to the right places at the right time, both by deploying personnel and providing remote analytical support.”

Report of the Secretary General on the United Nations and conflict prevention (S/2015/730 of 25 September 2015)

The principal operational role of the Standby Team is to provide expert advice to senior UN officials and partners upon request, either by deploying to the field or by providing advice remotely. This support is flexible and adapted to the needs of the situation. It can include providing technical expertise in a specific area; giving advice on procedural and agenda-setting issues; identifying entry points for dialogue and mediation; drafting the text of agreements; leading workshops for parties on substantive or process issues; and providing specialized mediation training and coaching.

SBT members are experienced in mediation situations and experts in a range of issues that arise frequently in peace negotiations, including the overall design and conduct of mediation, facilitation and dialogue processes (process design), security arrangements (ceasefires/DDR/SSR), constitution-making processes, gender and inclusion, power-sharing issues, and wealth-sharing/natural resources. When not deployed in the field, SBT members are on permanent standby, conducting research and comparative analysis of effective practices in their areas of expertise. Team members also support MSU in drafting operational guidance notes and related training materials.

Administration of the Standby Team

SBT support is provided in response to requests from UN officials and other partners at no cost to requesting entities; it is a resource fully funded from voluntary contributions to DPPA. All logistical, travel, administrative and management arrangements for the SBT are handled by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

For further information please contact the MSU Team Leader, Mr. Sean Kane, at kanes@un.org or the MSU Standby Team Coordinator, Mr. David Mueller, at david.mueller@un.org

Composition of the Standby Team

CHRISTINE BELL (Ireland – Constitutional Issues) is Professor of Constitutional Law, and Assistant Principal (Global Justice), at the University of Edinburgh. Her work has centred on peace process design, issues of inclusion and in particular inclusion of women and non-dominant minorities, and ‘PeaceTech’ in the form of the use of peace and conflict data and creative interfaces to support peace processes. It has been recognised by awards from the American Society of International Law, the Socio-Legal Studies Association, UK, and the Royal Society of Edinburgh. She has been involved in giving comparative process-design, legal and constitutional advice in a number of peace processes including in Colombia, Northern Ireland, Ethiopia, Philippines, and Sri Lanka. In particular, she supported a range of political parties and mediators in Northern Ireland in preparing negotiating positions with reference to human rights issues during the peace process, and was appointed to the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission established by the Belfast or Good Friday Agreement.

EMMANUEL HABUKA BOMBANDE (Ghana – Process Design) has, while on the SBT, advised on the establishment of infrastructures for peace in Burkina Faso and the Sudan transition process. He has supported dialogue efforts in Montenegro and conflict prevention initiatives in São Tomé & Príncipe, Lesotho, Eswatini and the Comoros. Mr. Bombande also provided advice on the roles of Regional Organizations in conflict prevention including ECOWAS, EC-CAS and EAC. Prior to his current role, he served as Senior Mediation Adviser to the Head of MINUSCA in the Central African Republic, and from 2016-2017 as Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ghana. He has previously served as Special Assistant to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS). Mr. Bombande co-founded the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and has been a lead facilitator of the Folke Bernadotte Academy-UNDPPA dialogue and mediation course for the past fifteen years. He speaks English and French.

FLORENCE MPAAYEI (Kenya – Gender & Inclusion)

has, while on the SBT, provided advice on gender and inclusion in Kenya, Sudan and Zambia. In South Sudan, she has supported UNMISS in strengthening the mediation capacity of religious leaders and mentored young women mediators in the Horn of Africa countries. Florence has long experience in mediation and dialogue facilitation, including building the capacity of civil society peace actors. She has designed programmes to support women's participation in high-level mediation efforts including in the Great Lakes, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan under the auspices of, inter alia, the AU, IGAD, EAC, and UN Women. Florence has been a member of FEMWISE-Africa and the Women Mediators Across the Commonwealth, and also serves as a board member in several organizations. Prior to joining the SBT, she was a Senior Advisor on Peace Practice and a Visiting Lecturer at the Hekima University College/Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations. She speaks English.

JUAN DIAZ PRINZ (Germany/USA – Process Design)

has over 20 years of mediation experience focusing on sub-national processes and insider mediators and how they link to national processes. He spent 14 years working in the Western Balkans in the Office of the International Mediator for Bosnia and Herzegovina and as the Director of an NGO dedicated to promoting an integrative approach to mediation. He also consulted for international organizations, such as the OSCE, EU, LAS, and UNDP. Juan brings extensive regional experience, having worked in Africa, Asia, and Latin America as a trainer in mediation, dialogue, conflict analysis, trust-building, and peacebuilding. Most recently, Juan was the Senior Mediation Expert and Acting Director of the Inclusive Peace Processes and Reconciliation team at USIP, where he advised, trained, or facilitated in a variety of country contexts, including Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Cameroon, CAR, Iraq, Tunisia, Ukraine, Venezuela, Western Sahara, and Syria. He is a recognized mediator at the Federal Association of Mediation in Germany. He speaks English and Spanish.

JUAN GARRIGUES (Spain – Process design)

was previously the Deputy Director of the Dialogue Advisory Group (DAG), where he facilitated political dialogues in different contexts including Libya, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Venezuela. In the Basque Country, he was part of the International Verification Commission which participated in the disarmament of ETA after almost 60 years of armed violence. From 2008 to 2011, he served as a foreign policy advisor in the Spanish Prime Minister's office. In the UN, he has provided mediation support in Haiti, the DRC and Afghanistan, worked in the Americas division of the (then) Department of Political Affairs and served as a UN Volunteer in Niger. He has also served as a short and long-term election observer with the EU, OSCE and UN. He is a Senior Research Fellow Associate at the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB). He speaks English, Spanish and French.

JUANITA MILLAN HERNANDEZ (Colombia – Security Arrangements)

has, while on the SBT, supported the Sudan peace process and provided expertise in support to the Libyan-led ceasefire monitoring mechanism. She has also supported DPPAs Women in Ceasefire online Course. Prior to joining the SBT, she served as Adviser to the High Commissioner for Peace of Colombia during the Havana Peace Talks. In 2014, she was appointed to become a member of the Sub-Commission on Ending the Conflict, a technical working group responsible for the design of the Ceasefire and Disarmament process. The same year, she assumed a position in the Sub-Commission on Gender, advising on the gender-sensitivity of the agreement's provisions. After the signing of the peace accords, Juanita was part of the Tri-Partite Ceasefire Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, focusing on gender-sensitivity, security guarantees, as well as the reincorporation of FARC combatants. She also advised the Colombian Government on potential configurations of talks with the ELN. She speaks English and Spanish.

RICHARD SMITH (South Africa – Process Design)

has, while on the SBT, supported senior UN officials in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and Syria, and in multiple countries in Africa, the Americas, Europe and the Pacific. Mr. Smith has expertise in gender-sensitive conflict analysis, conflict prevention and peacebuilding, multi-track peace processes, electoral support, natural resource conflicts and inter-religious dialogue. He has extensive experience in inclusive mediation process design and the facilitation of multi-stakeholder dialogue processes, including in the Middle East and South-East Asia. Mr. Smith has also been a rostered member of the African Standby Force, and supported SADC, the ECOWAS Commission and AU Peace Support Operations in strengthening the peace support capabilities of AU Regional Mechanisms. He speaks English.