



## Standby Team of Mediation Experts

Established in March 2008, the Standby Team of Mediation Experts is a service of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) situated in the Mediation Support Unit (MSU) within the Policy and Mediation Division (PMD). It is a specialized resource that can be rapidly deployed on a temporary basis into the field to provide technical advice to UN officials and others engaged in conflict prevention or mediation efforts. The Team's services are available to current United Nation envoys, political and peacekeeping missions and country teams, as well as to regional organizations and partner organizations with whom the United Nations works closely in conflict mediation and good offices worldwide. Team members can be deployed in any configuration, either as individuals, a small group or the entire Team.

The principal operational role of the Standby Team is to provide expert advice to senior UN officials or other partners, upon request, either by deploying to the field or, in some cases, by providing advice remotely. This support is flexible and can be adapted to the needs of the situation and can include: providing technical expertise in a specific area; giving advice on procedural and agenda-setting issues; providing analysis of the positions of parties in negotiations, including the identification of potential points of convergence as well as possible gaps; drafting the text of agreements; leading workshops for parties on substantive or process issues; and providing specialised mediation training and coaching.

*"We wish to see the United Nations and all our partners make full use of the potential of mediation to prevent, manage and resolve disputes and conflicts. We need to have the know-how, the operational dexterity, and the partnerships to undertake mediation professionally and effectively."*

*Ban Ki-moon,  
Secretary-General of the United Nations  
13 September 2012*

Team members are experienced in mediation situations and experts in a range of issues that arise frequently in peace negotiations, including overall design of processes, security arrangements (ceasefires/DDR/SSR), constitutional issues, power-sharing, natural resources, and gender and inclusion. When not deployed in the

field, the members of the Team are on permanent standby, carrying out research and coordinating reviews of best practices in their area of expertise. Furthermore, the Team members are responsible for producing operational guidance notes and related training materials, and assisting MSU with the development of a network of experts in their areas of expertise.

## Administration of the Standby Team

The Standby Team support is provided in response to requests from UN officials or other partners. The Standby Team is a fully-funded resource and support is provided at no cost to requesting entities. Flights for any member of the Team can be booked at a moment's notice, using funds already available to the Team. All political and policy decisions regarding the use of the Standby Team are made by the Department of Political Affairs. Administrative and logistical support to the team is provided by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

## Thematic Composition

**Process-Design, Gender and Social Inclusion:** Rina Amiri (Afghanistan) brings over 15 years of experience advising governments, serving as a political analyst with the United Nations and leading NGO initiatives. Ms. Amiri brings a versatile set of skills in mediation and peacebuilding processes, with a focus on gender and social inclusion. Her work experience spans West and East Africa, the Middle East, South, Central and Southeast Asia. From 2009-2012, Ms. Amiri served as a senior advisor to the U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Before that, she oversaw research and advocacy efforts on conflict and security issues in Afghanistan and Pakistan as Director of the Soros Foundation's Afghanistan and Regional Policy Initiative. From 2002 to 2006, Ms. Amiri worked for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) on electoral, constitutional and gender matters. At Harvard's John F. Kennedy School, Ms. Amiri conducted consultations, research and training programs for women leaders from over twenty countries. She served as one of the founding members of Inclusive Security, a coalition of more than 2000 women peacebuilders that advocates for the full participation of all stakeholders, particularly women, in peace processes. She speaks English and Dari/Farsi.

**Natural Resources:** Michael Brown (Canada) is an expert on mediation, conflict and peacebuilding issues and his professional experience spans Latin America, Asia, West Africa, Eastern Europe and North America. He has worked extensively on ways to resolve disputes over land and property rights, especially in countries in

transition. Mr. Brown also has experience on issues related to natural resource and wealth sharing, and has worked on conflict issues related to mining, oil and gas, and water resources. He is a Professor of Practice in Conflict Mediation at McGill University and has held leadership and advisory positions with UNDP, the World Bank, UN political missions and USAID. Mr. Brown was the Head of Peacebuilding and Recovery for UNDP in Nepal. He was the Senior Peace and Development Advisor for UNDP Ecuador and Director of their conflict prevention and peacebuilding program in the Colombia-Ecuador border zone. He was also the Head of Land and Property Team in the UN Transitional Administration in Timor Leste. He also has experience in transitional governance, rule of law, political leadership, indigenous peoples and rights, and integrating former rebel forces and child soldiers. Mr. Brown has degrees in Geography (B.Sc., McGill University) and Law (J.D., University of Victoria), and was called to the Bar in Canada (Province of Ontario). He speaks English, Spanish and French.

**Constitution-Making and Process-Design:** Hassen Ebrahim (South Africa) was a practicing lawyer and was intimately involved in the negotiations and implementation of South Africa's first democratic constitution. He first served as a technical advisor to the Transitional Executive Council in the lead up to the 1994 elections in South Africa, then as Chief Executive Officer of the Constitutional Assembly to manage the negotiations. His initiative during the constitutional process in South Africa led to a public participation strategy that has become a model for best practice worldwide. After ten years as a government adviser, Mr. Ebrahim moved beyond South Africa and has provided advice on power sharing and constitutional expertise in Zimbabwe, Sudan, South Sudan, Libya, Tunisia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Philippines and Nepal. In Somalia, he was the Senior Technical Expert supporting the Speaker of the Somali Parliament to help establish the required institutions of state and implement the new constitution. As member of the Standby Team, he is now assisting the United Nations Mission in Somalia in supporting constitutional reform efforts. He brings expertise in the areas of constitution-making, popular consultation processes, power-sharing, and religion and peacemaking. He speaks English.

**Process-Design:** Sven Koopmans (The Netherlands) is an expert in peace negotiations and process design, combining experience as a diplomat and political advisor with expertise in international law. As a member of the Standby Team, he was the lead mediation advisor to the head of the United Nations Mission in Mali (MINUS-MA), developing a negotiation framework and conducting shuttle diplomacy in the collaborative effort with the AU, ECOWAS and the EU, leading to the 2013 Ouagadougou Framework Agreement. In addition, he has advised special envoys of the

Secretary-General on conflicts in Europe, Africa and Latin America on matters of mediation design, international law, constitutional review and border delimitation. Previously he advised the AU on ways to settle border disputes, and was counsel to the EU Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan. For USAID he helped develop the popular consultations process in South Kordofan and Blue Nile in Sudan. Around the time of Kosovo's declaration of independence he was adviser to the International Civilian Representative there. Earlier he provided technical expertise during the negotiations which led to the Annan Plan for Cyprus. Furthermore, for many years he worked as a attorney at a global law firm, specializing in international litigation. He has taught negotiations in France and holds a Doctorate in international law from the University of Oxford. He specializes in negotiations, autonomy and self-determination, borders, constitutions, national dialogues, power-sharing and agreement implementation. He speaks English, French, German and Dutch.

**Security Arrangements:** [Jeffrey Mapendere \(Zimbabwe\)](#) has worked in Africa, Asia and the Middle East on a wide range of conflicts and has been re-appointed several times as a member of the Standby Team of Mediation Experts. He was the Assistant Director of the Carter Centre's Conflict Resolution Programme (2003-07), and repeatedly served as The Carter Center Field Office Director for Sudan and South Sudan in 2009 and 2011. He has worked extensively for the UN on the Darfur peace process in Doha from 2010 to 2012, and has also supported good offices efforts in the Central African Republic, Nepal, Somalia, South Sudan, Afghanistan and elsewhere. From 2012 to 2013, he was the senior advisor to the lead Facilitator for the Kampala Dialogue process. In addition, Mr. Mapendere has been a lead trainer on ceasefires, process design and gender and mediation. His personal experience as a member of a liberation movement and the national army in Zimbabwe enables him to advise on a wide range of security issues including negotiating ceasefires, DDR and SSR arrangements, and engaging armed groups. He has also advised the UN on overall mediation process-design issues. He speaks English.

**Process-Design:** [Pierre-Yves Monette \(Belgium\)](#) provides expertise in the following areas: mediation process-design; constitution-making; community reconciliation; and natural resources (with a focus on water). He has been working for the United Nations since 2011, notably in the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Mali and the Maldives. In CAR, he coached and assisted the National Mediator in the 2011 ceasefire process between the government and the main rebel groups; he also negotiated and co-drafted the 2013 Constitutional Charter of the Transition. In Mali, he was sent to help MINUSMA support the implementation of the 2013 Framework Agreement for Mali. Mr. Monette is a professor at the College of Europe (the Bruges-based postgraduate University on European Affairs) where he has been

teaching “International mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolutions” since 2002. He is an attorney at the Brussels bar and has been the Federal Mediator of his country (Belgium) between 1997 and 2005. He is also the honorary Counselor to the Belgian Head of State (King Philippe I).

He has also published articles and essays on mediation, on the European integration and on the political situation of his country. He has a Master’s degree in Law and Bachelor’s degree in Philology from the University in Louvain, Belgium and a degree in Spanish Literature from the University of Salamanca, Spain. He is fluent in French, English, Spanish and Dutch, and also speaks German, Italian and Portuguese.

**Constitutions:** Ms. Christina Murray (South Africa) is a Professor of Constitutional and Human Rights Law at the University of Cape Town. Recently she has been part of the constitutional support team of the Special Advisor to the Secretary General of the United Nations on Yemen. In 2012 she was a member of the Constitution Commission of Fiji. Between February 2009 and October 2010 she served as a member of the Kenyan Committee of Experts that prepared the 2010 Constitution of Kenya. Professor Murray’s first experience in constitution-making was serving on a panel of seven experts advising the South African Constitutional Assembly in drafting South Africa’s Constitution between 1994 and 1996. Since then, in addition to her academic work, she has advised a number of government departments in South Africa and worked with South Africa’s national Parliament and many of its nine provincial legislatures. In addition, she has provided constitutional expertise in a number of other countries including Egypt, Libya, Sudan, South Sudan, Nepal, Zimbabwe and Pakistan. She speaks English.

**Power-sharing:** Marie-Joëlle Zahar (Lebanon) is a Professor of Political Science and Research Director of the Network on Peace Operations at the University of Montreal. She is an expert on Middle East conflicts with comparative experience in the Balkans (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Sub-Saharan Africa (Sudan, South Sudan, Mali, Angola and Mozambique). Her research focuses on the dynamics of power sharing in post-conflict settings, as well as on the management of violence in peace processes. As a member of the Standby Team, she has supported a number of UN peace efforts including the Central African Republic, Libya, Mali and Syria. Prior to working for the UN, she has been a consultant for a broad range of governmental and non-governmental organizations including the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Délégation aux affaires stratégiques at the French Ministry of Defense, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), and the Government of Canada. She was the senior expert responsible for

developing the Forum of Federations' program in support of the Popular Consultations' process in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states in the Sudan. Dr. Zahar has also conducted numerous trainings for practitioners on a range of issues related to peace building and post-conflict reconstruction. She has authored or co-authored over 40 articles and book chapters. She speaks English, French and Arabic.

## Requesting Standby Team support

Requests for deployment or assistance of the Standby Team or any one of its members should be directed to the Director of the Policy and Mediation Division of DPA and to the Chief of the Mediation Support Unit. The request should be made in writing or by e-mail and should come from the head of mission, head of appropriate department, Special Envoy, Resident Coordinator, senior adviser or other appropriate senior official.

For further information or to discuss possible support, please contact the Chief a.i. MSU Robert Dann at [dann@un.org](mailto:dann@un.org) (+1-212-963-7603) or the MSU Standby Team focal point, Mr. Julian Davis at [davis1@un.org](mailto:davis1@un.org) (+1-917-367-9486).