

**Group of Friends of Mediation
7th Ministerial Meeting
New York, Thursday, 22 September 2016**

Co-Chairs' Summary

The Group of Friends of Mediation held its 7th Ministerial Meeting on the margins of the United Nations 71st General Assembly High-Level Week on Thursday, 22 September, with the theme "The Role of Mediation in Preventing Conflicts and Ending Human Suffering."

The meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Timo Soini, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland and H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, who was represented later by H.E. Ahmet Yıldız, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

The Co-Chairs on this occasion welcomed Austria, Honduras and Slovakia as the latest members to join the Group.

The meeting started with the opening remarks by the Co-Chairs, followed by Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman's keynote remarks.

In his remarks, USG Feltman commended the Group for the recently adopted fourth General Assembly resolution on "Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution" and welcomed its request for the next Secretary General to submit a report on UN's activities in support of mediation to the next General Assembly. He highlighted the link between humanitarian crises and conflicts, focusing on displacement and the tremendous human cost of armed conflicts. He pointed out that prevention and mediation, development and humanitarian assistance are also intrinsically related and stressed that prevention requires both political will and investment in financial terms. Further, he pointed out the need for the UN to retain its capacity to respond quickly to the escalation of disputes and conflicts and addressed the need for achieving complementarity between political and humanitarian efforts as well as the importance of timely and adequate resources for mediation efforts. He concluded that the UN needs to put even stronger emphasis on mediation and conflict prevention; give priority to seeking long-term, inclusive political solutions to conflicts; and use mediation to stem the humanitarian crises of today, and prevent new ones from erupting tomorrow.

Out of the 52 members of the Group of Friends of Mediation, 44 delegations were present in the meeting, contributing to the work of the Group, as well as actively participating and delivering statements regarding mediation and conflict prevention.

Many reiterated the importance of taking mediation further in the UN agenda, consistent with the understanding that mediation and conflict prevention need to be brought to the fore. To this end, a number of delegations addressed developing ideas to increase its effectiveness in line with current realities and needs. In this connection, the role and active involvement of the members of the Group of Friends of Mediation was highlighted.

Some members underlined the importance of early warning mechanisms, some highlighted the continued need for enhanced cooperation with regional organizations as well as the important role played by women in mediation.

Considerable reference was made to the results of the World Humanitarian Summit along with the nexus between development efforts, sustainable peace and humanitarian crises. The need of information sharing on best practices was extensively pronounced by the

members, as well as, the need to effectively address the issue of capacity building and to increase financial resources in the field of mediation.

Several members shared their national experiences and efforts and expressed a need for more investment in mediation in and outside the UN. One member expressed a call for a more focused discussion on how to prioritize the financing of conflict prevention and mediation.

Some members portrayed the contemporary security environment reflecting a paradigmatic shift and also stressed the need to switch to an approach that centers around prevention, resolution and early warning rather than management of conflicts.

Akin to the previous year's meeting, the relationship between regional organizations and the UN was also highlighted, with updates on mediation efforts under the auspices and efforts of the regional and sub-regional organizations present at the meeting.

Members appreciated the support given by the Secretary General of the UN and the work that has been carried out by the UN Secretariat. The consensus among the members was to continue to cooperate closely with the UN Secretariat and to effectively bring the current issues surrounding mediation efforts to the attention of the incoming UN Secretary-General.