



PERMANENT MISSION OF TURKEY
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



PERMANENT MISSION OF FINLAND
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**Joint Paper on “Friends of Mediation”
submitted by Finland and Turkey to the
Informal meeting organized
by the President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly
“United Nations Mediation: Experiences and Reflections from the Field”
November 9, 2011, New York**

In September 2010, Finland and Turkey took on the initiative to create a group of **Friends of Mediation** at the United Nations to bring together various actors involved in mediation and to push for enhanced use of mediation. The Group met for the first time at ministerial level in the margins of the High-level week of the General Assembly in September 2010. The group comprises currently of 25 Member States, the UN and seven regional organizations (see attached list).

Since September 2010, the Friends of Mediation has created a real momentum for mediation in the UN. The main achievement of this initiative thus far was the adoption of a major resolution. The group presented last February a draft resolution on mediation to the Member States of the UN. The issue attracted keen interest of a large number delegations. After long and intensive negotiations, which developed and enriched the draft, the **UN General Assembly resolution entitled “Strengthening the role of mediation in peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution” (A/RES/65/283)** was adopted by consensus in June 2011. The UN Secretary-General described the Resolution in his recent report as “a groundbreaking development that positions the Organization as a standard setter for mediation”.

The Friends of Mediation met for the second time at ministerial level in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly on September 20, 2011. The discussion focused mainly on two issues: providing insight to the UN Secretary-General as he develops guidance for more effective mediation on the basis of mediation experiences as follow-up to resolution A/RES/65/283. The Foreign Ministers and heads of regional organisations also brainstormed on how to maintain the momentum generated by the “Peace through Mediation” initiative and what could be the future activities of the Friends of Mediation for the year ahead.

The Friends of Mediation emphasised the importance of coordination and conveying a unified message, as there are often various actors involved in the same mediation effort. However, the Friends stressed that there must be a balance between coordination and the need for flexibility. It was also agreed that the UN should have a central role, at least in coordinating different mediation actors, even though it may not always be the lead mediator. There was a clear consensus that interaction between the UN and regional organisations should be further enhanced. This could also assist in having more clarity of the role of each organization in a given conflict. Both the UN and regional organisations need

the support of the international community. Moreover, there is a room for more interaction with the non-governmental organisations and academia.

With this understanding, Friends of Mediation supports strengthening the role of the mediation capacities of the UN system, in particular the Mediation Support Unit of the Department of Political Affairs, as underlined in the UN General Assembly Resolution 65/283, and welcomes the informal discussion being held today by the President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly.

The Friends of Mediation stands ready to cooperate actively with the PGA who chose the “Peaceful Settlement of Disputes including Mediation” as one of his main priorities. As the year nears to an end, several activities are already planned to be organised throughout the coming year at the UN to get various actors together to harness the existing expertise and efforts for more effective mediation.

The Friends of Mediation is an inclusive group open to all UN Member States.