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**BRIEFING TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL  
ON THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S  
REPORT ON MEDIATION**

**21 APRIL 2009**

Thank you Mr. President. Last September the Security Council met under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Burkina Faso for a high-level debate on mediation.

During that debate, the Security Council identified many of the key issues and challenges facing the international community in resolving disputes peacefully. In its Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2008/36), the Council invited the Secretary-General to provide a report on “mediation and its support activities, which takes into account experiences of the United Nations and other key actors, and makes recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of United Nations mediation.”

The report before you benefited from a broad consultation process. In addition to internal consultations, the report drew on the experiences and views of Security Council members, individual Member States acting as mediators, regional and sub-regional organizations, and non-governmental organizations. It attempts to synthesize many years of United Nations experience in mediating conflict both between and within states.

The report provides an opportunity to take stock of efforts underway in the Secretariat, under the lead of the Department of Political Affairs, to bolster and professionalize the UN's mediation capabilities. The Secretary-General has called for a more proactive use of preventive diplomacy by the UN, and our ability to support and carry out mediation is central to that vision.

Release of this report also coincides with critically important efforts by Member States and the Secretariat to examine the present and future of UN peacekeeping.

These, of course, are closely related. A United Nations more effective in the practice of mediation will be more adept both at heading off conflicts before they become full-blown crises and at bringing such crises to a peaceful and lasting end before it is necessary to resort to peacekeeping. Effective mediation can help us to arrive at sound agreements that can be successfully implemented, and then assist the facilitation and dialogue needed throughout the later phases of the effort.

Mediation must continue as a central part of the process of peacekeeping and peacebuilding. For example, the head of the UN peacebuilding mission in Sierra Leone, Michael Schulenberg, has been busy in recent weeks encouraging dialogue to defuse the most recent political tensions there. Or witness the promising efforts of MONUC SRSG Doss and former President Obasanjo to bring peace to the eastern DRC. Strengthening mediation capacity is also an important objective to keep in mind, therefore, as we strive collectively at the United Nations to do a better job in the area of peacebuilding.

Mr. President,

I would like to turn to some of our key initiatives and recent efforts in the mediation field. These are part of a conscious effort to reshape the Department of Political Affairs into a more action- and field-oriented operation that can move more quickly and at an earlier stage to help prevent conflicts from spreading and to deliver faster and more reliable support to peace processes. As directed by the Secretary-General, we are working to put in place the expertise, financial resources, partnerships and knowledge-base to achieve these objectives. We deeply appreciate the support we have received from members of this Council and other Member States for these efforts.

### **Reliable, Timely and Flexible Support for Peace Processes**

The political support and financial resources that Member States have provided, through the regular budget and voluntary contributions, have enabled us to strengthen our Regional Divisions and establish a Mediation Support Unit. The MSU has been further complemented with a Standby Team of Mediation Experts able to deploy to negotiations around the world on short notice, and to provide advice and assistance to mediators on themes such as peace process design, security arrangements, power-sharing, wealth-sharing, natural resource management and constitution-making.

In the past year, DPA has provided mediation support to over twenty peace processes, with the MSU exerting a multiplier effect on those efforts. We have striven to take a flexible and innovative approach to peacemaking.

We have made our technical advisory services available to, of course, United Nations envoys and representatives, but also Member States, regional organizations and others who may happen to lead a mediation effort. We also try to provide high quality technical support in a timely manner. Experts can be dispatched to a mediation scene now in days not weeks.

These innovations are already making a difference in our ability to provide real support to peace processes. Let me provide some concrete examples.

- In *Somalia*, SRSO Ould-Abdullah has spearheaded a mediation effort which many observers see as the most promising effort in years to bring about political reconciliation in that country. DPA has provided close support to those efforts, in working with the parties to develop the 26 October 2008 Djibouti Agreement.
- In the *Central African Republic (CAR)*, our political mission on the ground played a key role in carrying out an all-inclusive national political dialogue. DPA's training to the preparatory committee contributed to the success of the dialogue.
- In *Cyprus*, we deployed facilitators to the technical working groups during the preparatory phase of the talks and continue to work closely with the Secretary-General's Special Adviser, Alexander Downer, including technical support on power-sharing and property issues.

- In *Nepal*, we continue to support RSG Karin Landgren with mediation and facilitation assistance in the implementation phases of the peace agreement.
- In Iraq, SRSG de Mistura is leading an increasingly visible role in fostering political reconciliation supported from New York by a variety of expertise on issues relating to the disputed internal boundaries, Kirkuk, water-sharing and the constitution.

We also have supported DPKO-led missions in Darfur, Kosovo, and the DRC as the SRSGs work either to reach peace agreements or work through the incredibly difficult tasks of implementing peace accords. It is important to note that UN political mediation efforts are being carried out not only in classic peacemaking situations such as Cyprus or the Western Sahara, but also through the day to day work of the political missions in the field. These missions spend much of their time trying to broker dialogue and to use preventive diplomacy to “put out fires” that arise.

Our services have also been put at the disposal of regional organizations in the lead of political processes. In *Kenya*, where former Secretary-General Kofi Annan led the effort, our team assisted him in preparing the mediation effort and on elections, security and constitutional issues. Since September 2008, in the *Comoros*, we have been supporting the African Union efforts on an “inter-Comorian dialogue”.

We have also found that a regional presence can be an effective way to mediate disputes. Through the West Africa office (UNOWA), we have been

able to work with ECOWAS and the African Union on such issues as Mauritania and Guinea, without the deployment of a stand-alone mission. Most recently, SRSJ Djinnit has undertaken a preventive mission to Togo to consult with authorities there on recent developments in the country. This is part of our ongoing work with ECOWAS and regional leaders to prevent conflicts in the region. Our Central Asian office in Ashgabat is leading an effort to help the five countries resolve tensions over water issues, among other issues of regional concern. A key role is being played by a specialist on natural resource management from the MSU Standby Team. The effectiveness of these regional efforts have encouraged our effort to establish a regional presence in the Central African region as requested by members of the African Group.

### **Flexible Funding, Mediation Start-Up Budgets**

Mr. President

It is important to note that our ability to move quickly to mediate disputes has improved thanks to the establishment of a small mediation start-up budget, funded by donors. DPA's modest travel budget cannot sustain the emergency dispatch of crisis prevention teams. With these funds we were able to deploy and sustain a small team in Madagascar to mediate the current crisis in the country, send envoys such as ASG Menkerios to support regional efforts on Zimbabwe, and get former President Obasanjo's mission to the eastern DRC off the ground in the midst of the fighting. Advance planning and ready resources are key to effective early mediation when trouble develops.

The kinds of mediation activities I have described to you today are now routinely expected by our envoys and representatives. Our Department has traditionally worked hard to meet these demands. However, the creation of the Mediation Support Unit and its Standby Team of Mediation Experts has given a tremendous boost to these efforts by providing readily available, in-house, mediation expertise. Presently, most of our funding comes from the generosity of donors which continues to be of critical importance.

## **Partnership**

Our challenges in the mediation of conflicts are shared by the entire international community and it is the responsibility of all of us to act in concert to solve them. To do this, it is essential to have partnerships with Member States, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations.

Regional organizations are often best placed to take the lead in mediation efforts, and some have a wealth of mediation expertise in their own right. Where requested, we have assisted in their mediation efforts and in strengthening the mediation capacity of regional organizations. In *Africa*, we have benefited from the cooperation of the African Union, ECOWAS and SADC in mediation efforts in Darfur, Sudan, and in Zimbabwe, Kenya, Madagascar, Guinea, Burundi, among many other examples. I would like in particular to recognize the outstanding efforts in extraordinarily difficult circumstances of joint UN/AU Envoy Djibril Bassole in Darfur. We also continue working closely with SADC, AU and the Economic Community of Central Africa States (ECCAS) to build mediation capacity.

In assign of our strong partnership with the AU, we have just concluded a joint assessment of our cooperation in two cases: Darfur, Sudan and Kenya. This was very productive, and we are planning a follow-up assessment on our work together on Somalia.

In *Europe*, we have made significant strides in enhancing our mediation partnership with the European Union, including the Commission. We welcome the recent discussions in the EU on developing its own mediation capacity. We look forward to working with all relevant regional actors: sharing expertise and lessons learned, developing joint training opportunities and working together on the establishment of a geographically diverse roster of mediation experts.

Mr. President,

We certainly recognize many areas requiring improvement. Mediation requires skill and knowledge, but it can be a complex operation with its own logistics, staffing and technical requirements. For envoys to succeed they need more than just their individual talents and experience. We are making a systematic effort to support them in the planning and management of peace processes.

Working with other parts of the UN system, Member States, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations, we are putting a system in place that will include five levels of support for envoys: (1) mediation planning (including assessment of requirements and mobilizing to meet them); (2) development of a small pool of operational-level on-call

mediators to manage the day-to-day functions of a mediation effort; (3) the standby team of mediation experts; (4) development of a small, but reliable, roster of internal and external experts; and (5) establishing a small team of geographically diverse experienced senior envoys to provide mediation advice.

We will also combine this specialized response capability with a rigorous training curriculum for our regional specialists. All political affairs officers should have basic training on aspects of mediation.

United Nations mediation capacities, its lessons learned and tools are not proprietary information; they are available to all who need them. Working together, we should promote an understanding among Member States that United Nations mediation (including good offices, facilitation, and dialogue) is a *service* offered by the Secretary-General at all phases of a conflict. All Member States should be comfortable requesting and utilizing this service, when required. We need to combine our capacity building with confidence building that United Nations mediation is an impartial and effective tool for conflict resolution. Reticence to involve outside actors has at times translated into lost opportunities by Member States to make use of what the United Nations has to offer. We are here to help, but can only do so if we are allowed to.

## **Knowledge Management**

The report makes it clear that the United Nations does not have a monopoly on mediation. This also applies to the accumulation of knowledge and best

practices on mediation. We have provided leadership in developing a web-based repository of information on mediation called the UN Peacemaker, but we will need to work closely with our partners to consolidate and disseminate this knowledge. This online support tool for international peacemaking professionals has over 800 documents, more than 300 peace agreements, and 15 operational guidance notes (with another 22 in development). The UN Peacemaker was developed on a limited budget and will now need to be more properly maintained and upgraded.

To be successful in our collective mediation effort, we need to be constantly learning new lessons and applying them. For this reason, we have put in place a debriefing programme for senior envoys which allows us to capture the experiences of senior United Nations envoys. We are also working on a Peace Agreement Evaluation Project which will look at factors, in peace processes and agreements, which contribute to the sustainability of peace. We are considering other innovative programs to take stock of lessons learned from successful mediations. Again, I want to note that these initiatives would not have been possible without the support of Member State donors and we deeply appreciate their generosity.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I want to say that we have very clearly heard your call and the instruction of the Secretary-General to develop a more rigorous and effective approach to mediation. Mediation is a Charter activity of the United Nations and must be carried out with the highest degree of professionalism, transparency and preparation to promote peace and

security. We are grateful for your support to date and hope to continue to earn it in the future.

Thank you Mr. President.