

## **Talking Points of the OSCE Secretary General**

### **Ministerial Breakfast of the Group of Friends of Mediation**

*New York, 22 September 2016*

- I would like to thank the co-chairs, Foreign Minister of Finland Timo Soini and Foreign Minister of Turkey Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, for convening this meeting. This is the sixth Ministerial Breakfast of the Group of Friends of Mediation that I attend. A clear sign of success and a demonstration of the effectiveness of the leadership of Turkey and Finland is the size of this table which grows longer every year.
- The first-ever World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul a few months ago, recognized that the nature of contemporary conflicts is changing rapidly and has become more complex. Conflicts are now responsible for more than 80% of the world's humanitarian crises.
- In the current security environment the international community ought to move away from conflict management towards effectively managing prevention, early warning and conflict resolution. This is a major paradigm shift that will require political will and commitment. In Istanbul, world leaders pledged to take this path by enhancing international co-ordination to address the root causes of conflicts and strengthening political leadership on mediation and conflict prevention.
- We need strong support and better understanding of the importance of these efforts. We need to strengthen the effectiveness of conflict prevention and mediation as a key part of it. And, I agree with previous speakers, we need to make an effort to better communicate our success in preventing conflicts.
- Regional organizations can play a critical role in supporting these endeavours. This role is recognized in the new resolution on mediation that will be on the agenda of the UNGA during this session. I commend the co-chairs of the Group of Friends of Mediation for their leadership in the negotiation process.
- Regional arrangements like the OSCE are well placed to alert their members and the international community to emerging crises, and to take concrete actions when there is agreement among their membership. Drawing on their wealth of regional expertise and knowledge, ROs can ensure the accurate and timely flow of information and analyses in emerging conflicts.
- Regional arrangements can also play a critical role in addressing the structural root causes of conflict and preventing the re-emergence of conflict. For its part, the OSCE is making sure that our post-conflict rehabilitation efforts are comprehensive, systematic and sustainable. We take every opportunity to increase involvement of civil society and peace constituents, including women, youth, and faith-based groups, in conflict resolution and peace building activities.

- Preventive diplomacy by regional organizations must be grounded in enhanced capacities. The OSCE has been steadfast in its commitment to develop a systematic mediation-support capacity in recent years. A Mediation Support Unit is in place and fully functional. It has provided valuable support to our operations in Ukraine, including mediation coaching and targeted support on cease-fire mediation.
- An OSCE Group of Friends of Mediation has also been created through a joint initiative of Finland, Turkey, and Switzerland. It provides political support for OSCE mediation activities, and fosters forward-looking discussions on relevant topics in Vienna. The alignment of this Group of Friends with the UN Group of Friends has promoted useful synergies between the OSCE and the UN.
- I would like to highlight our solid partnership and co-operation with the UN in this area. We just updated our Joint Work Plan with the UNDP Mediation Support Unit and reaffirmed our co-operation on in the areas of training, operational guidance, and operational support. Although less formalized, we have similar working relationships with the European External Action Service's Mediation Support Team.
- Effective conflict prevention and resolution requires building strong coalitions among relevant actors within the international community and also developing public-private partnerships.
- I have long advocated the establishment of a co-ordination mechanism for international organizations at the Secretariat level to operationalize co-operation, including in the field of conflict prevention and resolution. I support the UN initiative to convene a "World Prevention Forum" by 2020 aimed at identifying how the international community can work more effectively together by capturing, consolidating and sharing good practices and lessons learned.
- We need to draw more on your expertise, such as the UN Standby Team of Mediation Experts. You have an extensive know-how in setting up and maintaining complex missions in very critical situations that the OSCE could benefit from. We should both be able to pick up the phone and ask each other for advice in a rather informal, operational way.
- We also look to the UN for continued exchange of mediation tools, practices and trainings as we strive to enhance effective mediation in the OSCE area.