



Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland



CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY

11TH MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE UN GROUP OF FRIENDS OF MEDIATION

**Mediation as a tool for peaceful settlement and resolution of conflicts:
Taking stock after 10 years of the first UN Resolution and looking ahead**

**On-line meeting February 2nd 2022
(9:00 AM NY time, 15:00 CET)**

The Group of Friends of Mediation organized a high-level event on 2nd February 2022. Despite the growing need for peace mediation, the UN Group of Friends of Mediation had not been able to convene at the Ministerial level due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the past two years. The 11th Ministerial meeting of the Group was therefore organized on-line. The theme of the event was “Mediation as a tool for peaceful settlement and resolution of conflicts: Taking stock after 10 years of the first UN Resolution and looking ahead”.

The event was co-chaired by H.E. Pekka Haavisto, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland and H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye. The keynote speakers included H.E. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs as well as Dr. Alexander Stubb, Chair of the Board of the CMI – Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation.

H.E. Haavisto started his opening remarks by noting that in the current international situation multilateral cooperation and the importance of diplomacy are perhaps more relevant than ever. The changing conflict scene highlights the need for a comprehensive, integrated, inclusive and multi-track approach when solutions are being considered. It is important to take into account the opportunities that peace mediation may provide as a tool for conflict prevention and resolution. H.E. Haavisto underlined the importance of trust as an essential element of peace. Trust requires human interaction, dialogue and mutual exchange – activities that the COVID pandemic has restricted and even prevented for nearly two years. This has certainly affected the ways and effectiveness of our mediation work. H.E. Haavisto pointed out that the pandemic has been particularly devastating for many women and young people and emphasized the need to pay special attention to their role and ensure their meaningful participation in every peace process - inclusiveness being the key to a lasting peace. H.E. Haavisto stressed the need for water diplomacy as an example to address political tensions over water. Fair and well-governed management of water resources can serve as a platform for cooperation and peacebuilding. In conclusion, H.E. Haavisto emphasized the role of the United Nations in conflict prevention and sustaining peace. He welcomed Secretary General's

New Agenda for Peace, included in his recent report Our Common Agenda and saw the Group of Friends as a visible proof of the strong support for the United Nations and its mediation efforts.

H.E. Çavuşoğlu began his remarks by observing the increasingly challenging conflict landscape the world faces today. He noted that around two billion people are currently living in countries affected by conflicts, and that these conflicts have become more complex and their drivers more diverse. Over the last 60 years, around 40 percent of conflicts have been over natural resources, he said – and with climate change, this percentage is bound to increase. On a positive note, H.E. Çavuşoğlu drew attention to the opportunities that new technologies present for more impactful mediation. He noted that Türkiye was the first country to make a voluntary financial contribution to the UN's Innovation Cell. He continued by emphasizing the increased need for effective mediation and highlighting the accomplishments of the UN Group of Friends of Mediation. Since its founding, the Group has been instrumental for four General Assembly Resolutions on mediation as well as the first-ever comprehensive UN Guidance for Effective Mediation. The group has attracted interest and grown to 61 members, demonstrating the increasing awareness on the matter. H.E. Çavuşoğlu noted that the success of the Group of Friends at the UN inspired the establishment of similar groups at the OSCE and the OIC. He mentioned Türkiye's endeavours for peace mediation within the OIC and the forthcoming 8th Istanbul Mediation Conference as well as the importance of the inclusion of women and youth in mediation. He underlined the misleading nature of the term of "frozen conflicts." As the situation around Ukraine has shown, he said, it is not the conflicts that are frozen, but the solutions – something we must continue to address through mediation. He closed by calling for an increased focus on peace mediation.

In her remarks H.E. DiCarlo thanked the Co-Chairs and the Group for its support to the UN's mediation work in the context where conflicts are becoming more fragmented and complex. The USG noted that the complexity of current conflicts and attitudes has challenged traditional tools of conflict resolution. She underlined the importance of partnerships between the UN and the member states as well as regional organizations and civil society. Inclusivity is a strategic imperative to the success of mediation, the USG stated. She highlighted the UN's efforts and accomplishments in this regard – internally achieving gender parity in leadership of peace operations, pursuing direct participation models that prioritize women's participation, regular consultations with women's groups in conflict areas, supporting local women peacemakers, and contributing significant funding to the UN's gender and youth promotion initiative. The New Agenda for Peace will inform and be informed about mediation activities. We are facing a "five-alarm global fire," she said, where the climate crisis, lawlessness in digital space, and lack of peace and security are among the most pressing concerns of the day. She emphasized that regional and international unity are more important than ever, and we must be ready to face new threats to peace and to flexibly use new tools for mediation in a world of changing conflicts. The Group of Friends is an important platform in identifying and tailoring support for future activities. In conclusion she underlined the need to continue to prepare for new threats and to adapt to the changing environment in which conflicts take place.

Dr. Alexander Stubb pointed out the achievements of the Group of Friends, including the four General Assembly Resolutions. Conflicts are becoming more complex, he said, because everything is being used as a weapon – economy, technology, energy, information – it is not as easy to see when it is time to go in and start mediating and who exactly you should be talking to. He encouraged the Group of Friends to look at new ways of becoming engaged in this "age of unpeace," when the line between war and peace is being blurred.

In the members' statements wide support was given to the role of the Group of Friends of Mediation and to the United Nations' efforts to promote conflict prevention and peaceful settlement and resolution of conflicts through mediation. The changing conflict scene and new challenges for peace were mentioned in several statements. The importance of inclusion was stressed by most speakers, including especially the meaningful participation of women and youth. The role of regional and sub-regional organizations was also underlined, as was local ownership and civil society participation in order to achieve and sustain lasting peace.

In the 11th Ministerial meeting of the Group of Friends of Mediation that was broadcast by UN Web TV as well as by the Finnish and Turkish Ministries for Foreign Affairs, 45 member states/organisations were represented. All 20 high-level speakers (9 Ministers, 1 Secretary-General, 1 Under-Secretary-General, and 9 Deputy Ministers) underlined the importance of mediation as well as the crucial function of the Group to support the peaceful resolution of conflicts.