



Mediation Support Unit

The Mediation Support Unit (MSU), based in the Policy and Mediation Division of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), is a system-wide asset that assists the mediation initiatives of the United Nations, Member States, regional/subregional organizations and relevant partners. The MSU is the United Nations focal point for mediation support and the institutional repository of knowledge, lessons learned and best practices.

The MSU delivers services in three main areas:

1. Technical and operational support for peace processes: The MSU provides support throughout the planning, implementation and evaluation phases of a mediation process. Available services include strategy development and process design for mediation, facilitation and dialogue initiatives as well as advice on thematic issues from a mediation perspective. These thematic issues include security arrangements (ceasefires, DDR and SSR), constitution-making, power-sharing, natural resources (wealth-sharing) issues and gender issues.

Technical support is rendered through two main tools within MSU; the first being the unit's staff, who work on a number of thematic issues and country specific contexts. In addition to staff in the Unit, the MSU is also home to DPA's Standby Team of Mediation Experts, the unit's second tool. This team is available to all United Nations entities, regional organizations and other partners, and can be deployed within 72 hours. For longer-term deployments, the MSU, on behalf of DPA, also manages a Mediation Roster - a database of operational-level mediators and technical-level experts.

2. Capacity-building: At the operational level, MSU provides bespoke coaching for mediators and training for mediation teams on mediation and negotiation techniques and skills, strategy development, process design and thematic issues. To facilitate the effective engagement of conflict parties in a peace process, such coaching and training initiatives may also be offered to parties to a conflict upon request from the mediator. At the organizational level, MSU capacity-building support is also available to regional organizations and Member States seeking to strengthen their mediation capacity.

3. Mediation guidance, lessons learned and best practices: Knowledge products have been developed to provide guidance for mediators and their teams. These products include: the *UN Guidance for Effective Mediation* – which identifies a number of key fundamentals that should be considered in a mediation effort, outlines some potential challenges and dilemmas faced by mediators and offers some guidance, the *Special Envoy Briefing Package* - a compilation of key UN policies and approaches to mediation, the *UN Manual for Mediators* - a distillation of core mediation techniques and experiences drawn from the specific experiences of UN envoys, and the *Mediation Start-up Guidelines* - a toolkit for the establishment of a mediation effort, with specific attention to the administration and management dimensions. The MSU also hosts the UN Peacemaker website which includes a database of peace agreements and other relevant guidance material.

www.peacemaker.un.org

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