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*Mediation for peace*

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F O R U M

*papers*

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*Effectively supporting  
mediation:*

*Developments,  
challenges and  
requirements*

*Stine Lehmann-Larsen*

**Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue**

114, rue de Lausanne

1202 Geneva

Switzerland

t: +41 22 908 11 30

f: +41 22 908 11 40

[info@hdcentre.org](mailto:info@hdcentre.org)

[www.hdcentre.org](http://www.hdcentre.org)

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# Introduction

Since the 1990s, mediation has addressed or ended a broad range of conflicts. The 2012 *Peace Process Yearbook* suggests that about 80 per cent of armed conflicts in the past 20 years came to an end through a peace agreement. In 2011, the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on mediation recognised the use of mediation ‘as a promising and cost-effective tool in the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflict prevention and resolution’. Most policy makers, scholars and practitioners concur that mediation can help prevent disputes from escalating, help conflict parties reach a sustainable settlement, encourage long-term reform, and help structure post-conflict peacebuilding.<sup>2</sup>

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“Although the demand for United Nations mediation has skyrocketed in the past 10 years, resources devoted to this function have remained minimal.”

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While recognition of the benefits and potential of mediation has grown, so have the challenges. They include a rapid proliferation of mediators, growing involvement of regional organisations in peace processes, the increasing involvement of individual states, and increasingly more complex and demanding mediation processes. Consequently, the United Nations (UN) and other practitioners have found that peace processes require substantial professional support to be effective:

‘Mediators and negotiators need adequate support. Although the demand for United Nations mediation has skyrocketed in the past 10 years, resources devoted to this function have remained minimal.’<sup>3</sup>

This realisation has led to the establishment of mediation support units within the UN and the European Union (EU). The African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are in the process of building similar units, while non-governmental organisations (NGOs) like the HD Centre have already established them.

These units provide support including expertise on issues central to negotiations, training and building the capacity of institutions, and direct support to mediators and their teams.

This paper examines what mediation support entails and how it can be improved. It seeks to raise awareness of the benefits of mediation support and how to integrate this support with operational processes. The overall aim is to contribute to the development of mediation support, and ultimately to more effective mediation processes.

Thus, this paper argues in favour of strengthened international capacities to support mediation and provides analysis on how mediation is effectively supported. It acknowledges that mediation is a complicated and difficult endeavour whose outcomes are dependent on a wide number of variables. While mediation can benefit from appropriate support structures, no support on its own can guarantee a sustainable outcome.

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# Mediation support and its emergence

Mediation support can be defined as ‘activities that assist and improve mediation practices, e.g. training activities, developing guidance, carrying out research, working on policy issues, offering consultation, backstopping ongoing mediation processes, networking and engaging with parties’.<sup>4</sup>

It builds capacity of mediation staff as well as conflict parties; provides analytical resources to enable learning from previous experience; builds on networks for sharing ideas and insights; and provides on-site support and day-to-day management of the process and parties.<sup>5</sup> Box 1 offers more details.

## Box 1: Four parts of mediation support

Mediation support can entail any (or usually several) of the following:

1. *Operational support*, which includes **direct support through field deployment** such as on-site thematic and process-orientated expertise, day-to-day management of the process and parties, and logistic support and flexible resource management; substantive desk support such as process design and problem-solving workshops, briefings, research and analysis; as well as support activities including confidence building and technical support to the parties.
2. *Institutional capacity building and training*, which involve **capacity building** such as establishing clear decision-making, planning and coordination procedures, briefings, training curricula design, and access to expert networks and human resources; and training and skills enhancement, including training of mid- and high-level mediators and field and HQ support staff.
3. *Knowledge management and research*, where **knowledge management** entails accumulating, managing and disseminating comparative knowledge or substantive issues on mediation processes; and research refers to both tailor-made, process-specific research such as conflict briefs and stakeholder analysis, and additional research relevant to the field.
4. *Networking and experience-sharing*, which enforce positive relationships and allow mediators to share and discuss their experiences.

Different types of organisations offer mediation support services, involving governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental actors. Governmental mediation support actors include state-supported entities, integrally linked to governments but also offering support to other actors. The inter-governmental actors include the UN and a few in-house mediation support structures recently created, or being created, within regional organisations engaged in mediation. Such in-house mediation support structures are usually focused on providing support to the mediation work of their own institutions. But the UN, for example, is also providing substantial support to other actors through the UN Standby Team and its rosters, including to other inter-governmental actors, governments and non-governmental actors. Non-governmental mediation support actors are involved in mediation, peacemaking and peacebuilding, and support and enhance both their own mediation initiatives and those of external actors.<sup>7</sup>

The ‘clients’ of mediation support are all types of mediators – NGOs and private individuals, the UN, other regional organisations, and states. Demand usually meets supply on the basis of previous partnerships and recommendations by prominent mediators. For example, the UN is usually supported by its own mediation support structures, NGO friends of the Department for Political Affairs (e.g. the Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum and the International Center for Transitional Justice), and on the basis of past experience and recommendations.

The UN has been at the forefront of developing and strengthening the mediation field, through discussions and by implementing standing capacities for the international community to develop, and by assisting regional organisations in strengthening their internal mediation capacities.

The UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) initiated some of the earliest structured work to support mediation effectively, establish an institutional memory, and open avenues for further training and capacity building in the UN. In the past decade, UNITAR has held annual seminars for Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs) in collaboration with the International Peace Institute (IPI) and has produced internal learning materials based on in-depth interviews with SRSGs.<sup>8</sup>

The publication of the report of the UN High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change in 2004 further prompted the mediation community to discuss the professionalisation of mediation efforts.<sup>9</sup> The report outlined the need for the

UN to offer 'more consistent and professional mediation support', which the 2009 report of the UN Secretary-General, *Enhancing Mediation and its Support Activities*, strongly echoed.

Such acknowledgement led major mediation actors to establish internal mediation support structures and mechanisms, starting with the UN Mediation Support Unit (MSU) created in the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) in 2006-07.<sup>10</sup> Soon thereafter, DPA established the UN Standby Team of Mediation Experts to assist and support the UN and its partners' mediation endeavours in the field.<sup>11</sup> The Standby Team consists of six to eight recognised experts on a range of issues arising frequently in peace talks, such as power-sharing, process design, security arrangements, constitutions, natural resources and gender and social inclusion. It has been broadly used and its services cited as 'among the most useful services within the UN'.<sup>12</sup>

In June 2011, the UN General Assembly adopted a consensus resolution to strengthen the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflict prevention and resolution (Resolution 65/283).<sup>13</sup> That same resolution stresses the importance of well-trained, impartial, experienced and geographically diverse mediation process and substance experts to ensure timely and highest-quality support to mediation efforts.<sup>14</sup>

The UN has also begun assisting regional organisations such as the AU, the ECOWAS, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the EU to strengthen their internal mediation capacities. This emphasis on building institutional capacity of regional organisations (in line with recommendations of the UN General Assembly in 2011<sup>15</sup>) partly led to a new trend within regional organisations to initiate mediation support mechanisms for these organisations.

In 2008, a small global network of organisations supporting mediators (mainly NGOs) was created. The Mediation Support Network (MSN) gathered mediation support actors to exchange knowledge and coordinate activities.<sup>16</sup> The Network gathers organisations involved in supporting mediation, and is currently expanding its membership to include more actors from the global South.<sup>17</sup> The Network looks at thematic issues and challenges to mediation support activities and attempts to strengthen coordination among members.<sup>18</sup> The MSN has contributed to the UN's policy making, including to the UN Guidance for Effective Mediation,<sup>19</sup> which was issued as an annex to the report

of the Secretary-General on strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution (A/66/811, 25 June 2012).<sup>20</sup> The increasing number of publications on mediation support activities by the Network, and members' frequent participation in debates and outreach activities involving mediation practitioners, policy makers and scholars, has led to greater awareness of the nature of mediation support and how it can contribute to more effective mediation processes.

The following four sections look at ways in which mediation support mechanisms and activities can benefit the practice of mediation. Each section provides an overview of the four separate yet overlapping categories of mediation support activities: operational support; institutional capacity building and training; knowledge management and research; and networking and experience-sharing. Lastly, each section identifies gaps within mediation support, suggesting which requirements need urgent attention.

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# Operational support

Operational support includes *all support provided to a mediation process*. It involves, but is not limited to, addressing: lack of coordination; inclusion challenges; a stagnated process; lack of preparedness or uneven capacity; and designing and managing the process itself.

Operational support includes three interlinked areas of work – direct support, general support and other support activities.

- a) **Direct support through field deployment**, long- and short-term, through highly skilled staff and experts forming part of the local mediator's team. This can feature:
- *On-site secretarial assistance* to draft reports, take notes and draft agreements; give legal and communications advice; identify thematic issues and experts; and manage logistics, human resources and finance.
  - *Experienced mediation practitioners* to provide advice and guidance to the mediator and team; design the process; assess the strategy; and identify thematic concerns.
  - *Technical experts*, for example in power-sharing, constitution-making, security transformation processes, resource-sharing, land reform, or civil society inclusion, to address thematic concerns depending on the needs of the process and the issues being discussed by the negotiating parties.
- b) **Substantive desk support to the peace process**. This type of short-term, periodic support is provided both on- and off-site by desk officers, political analysts and mediation support staff. General support can include:
- *Process design*, including thinking through of the strategy; ensuring inclusion of parties and coordination mechanisms; and securing a venue and support team. As the process evolves, the design can comprise *problem-solving workshops*, such as review/stocktaking sessions on ongoing processes.
  - *Briefings* on context, substance and previous and ongoing processes to mediators, experts/advisers, on-site support teams, partners and others joining the process.
  - *Research and analysis* of past and current issues, either context-specific or thematic.
  - *The injection of substantive knowledge*, such as on power-sharing or gender issues, or how to deal with amnesty versus transitional justice. This

can be done through either workshops or experts joining the team regularly.

- c) **Support activities** to strengthen the parties' involvement in the process, such as:<sup>21</sup>
- *Confidence-building exercises for the parties* (before or during the process), to mitigate concerns, mistrust and animosity.
  - *Technical support to parties*, including skills training and training on the substantive issues of the process; clarifying what negotiations are about; providing information and knowledge on the context and parties involved; introducing new ideas through strategy development; and defining a negotiation approach.

## EXAMPLES OF OPERATIONAL MEDIATION SUPPORT

Mediators have increasingly taken advantage of available operational support options. An example of *direct support through deployment* was that provided to Kofi Annan in Kenya. Following the 2007–08 electoral crisis, the AU-mandated Panel of Eminent African Personalities was deployed. Mr Annan brought in staff from the AU, UN and HD Centre to address the need for secretarial and managerial support as well as expertise and advice. This provided support quickly – and seamlessly – under the banner of the Panel, circumventing many bureaucratic constraints. The support included seconding staff and experts; providing logistical and technical assistance to the secretariat; preparing tools to facilitate the discussions; and formulating agreements on the political issues of the crisis. The joint team also provided advice and support to the Panel on substantive and practical issues.

The 2007–08 Kenya process is a textbook example of support coordination among stakeholders. This can be credited to Mr Annan's convening power and authority. However, qualified mid-level mediators and advisers were also well placed to provide insight on how to coordinate the involvement of external actors, through extensive networks, broad experience with different actors and knowledge of previous coordination.

The Central African Republic (CAR) is another example of *direct support through deployment*. Following the request of the UN SRSG, the UN MSU provided expert assistance during the Inclusive Political Dialogue (*Dialogue Politique Inclusif*) in December 2008. The MSU worked with

personnel drawn from the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, HD Centre and UN CAR Peace-building Office (BONUCA). The team advised former Burundian President Pierre Buyoya, who chaired the Dialogue, with feedback on how to structure and lead the process, perceptions of the dynamics of the dialogue, potential obstacles and thematic inputs related to security-sector reform. Team members drafted and edited documents, offered suggestions on substance or process when necessary, and reported on progress and stalemates to President Buyoya.

The UN's support to the Yemeni political transition has also benefitted from direct mediation support. Experts on peace-process design, national dialogue, federalism and constitution-making issues contributed to the work of the UN Secretary-General Special Adviser on Yemen. The MSU and its Standby Team and the HD Centre contributed some of the expertise, in addition to experts hired by the team of the Office of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General.

In 2011, the UN MSU provided *substantive desk support* to the SRSG to Libya, addressing the immediate and long-term needs of the SRSG (defined as two weeks and three months, respectively). The work was conducted in New York due to the difficult situation in Libya. Consequently, the MSU had to rely on outside sources to assess the situation. The package included several road maps, stakeholder analyses, scenario planning and concept notes on what mediation could look like in the different scenarios. The process included the MSU desk officer and the entire Standby Team (SBT), plus experts from other UN departments to help frame the strategy.

*Substantive desk support* can include assessing progress and reviewing strategic and operational plans. If teams can reflect on the process, identify opportunities for learning, anticipate challenges and document lessons to share with the rest of the organisation, linked and other mediation processes can benefit. Such sessions can be internal or allow for outside advice and experiences. If undertaken in a spirit of openness and learning, reviews can contribute to capturing lessons and team building.

*Support activities* include activities designed to respond to challenges of the capabilities of the parties. One significant challenge when entering a process is ensuring that the parties are ready. Through preparation of the parties, support activities can build their confidence and knowledge of the process they are about to enter. This work often involves an external support team under close supervision of the mediator.

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## Support activities can prevent serious imbalances between the parties in terms of skills and knowledge, and help them negotiate a mutually acceptable agreement.

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Parties are more likely to engage in dialogue if they understand and have confidence in the process. Support activities can prevent serious imbalances between the parties in terms of skills and knowledge, and help them negotiate a mutually acceptable agreement. They can help the parties deal with obstacles to negotiation, build their confidence, and improve the structure and execution of the process.<sup>22</sup>

The MSP (together with the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs) has a longstanding record of this type of support. Its experience includes training participants in the political dialogue process in the Central African Republic; training Darfur movements on skills, topics and elements of process analysis; and skills-enhancement workshops with stakeholders in Gaza.<sup>23</sup>

*Support activities* to strengthen the parties' involvement in the process has also been a major aspect of the HD Centre's work in the Philippines, where it supports the peace process between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Since 2007, the HD Centre has contributed to establishing an International Contact Group,<sup>24</sup> and has facilitated groups of eminent persons to support the peace process.

In 2008, the parties and the Malaysian facilitator believed that the process needed support on substantive and process issues<sup>25</sup> and agreed that the HD Centre should invite experts, mediators and negotiators to contribute during 2008 through 2010. These individuals included prime ministers and leaders of non-state groups from South Africa, Indonesia, Northern Ireland, Great Britain, Sudan, New Zealand, Canada, Spain, Zimbabwe, the Palestinian Territories and Peru.

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The interest of the parties in engaging with the visiting experts was significant; they repeatedly stated that interacting with others who had experienced long, demanding and contentious peace processes was a source of inspiration. The activities centred on controversial issues of the MILF peace process, and learning about successful peace processes in other countries helped participants to re-start the stalled process in the Philippines. The stakeholders are now better prepared and more confident, and they are more comfortable with taking risks.<sup>26</sup> Consistent efforts, together with other activities, led to a breakthrough in the talks in 2012.

Many other examples can be cited of how operational mediation support has contributed to the work of mediators, as mediation supporters now have considerable experience in designing and implementing such activities. However, scope remains for creative approaches to support ongoing peace processes, as the demand for mediation support activities by mediation teams is continuously increasing.

### CHALLENGES TO OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

When mediation support activities were first introduced, senior practitioners, member states and intergovernmental officials were generally sceptical about their usefulness. Mediation-support actors had to spend time building confidence in their services and value. There is now increasing awareness of the value of mediation support, and the number of requests for mediation-support actors is increasing.

Trust is a main requirement for those working in peace processes and an essential ingredient in effective mediation support. Mediators work on life-and-death issues, and face confidentiality constraints; therefore, mediators must work with people they trust. Mediators might face difficulties establishing cohesion in their teams, which they often inherit or are assigned. This does not help to build trust within a team, a reason why mediators might prefer working with people they already know. This affects the mediation support and requires time to earn trust. The balance between offering advice and accepting that the mediation team has the lead, while making sure that good advice is heeded, is a difficult one which can lead to the lack of trust. Absence of trust will limit the number of potential support actors, and might result in *mediation support becoming an exclusive club*.

While appreciating the benefits of support, mediators might prefer lean operations and minimal bureaucracy. Mediation support should be quick, flexible and accessible – whether in staff, activities or knowledge injection.<sup>27</sup> Addressing bureaucracy in the UN and regional organisations is beyond the scope of this paper, but hiring procedures often do not match operational requirements, which external mediation support could prevent at the beginning of a process.

With the support of the Norwegian Refugee Council, the UN has countered the problem of excessive bureaucracy by establishing the SBT, and associated rosters of mediators and mediation experts. The rosters attempt to address the challenge of including more women in peacemaking efforts. At least in some cases, this has led to the ability to deploy one or more highly skilled mediation experts rapidly and at short notice. However, the MSU still lacks sufficient staff to manage the SBT and ensure well-prepared deployments.<sup>28</sup>

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## A challenge to mediation support is providing support to conflict parties while remaining non-partisan and not compromising integrity and impartiality.

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Another challenge to mediation support is *providing support to conflict parties while remaining non-partisan and not compromising integrity and impartiality*. Some external critics highlight certain pitfalls of providing support to conflict parties. If the mediation support actor is not neutral, it can lead to an endorsement of the conflict party's stance, and the mediation support actor could potentially be perceived as advocating the party's interests instead of an impartial settlement. Such mediation support efforts can undermine the efforts of international organisations to negotiate with the conflict party. Thus, it is important for mediation support actors to adhere to both the 'do no harm' principle and the principle of impartiality to avoid the unintended negative effects of siding with one party (or being perceived to do so).

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## WAY FORWARD

The demand for operational support to mediation processes is rising. However, there are two areas still to be fully explored, as outlined below.

*Support to national and local mediators:* Using ‘insider mediators’ or ‘local mediators’ to support locally driven and managed dispute-resolution activities is one of the oldest means of mediating. For centuries, community Elders and respected local scholars have dealt with conflicts in their own communities, cities, countries and regions.<sup>29</sup> Mediation support actors are increasingly realising the value of supporting local mediation efforts on a national scale.<sup>30</sup> International support to local mediation efforts may help to build confidence, technical expertise, capacity and relevance of local traditional actors and mechanisms. This can enable local dispute-resolution processes to link more effectively with national authorities or international organisations, complement wider state-based processes, and reduce risks that local disputes will escalate state fragility or contribute to exacerbation of national conflicts. As mediation-support actors are increasing their awareness of and support to insider mediators, a coherent and self-critical do-no-harm approach to building the capacity of insider mediators is required.

In recognition of this gap and to support local and nationally-owned processes, the HD Centre provided in 2011–12 direct technical support to the Kenyan National Cohesion and Integration Commission as the convener of a peace process between Kikuyu and Kalenjin Elders in the Rift Valley. Through dialogue between 80 Elders, the Commission successfully addressed the animosity between the two communities, whose armed elements constitute many of the militias involved in the 2007–08 violence.<sup>31</sup>

*Support to armed groups:* During the past decade, organisations like the Berghof Foundation for Peace Support, the HD Centre, Conciliation Resources, the Conflict Management Initiative and MSP have prepared parties for negotiation through training and workshops as described above. However, such support to armed groups or intending to engage in explorative peace talks with them poses a range of challenges. For instance, the US Supreme Court ruling (‘Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project’) criminalising support to groups listed as terrorist organisations, even if that support is designed to end violence, makes it difficult for mediation-support actors to prepare such parties for effective participation in

peace processes.<sup>32</sup> For mediation support to reach its full potential, the mediation community must seek alternative ways to prepare for negotiation those proscribed groups that are genuinely interested in engaging in dialogue.

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# Institutional capacity building and training

In the past few years, there has been an effort to build the standing capacities of institutions in responding, managing and supporting crises. A standing capacity strengthens the response and ensures that time is not lost on preparation. This has led to the set-up of institutional support mechanisms within regional organisations to provide access to expertise; improve coordination among actors and stakeholders and within the organisation; ensure systematic management of mediation processes; and enable the mediating actors to plan for long-term involvement.

Mediation support actors have been backing this process through capacity building and training programmes, which can be divided into two sub-categories:

- a) **Capacity-building** activities focused on enhancing institutional support mechanisms include:
  - *rosters of mediators, support staff and experts*
  - *standard operating procedures* (both internal and associated with external relations with partner organisations) to streamline management across the institution
  - *templates for strategic and operational mediation plans*
  - *training curricula*
  - *procedures for briefing and debriefing mediators and mediation teams*
  - *communication and logistical systems*
  - *human resources.*
- b) **Training and skills enhancement** are provided on an institutional and individual level for:
  - *practitioners and mediators* (high- and mid-level)
  - *support staff (field and HQ) and experts.*

## SYSTEMATISING REGIONAL PEACEMAKING EFFORTS

Following the UN MSU precedent, regional organisations are now in various stages of setting up institutional support mechanisms – either through specific units, as in the UN system, or with the capacity integrated within existing divisions. The process is demanding; few regional organisations are able to carry it out on their own. The lack of human resources to manage the efforts means that other organisations often support the capacity-building process.

The 2009–11 ‘Plan of Action to Build the AU’s Mediation Capacity’ emphasised that mediation should be seen as ‘a

specialised endeavour encompassing a body of knowledge and a set of strategies, tactics, skills and techniques’. The AU stressed the need for specific measures to support its mediation efforts. In response, the UN plus four non-governmental mediation support actors joined forces to strengthen the AU’s mediation capacity through an AU Partner Group. Among the outputs are a training curriculum on engaging in mediation, finalising mediation and communicating agreements, and evaluating mediation processes, developed by the AU in collaboration with South African ACCORD and Finnish CMI.

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Similarly, in February 2010, the ECOWAS Commission decided to establish a Mediation Facilitation Division, to support its efforts in mediation and shuttle diplomacy and to serve as a resource for documenting and sharing best practices within the organisation. ECOWAS has developed a three-year strategy outlining key activities, targets and resources required for an effective Mediation Facilitation Division to provide technical expertise and operational support to ECOWAS mediation efforts.<sup>36</sup> Terms of reference for new staff members have been drawn up and interviews are taking place.

Similar initiatives are being discussed in the SADC and in the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Recently, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), through its Conflict Prevention Centre<sup>37</sup>, significantly increased its expertise on mediation support. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is looking at past, present and potential roles in conflict prevention and resolution, as well as its capacity to undertake them.<sup>38</sup>

Two regional organisations that have made substantial progress are the EU and the Organization of American States (OAS). The EU has established the European External Action Service (EEAS) Mediation Support Team (MST). Its mandate includes providing operational support to mediation and dialogue initiatives, assessing lessons learned, identifying best practices, and developing guidelines for EU practice in mediation.<sup>39</sup> Since the start of activities in late 2011, the team has supported work on a range of countries and regions including Mali, Myanmar, Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan, the South Caucasus, Central Asia, the Western Balkans, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Nigeria and Central America.<sup>40</sup>

The Commission is further strengthening and expanding support to third parties by the EEAS Mediation Support Team. In January 2014, the EU Commission initiated a project to facilitate EU support to third parties engaged in mediation and dialogue at the international, regional or local levels. Activities include technical assistance and training, and organising meetings and seminars. The project 'Technical assistance to European resources for mediation support' (ERMES) is implemented by a consortium of non-governmental mediation support actors.<sup>41</sup>

In 2010, the OAS Department of Sustainable Democracy and Special Missions of the Secretariat for Political Affairs launched a process to strengthen its in-house mediation capacity, as well as its support to member states. Two staff members work full time on developing mediation-support tools for the OAS General Secretariat; documenting lessons learned from past OAS experience in mediation and peacebuilding; organising mediation training opportunities for officials of the General Secretariat and of member states; strengthening relations with other organisations specialising in mediation; and identifying mediation resources and needs in member states. The team also develops country-specific projects to strengthen institutional capacity for preventing, managing and peacefully resolving conflicts.

### CHALLENGES TO CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING

Interesting initiatives within regional organisations continue to emerge, and many organisations have increased their mediation support capacities by thinking creatively. However, the current capacity of especially African organisations is still disproportionate to the rapidly increasing demand for

peaceful solutions to the continent's conflicts. The capacity-building processes within organisations like the African Union, ECOWAS, SADC and IGAD continue to be severely challenged by the lack of human resources. *Access to sufficient and qualified personnel* is one of the biggest challenges of providing effective support to mediation in general, but this is a recurrent issue within regional organisations. Member states are not always comfortable with their organisation developing new capacities, as it might be perceived as a threat to their sovereignty. In some cases, this has hampered the approval of the new structures, including staffing plans. Consequently, some AU special envoys find themselves running political missions with limited HQ support and difficulties in ensuring optimum field staff: Burundi, Chad and the Comoros are examples.

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## Access to sufficient and qualified personnel is one of the biggest challenges of providing effective support to mediation.

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In 2010, the AU Conflict Management Division commissioned an assessment of the AU Liaison Offices (AULOs). The confidential report raised concerns about the capacity of selected political missions, especially in comparison to their mandates. While assessing the reason for a lack of staff in the AULOs is beyond the scope of this paper, inadequate support remains a frequent problem. Mediation-support mechanisms are intended to prevent situations in which a mediator is left alone to manage the entire process. However, until the lack of human resources is addressed, mediation support structures will remain absent or inadequate. This begs the question of whether member states are interested in strengthening the capacity of their regional bodies.

Secretariats are largely focused on addressing ongoing crises and therefore do not have the *time and ability to build capacity*. Regional organisations are overburdened with increasing demands and often, when conflicts erupt, have no alternative but to respond. One example is the stalled process from 2010 until the end of 2012 of establishing a Mediation Facilitation Division in ECOWAS while the Commission was coping with electoral crises in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Senegal, and constitutional crises in Mali and Guinea-Bissau.

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The UN suffers from high staff rotation, which further hinders the build-up of expertise. The current rotation of experts on the UN MSU Standby Team, among others, is too frequent (in principle, every 12 months with the possibility of extending), which makes it impossible to build up expertise. Longer-term employment of mediation support staff would develop the experience and expertise required for effective mediation and mediation support.

The secretariats of AU, IGAD, SADC, ECOWAS and to some extent the UN are understaffed and overstretched. *The question is whether the mediation-support structure is needed in each organisation and for what purpose.* A mediation support unit requires management capacity, but also a mandate. Therefore, it could be argued that, if the peace and security department of an organisation does not have sufficient structure, resources, direction and mandate, a mediation support unit would not be appropriate before the organisation possesses (a) capacity to manage the unit; and (b) a clear and coherent vision of the functions of the unit. Instead, the organisation could focus on building the capacity of existing units.

This highlights the *need for systematic and sustained coordination to exchange information on challenges and appropriate responses.* Despite increasing demand, several mediation-support actors often end up working on the same topics or processes, causing duplication and competition. Few coordination mechanisms existed before the MSN was created in 2008. Also in 2008, the AU and UN were struggling with NGOs working with the AU to strengthen the organisation's institutional mediation capacity. In response, the AU Partner Group was established, and all activities were included in one joint work programme. This helped the AU identify a strategic plan for AU mediation support capacity and can be identified as a clear case of good practice.

A recurrent issue that challenges training and skills enhancement is the fundamental question of *'training for whom in what?'* This issue relates to whether mediation can be taught, adding to the challenge of a capacity-building needs assessment for each regional organisation. Some argue that traditional training does not apply to mediation; others argue for the need for several years of in-depth training. While classroom skills development (such as participatory case-driven simulation exercises) is not to be dismissed, mediation has to be practised and experienced. Thus, the needs differ between mediators, senior advisers and experts, and support staff.

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## While classroom skills development is not to be dismissed, mediation has to be practised and experienced.

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While the challenge of enhancing the skills of senior mediators is addressed below, those who need training in mediation skills are experienced mid-level to senior advisers and experts in a mediation team (e.g. members of the SBT). As stated in a recent evaluation of the SBT: 'Although highly skilled professionals, some members of the SBT [have] neither been exposed to mediation processes nor have they received mediation training.'<sup>42</sup> Such training ought to consider alternative ways of teaching mediation techniques, and should abandon the 'how to' approach and reliance on economic and civil mediation techniques, since such mediation takes place in vastly different and less challenging circumstances. Training courses should involve direct practical learning experiences and a 'learning by doing' approach such as mentoring.

Institutions and practitioners lament the dearth of veteran envoys and mediators, as well as high-quality support staff and experts, who can be speedily deployed. *Developing rosters* can improve the ability of institutions to identify mediators with the required seniority and expertise. However, mediation-support services have not yet found an efficient method of managing rosters. The international community is struggling to identify qualified people systematically, and to ensure they are available at short notice, thus leaving no way around costly retainers. Mid-level diplomats, experts and advisers (including women) need to be coached for mediation processes and enabled to join the ranks. An argument against rosters is that high-quality experts cannot be expected to be available without a long-term employment guarantee. The UN and the AU are considering these and other questions as they develop rosters. Both organisations are paying particular attention to identifying suitable female mediators.

### WAY FORWARD

International institutional frameworks to support mediation are in the early stages of development, and significant

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challenges remain. Even with maximum support and encouragement from the international community, the capacity-building processes will remain complex and slow, and should be expected to last at least a decade.

As regional organisations increase their role in mediation, their need for capacity also increases. Regional organisations must keep addressing serious challenges in human, financial, technical, administrative and management capacity. They can test new approaches, such as the following.

*Capacity building for governments active in regional peacemaking:* States close to conflict areas can be influential peacemakers, and routinely collaborate with regional and sub-regional organisations. However, few do so systematically with adequate resources and support. Both the Report of the Secretary-General and the 2011 Resolution of the General Assembly underline the need to strengthen member states' mediation capacity by encouraging them 'to develop national mediation capacities... to ensure coherent mediation and responsiveness'.<sup>43</sup> Some governments have begun prioritising the development of specialist capacities to support mediation. An increased effort by mediation-support actors to assist this process would be welcome.

*Skills enhancement for mediators:* Senior mediators (politicians, Elders, and other high-ranking officials and diplomats) may not have the time or interest to attend trainings. It is vital to ensure that senior mediators are deployed with adequate briefing and sufficient knowledge of the context in which they are expected to work. Some may also lack the mediation and interpersonal skills required, and understanding of the different mediation options available. The UN and regional organisations are beginning to address this gap through seminars for special envoys, but the needs remain considerable and challenging. To develop mediators' skills, creative new methods are needed. Based on the HD Centre's experience, they could include: *Learning from peers* – a methodology useful when mediators or officials are interested in hearing from equally senior practitioners; *learning from past experiences* – applied when an organisation or group wishes to establish or enhance an internal learning process; *comparative analysis* – a technique useful in sensitive environments with participants less open to training;<sup>44</sup> and *in-depth pre- and post-deployment debriefings*, which can encourage self-evaluation and help mediators to enhance their skills.

An alternative skills-enhancement technique focuses on thematic knowledge: different techniques to use alone or in conjunction with one of the above activities. It could include short presentations of tools, techniques and practical approaches, interactive strategic discussions on relevant thematic topics, and story-telling. The UN Department of Political Affairs is conducting a high-level seminar on Gender and Inclusive Peace Processes offered to special envoys, senior mediators and their teams. Similarly, the AU Commission recently organised with the HD Centre a seminar for the AU Sahel team on strategic options for broadening participation, transitional justice and negotiating with armed groups. This sort of thematic training seems to resonate with both senior mediators and their teams.

*Mentoring and appropriate training of junior or mid-level staff:* Mediation support staff members often lack practical experience in peace processes.<sup>45</sup> A range of NGOs and training institutes offer training in mediation and negotiation skills that is usually attended by junior or mid-level personnel working in a supporting role. While most trainees may never conduct actual mediation, they are likely to provide support to a mediator. Therefore, rather than receiving a crash course in mediation skills, they might benefit from training in support activities, operational planning, best practices or the broader context of peace processes (long-term economic and political development) to gain a comprehensive understanding. Further, institutional training is required, specifically tailored for staff and focused on the institution's modus operandi. In addition, development of on-the-job practical training for support staff at all levels is vital. Senior mediators suggest that professionalisation should include process-related as well as technical expertise.<sup>46</sup> Mentoring opportunities – currently inadequate or absent – could address this. The hands-on nature of peacemaking makes it difficult for young professionals to learn mediation skills through short courses, desk-officer jobs or reviewing written material. More experienced mediators often express interest in developing mentoring and in-depth training programmes. One way to improve opportunities for mentoring would be experience-sharing retreats and workshops, where participants include entry- and mid-level professionals as well as senior peacemakers. Interested senior mediators could be identified and paired in a mentoring process with young professionals. In addition, members of the chief mediator's team could less formally mentor younger support staff.

# Knowledge management and research

The UN Secretary-General has noted: ‘Although we have learned many lessons, there has been insufficient effort to capture, organise and pass these on to future mediators.’<sup>47</sup> Given this, mediation support *aims to make better use of the vast experience and knowledge available*. Knowledge management and research can be divided into two sub-categories:

a) **Knowledge management and related activities** include the accumulation, management and dissemination of knowledge on the profession of mediation and about mediation processes or substantive issues for mediation. In an ideal scenario (with no human resource restraints), such activities could include:

- *briefings* of newly appointed staff
- *debriefings, lessons-learned exercises, evaluations and case studies* of finalised processes
- *dissemination of best practices* through guidance notes, guidelines, lessons-learned reports and other publications.

In the knowledge management cycle, lessons are not left unrecorded but made use of repeatedly. Activities share experiences and foster internal learning, including collecting material (for example, by a political analyst or desk officer) to document the process; after-action activities (i.e. a review, a debriefing and/or an evaluation) to collect and file the entire experience; analysing and digesting the mediation experience to identify relevant lessons, recommendations and best practices for future processes; storing knowledge for future use and developing learning material (briefing and training materials, guidance notes, guidelines and procedures); and disseminating accumulated lessons which are fed into new and ongoing processes.<sup>48</sup>

b) **Research** related to mediation support can be:

- conducted *independently of a specific process* (i.e. on how to assess and evaluate success and effectiveness)
- *tailor-made* or provided on a needs basis *upon request* from the field. This could include conflict briefs or stakeholder analysis.

Access to research and analysis informs mediation processes and teams, and strengthens mediation actors’ understanding of the context and of their role in the process. It also establishes and preserves institutional memory. However, it is important to strive for brevity. Short and concise learning tools developed by mediation-support

actors help mediators stay informed about past lessons and updated on current political developments. They can also assist mediators in identifying appropriate options relevant to their process.

## SUPPORTING IMPROVED THINKING

The work of Conciliation Resources, the HD Centre, the Swiss Mediation Support Project (MSP) and the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) constitutes encouraging examples of efforts to document best and worst practices, provide mediators and conflict parties with tools, and stimulate improved thinking and practice, involving both *knowledge management and research*.

For example, since 2008 USIP has been publishing its Peacemaker’s Toolkit series, which tackles some of the most challenging process issues, such as managing public information, integrating internal displacement and conducting peacemaking. The MSP is active in both knowledge management and research, having published on insider mediation, confidence building and evaluation of mediation, among other subjects. Conciliation Resources’ *Accord* publication has detailed case and thematic studies, and International Alert designs tailored research, analysis and strategic assessments to improve actors’ understanding of complex conflict situations and to increase the coherence and effectiveness of peace interventions. The HD Centre launched its Mediation Practice Series (MPS) in 2010 – a knowledge management tool providing practical options for mediators. All of this material is highly relevant and broadly used.

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Short and concise learning tools can help mediators stay informed about past lessons and updated on current political developments.

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The African Union Handbook for practitioners on managing peace processes developed by the HD Centre is a three-volume publication which compiles material on key issues that mediators encounter. It contains

up-to-date, user-friendly analysis of recent mediation and peace processes, and examines the main challenges and lessons highlighted by current practice, case studies and reference material.<sup>49</sup> It is intended to assist staff on site as well as in the AU Commission to think through the various demands of the process and benefit from comparative experiences.

*Knowledge management activities* can have alternative aims, such as strengthening strategic thinking and coordination among mediation actors. The AU is organising seminars for its country teams referencing the Handbook mentioned above. Such exercises not only strengthen knowledge of specific thematic issues or existing coordination practices, but also allow partners to reflect on experiences, dilemmas and successes. They provide mediators with the opportunity to share experiences, which also helps in enhancing skills.

### CHALLENGES TO KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND RESEARCH

Many mediation actors, including private actors and regional organisations, dedicate *inadequate resources to recording and learning* from their own experiences. However, for mediation actors to apply best practice systematically, they need to become better at managing the vast knowledge already available.

One of the main criticisms of the growing body of information is that the knowledge management cycle is closed; the lessons identified and emerging best practices are not being properly applied. A *disconnect between analysis and practice* remains widespread, as research practice is not sufficiently implemented. To strengthen institutional memory and ensure continuous internal learning, organisations require holistic and cohesive knowledge-management systems covering: planning; evaluation templates and methods; follow-up on recommendations; briefings and debriefings; and the identification, production and dissemination of materials and training curricula. Only when such systems are in place can learning be institutionalised.

Many members of the MSN have published on mediation issues in the form of guidance notes. In theory, this increases the *risk of duplication*; however, organisations working on similar issues are increasingly communicating to minimise the danger of unnecessary duplication.<sup>50</sup>

### WAY FORWARD

There is considerable innovation in knowledge management and research, but mediation-support actors are still struggling with the question of how best to present material to the mediators and teams. While the field of mediation does not lack guidelines, only a few offer an operational perspective on the mediation process. As a result, reliable, concrete and easily digestible reference material to inform mediators and mid-level staff working in mediation teams or at headquarters remains insufficient. Such material should not prescribe an appropriate practice but should recognise the complexities of mediation and the many possible ways of managing a process. The UN MSU is developing a systematic policy on the management of guidelines. As mentioned above, other organisations (including the HD Centre, MSP and USIP) have recently begun publishing useful, practical mediation tools on substantive and process-related issues.

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# Networking and experience-sharing

Networking and experience-sharing are important – even necessary – for learning among mediators. By providing first-hand access to other actors in the field and experts in conflict resolution, such activities are a valuable source of reliable information and analysis. However, good methodological knowledge (and boldness) is required to avoid networking events becoming self-congratulatory. Due to the underlying learning aspect, this category overlaps with institutional capacity building and training [Section (iv) above].

## A TOOL FOR SUSTAINED LEARNING

In 2009, Pact International, with the support of the HD Centre, organised a retreat for a group of Elders from an African country. The Elders had previously been engaged in mediating electoral disputes. The objective of the retreat was to prepare them for upcoming elections and increase their skills in facilitating dialogue and in supporting a more conducive environment for fair and free elections. However, as the Elders strongly resisted ‘being trained’, the organisers invited peace-process actors from Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and Northern Ireland to discuss their experiences in relation to the Elders’ context. The Elders were enthusiastic and went on to outline a joint plan of action for more constructive involvement in conflict prevention in their country. This activity not only exposed participants to lessons learned from comparative environments, but also provided them with an informal, safe and confidential space where *experiences could be shared* between peers.

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Networking and experience-sharing activities should not be neglected as learning tools, because they create valuable opportunities for improving relationships and bridging hierarchical or institutional divides.

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The above activity was organised with the sole purpose of exposing a group to comparative experiences so they could reflect and learn. Other activities, such as the Oslo forum hosted by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the HD Centre, are events organised for the purpose of networking. The Oslo forum events facilitate an exchange of experiences among senior-level mediators engaged in peace processes, and build a professional network across institutions.<sup>51</sup>

## KEY CHALLENGE AND WAY FORWARD

Networking and experience-sharing activities should not be neglected as learning tools, because they create valuable opportunities for improving relationships and bridging hierarchical or institutional divides. This contributes to the transfer of knowledge and ultimately enhances capacity. Mediation supporters could benefit from making more strategic use of networking and experience-sharing activities.

# Sustainability

Sustainable agreements are the responsibility of all actors involved, including mediation-support actors. Therefore, effective mediation needs to take a long-term approach, linking mediation capacity and support with implementation.

But for a few exceptions,<sup>52</sup> mediators are often criticised for the degree to which they focus on getting a deal signed, and then leave implementation to others. The 'handover' process is usually complex because of the multiple actors involved in implementation and their various requirements and threshold conditions for involvement,<sup>53</sup> such as consistency with international human rights standards and practicability of specified tasks and 'timelines'.<sup>54</sup>

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Scholars and practitioners have pointed out that it is time to adopt a longer-term approach to peace processes, in which an agreement is just one step in a larger political process, and mediation is a constant activity.

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The challenge of applying a long-term approach to a peace process can be less cumbersome if the mediator has access to consultations and early coordination with those involved in peacebuilding. (For example, a World Bank adviser was seconded to the negotiation team in Uganda, albeit in a DDR capacity. Another similar arrangement was set up in the Aceh process in 2002.) There is now consensus that international support for implementation is crucial, and external actors need to sustain their support and remain available for longer than has generally been the case. Thus, external actors need to invest enough to be able to continue mediation through the peacebuilding process.<sup>55</sup>

Increased access to mediation support could have a positive impact on how mediators sustain the ability to view peace processes in a comprehensive manner. Without adequate capacity to plan for and maintain long-term involvement, mediation becomes like fire-fighting, responding to crises rather than building foundations for lasting peace. More

systematic recourse to mediation support should help alleviate this tendency and – in principle – allow for more sustainable peace.

Despite greater focus on how to increase sustainability, most settlements still leave certain issues unsolved – often including basic grievances and root causes of conflict. Some parties may have been left out of the negotiation process, new issues may arise and there may be disputes over the interpretation of the agreement. In addition, continued confidence-building measures between parties are often required. Consequently, there is a heavy burden on those implementing peace agreements.<sup>56</sup>

Scholars and practitioners have pointed out that it is time to adopt a *longer-term approach to peace processes*, in which an agreement is just one step in a larger political process, and mediation is a constant activity. Mediation should focus not only on substantive issues but also on outstanding issues and the implementation of the elements of the agreement.<sup>57</sup>

Mediation-support actors can enable such a shift to longer-term perspectives. They can contribute to a sustained focus on the political requirements of post-agreement contexts. They can also contribute to more systematic practices so that standards and ethics of good mediation apply, while the required flexibility is maintained.

# Concluding remarks

Recent developments indicate a growing awareness of the need for mediation support, including among practitioners. This had led to policy changes in UN resolutions and among regional organisations. The progress made in such a short time allows for an outline of key observations concerning mediation support:

- Effective mediation support enhances the chances of effective mediation.
- Publicly known best practices of mediation support are not available to practitioners. For mediation-support activities to grow in recognition, enhanced advocacy from mediation-support organisations and practitioners would be required, as well as analysis and information about available support options, documenting good practice and sharing lessons beyond organisational boundaries.
- Resorting to mediation support in a peace process does not hamper the flexibility of mediation teams and does not necessarily imply further 'bureaucracy'.

There is still space for growth to ensure that mediation is effectively supported, to raise awareness of the positive impact of mediation support, and to share lessons about mediation-support options and experiences. While success can never be guaranteed, effective well-supported mediation processes offer a better chance of sustainable settlement.

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## Effective mediation support enhances the chances of effective mediation.

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- Access to sufficient and qualified personnel is one of the biggest challenges of providing effective support to mediation in general, but especially within African regional organisations.
  - The mediation-support community should keep exploring additional collaboration arrangements and mechanisms to strengthen coordination and share feedback and lessons with mediation providers.
  - Gaps within mediation support activities remain, such as the need for increased support to local mediation, and the need to address the challenges posed by the criminalisation of mediation support in the context of proscription regimes.
  - Engagement with conflict parties requires strict adherence to do-no-harm and impartiality principles.
  - Mediation-support actors can contribute to a sustained focus on the political requirements of post-agreement contexts.
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## Endnotes

- 1 **Ms Stine Lehmann-Larsen** is Project Manager for the HD Centre's Mediation Support Programme, managing a number of projects supporting various actors in mediation. Her work includes supporting and strengthening the HD Centre's own mediation projects and she is working with the EU Commission, African Union and ECOWAS to strengthen their mediation practice and involvement in dialogues. In particular, she works on mediation around election-related issues. She was part of the HD Centre team supporting the UN's dialogue efforts in the Liberian elections in 2011, and in 2012 she provided support to the Kenyan National Cohesion and Integration Commission's facilitation of an agreement between Kikuyu and Kalenjin Elders in anticipation of the 2013 national elections. Currently, she works on a series of electoral and reform-related dialogues in Guinea-Bissau. Prior to joining the HD Centre in 2008, Stine worked at the Danish Defence Academy, the Danish Institute for International Studies, and the Danish Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York. Her field of experience also includes work for an NGO in Cairo and the set-up of a private international consultancy with offices in Copenhagen and Cairo. She holds an MA in Conflict Resolution from Bradford University (UK) and an MA in International Development from Roskilde University (Denmark).
- 2 For instance, Beardsley et al. (2006) highlight how, in the 1990s, mediation generally led to a 5-times-greater probability of reaching an agreement compared to a non-mediated situation, and a 2.4-times-greater probability of long-term reduction of tensions. Beardsley, Kyle C. et al., 'Mediation style and crisis outcome', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 50, No. 5, 2006, pp.58–86.
- 3 United Nations, *A More Secure World: Our shared responsibility*, Report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (New York: United Nations, 2004), A/59/565, para.102. See also United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG), *Report of the Secretary-General on Enhancing Mediation and its Support Activities* (New York: United Nations, 2009), S/2009/189.
- 4 Mediation Support Network, *Summary of Intent of the Mediation Support Network* (Sandö, 12 February 2010), see <http://mediationsupportnetwork.net/>.
- 5 These activities can also be applied to other types of negotiations and dialogue processes, i.e. ceasefire negotiations, national dialogues, etc.
- 6 Such as the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), the Mediation Support Project established by Swisspeace, the Center for Security Studies, ETH Zurich (CSS-ETH) and the United States Institute for Peace (USIP).
- 7 These include the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies, The Carter Center, Conciliation Resources, the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD Centre).
- 8 For more information on UNITAR's work, see <http://www.unitar.org/>.
- 9 United Nations, *A More Secure World: Our shared responsibility*, Report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (New York: United Nations, 2004), A/59/565, para.102.
- 10 [http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/undpa/mediation\\_support](http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/undpa/mediation_support).
- 11 The Standby Team (SBT) has provided support to a number of peace processes, including those involving the Central African Republic, the Comoros, Darfur, Madagascar and the Philippines. The Norwegian Refugee Council supports the team. The SBT is a hybrid structure managed by the UN Mediation Support Unit and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) which allows for flexible and rapid deployment and provides a degree of autonomy for the experts [Wills, Olivier and Herrberg, Antje, *Evaluation of the Mediation Support Unit Standby Team of Mediation Experts* (Oslo: Norwegian Refugee Council, January 2011), p.10].
- 12 Wills, Olivier and Herrberg, Antje, *Evaluation of the Mediation Support Unit Standby Team of Mediation Experts* (Oslo: Norwegian Refugee Council, January 2011), p.16.
- 13 United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG), *Preventive Diplomacy: Delivering results*, Report of the Secretary-General (New York: United Nations, 2011), S/2011/522, p.6, para.11.
- 14 United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG), *Preventive Diplomacy: Delivering results*, Report of the Secretary-General S/2011/522 (New York: United Nations, 2011), p.4.
- 15 United Nations, *Prevention of Armed Conflict*, General Assembly Resolution (New York: United Nations, 2011), A/65/283, pp.4–5.
- 16 <http://mediationsupportnetwork.net/>.
- 17 The MSN includes most of the active mediation-support actors. It was initiated by the Swiss Mediation Support Project (MSP), a joint venture between CSS-ETH Zurich

and Swisspeace. The additional members of the MSN are ACCORD, the Berghof Foundation for Peace Support, the Carter Center, Conciliation Resources, the Center for Peace Mediation, Centre for Mediation in Africa, CMI, FBA, Foundation for Tolerance International, the HD Centre, the Initiative on Conflict Prevention through Quiet Diplomacy (ICPQD), Nairobi Peace Initiative–Africa, Serapaz, Southeast Asian Conflict Studies Network (SEACSN), the UN MSU, USIP and the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP).

- 18 The MSN's meeting in June 2013 focused on linking high-level international mediation initiatives with local peacebuilding efforts.
- 19 [http://mediationsupportnetwork.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Discussion-Points-2\\_Translating-Mediation-Guidance-into-Practice.pdf](http://mediationsupportnetwork.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Discussion-Points-2_Translating-Mediation-Guidance-into-Practice.pdf).
- 20 <http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/undpa/shared/undpa/pdf/UN%20Guidance%20for%20Effective%20Mediation.pdf>.
- 21 Nathan, Laurie, *Mediation and the African Union's Panel of the Wise*, Discussion Paper 10 (London: Crisis States Research Centre (LSE), 2005).
- 22 Chigas, Diana, 'Unofficial interventions with official actors: parallel negotiation training in violent intrastate conflicts', *International Negotiation*, Vol. 2, 1997, pp.409–436.
- 23 For more information, see <http://peacemediation.ch/tailor-made/> and <http://www.howgaza.org>.
- 24 The ICG comprises four countries – Japan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the UK – and four international NGOs – the Asia Foundation, Conciliation Resources, the HD Centre and Muhammadiyah. It is the first of its kind where NGOs and diplomats work together in a formal and permanent setting. See more at <http://www.c-r.org/featured-work/international-contact-group-mindanao#sthash.DxfnKxvv.dpuf>.
- 25 Substantive issues included constitutional challenges; demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration; power- and resource-sharing; and governance. Process-related issues included confidence-building measures; restarting talks; balancing a confidential process with public involvement; confronting and engaging spoilers; and designing a new architecture for the process involving civil society and the international community.
- 26 Based on conversations with David Gorman.
- 27 United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG), *Preventive Diplomacy: Delivering results*, Report of the Secretary-General (New York: United Nations, 2011), S/2011/522, p.23, para.67.
- 28 Wills, Olivier and Herrberg, Antje, *Evaluation of the Mediation Support Unit Standby Team of Mediation Experts* (Oslo: Norwegian Refugee Council, January 2011), p.9.
- 29 For an elaboration on the role of insider mediators, see Mason, Simon J.A., *Insider Mediators. Exploring their role in informal peace processes* (Berlin: Berghof Foundation for Peace Support, 2009); Smith, Richard and Deely, Scott, *Insider Mediators in Africa: Understanding the contribution of insider mediators to the peaceful resolution of conflicts in Africa*, Summary Report of Phase 1 (Prangins: PeaceNexus Foundation, 26 July 2010).
- 30 Oslo Forum Paper, *Local Conflict and State Fragility: Supporting local mediation in the Philippines, Kenya and Libya* (Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 2013).
- 31 The direct support consisted of drafting and development of a sustainable peace agreement, with a specific focus on implementation mechanisms, and advice to national actors to address the larger grievances in the region as a means of preventing violence during the 2012 national elections.
- 32 Whitfield, Teresa, *Engaging with Armed Groups*, Mediation Practice Series (Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 2010), p.11.
- 33 Nathan, Laurie, *Plan of Action to Build the AU's Mediation Capacity* (Addis Ababa: African Union Seminar, 'Towards a more strategic approach in enhancing the AU mediation capacity', October 2009).
- 34 This included the establishment of mediation-support mechanisms within the AU Commission; training, reviews and evaluations as well as research and analysis; and the establishment of rosters of mediators and thematic experts. Nathan, Laurie, *Plan of Action to Build the AU's Mediation Capacity* (Addis Ababa: African Union Seminar, 'Towards a more strategic approach in enhancing the AU mediation capacity', October 2009).
- 35 ACCORD, CMI, FBA and the HD Centre.
- 36 The activities of the Mediation Facilitation Division include: a) a database of mediators and thematic experts; b) support to national capacities; c) experience-sharing exercises; d) administrative, financial and human resource capacity; e) a resource centre; f) training modules; g) bi-annual exchange programmes.
- 37 The OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) supports the Chairman-in-Office, other OSCE bodies, and OSCE

- field operations specifically on areas of early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.
- 38 A seminar was held at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) on 'The ASEAN Way of Resolving Conflict: Lessons learnt and preparing for the future' in Singapore, 21–22 June 2010; a seminar was held for the EU Special Representatives in Brussels, 27–28 October 2010.
- 39 Council of the European Union: Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities, agreed by PSC on 28 October 2009.
- 40 [http://eeas.europa.eu/cfsp/conflict\\_prevention/docs/2013\\_eu\\_mst\\_factsheet\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/cfsp/conflict_prevention/docs/2013_eu_mst_factsheet_en.pdf).
- 41 ACCORD, Crisis Management Initiative, the HD Centre, International Alert, and Search for Common Ground coordinated a European consultancy firm, Transtec.
- 42 Wills, Olivier and Herrberg, Antje, *Evaluation of the Mediation Support Unit Standby Team of Mediation Experts* (Oslo: Norwegian Refugee Council, January 2011), p.22.
- 43 United Nations, *Prevention of Armed Conflict*, General Assembly Resolution (New York: United Nations, 2011), A/65/283, p.3.
- 44 Lehmann-Larsen, Stine, *How to 'Train' Mediators*, background paper prepared for the 3rd Mediation Support Network meeting, Sandö, 10–11 February (Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 2010).
- 45 Interview with senior mediator, Oslo 2010.
- 46 Discussion at the 2010 Oslo Forum Mediators' Retreat, session 'Professionalisation of Mediation', 16 June 2010.
- 47 United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG), *Report of the Secretary-General on Enhancing Mediation and its Support Activities* (New York: United Nations, 2009), S/2009/189, para.61.
- 48 Mason, Simon J. A. and Siegfried, Matthias, *Debriefing Mediators to Learn from Their Experiences*, Peacemaker's Toolkit (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2010).
- 49 [http://www.hdcentre.org/uploads/tx\\_news/AU-Handbook-Volume-I-Process-related-questions.pdf](http://www.hdcentre.org/uploads/tx_news/AU-Handbook-Volume-I-Process-related-questions.pdf), [http://www.hdcentre.org/uploads/tx\\_news/AU-Handbook-Volume-II-Thematic-Questions.pdf](http://www.hdcentre.org/uploads/tx_news/AU-Handbook-Volume-II-Thematic-Questions.pdf), [http://www.hdcentre.org/uploads/tx\\_news/AU-Handbook-Volume-III-Making-Processes-Inclusive.pdf](http://www.hdcentre.org/uploads/tx_news/AU-Handbook-Volume-III-Making-Processes-Inclusive.pdf).
- 50 Some might argue that duplication can have benefits. Few lessons are identical and mediators and their teams might appreciate different approaches to a thematic challenge from different angles.
- 51 <http://www.osloforum.org>.
- 52 Such as the 1992 Mozambique accords signed in Rome. At the time, UN Special Representative Aldo Ajello remained involved as Head of the Supervisory and Monitoring Commission (CSC) throughout the implementation phase. The CSC was set up to monitor the ceasefire and manage the delicate process of implementing the Rome accords. A later example is that of Kenya, where the Panel of Eminent African Personalities remained politically involved after the signing of the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation agreements in 2008 – both personally and by proxy through a coordination and liaison office set up in Nairobi.
- 53 The author thanks Dr Simon Mason for making this point.
- 54 Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, A/55/305-S/2000/809 (UN, 2000), Annex III, p.54.
- 55 Discussion at an informal meeting organised by the President of the United Nations General Assembly, 9 November 2011; United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG), *Preventive Diplomacy: Delivering results*, Report of the Secretary-General (New York: United Nations, 2011), S/2011/522, p.21, para.57.
- 56 Cousens, Elizabeth, *It Ain't Over 'Till it's Over: What role for mediation in post-agreement contexts?* Oslo Forum background paper (Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 24–27 June 2008).
- 57 Griffiths, Martin and Whitfield, Teresa, *Mediation Ten Years On. Challenges and opportunities for peacemaking* (Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 2010); Papagianni, Katia and Wennmann, Achim, 'Approach Paper on Improved International Support to Peace Processes' commissioned by the International Network on Conflict and Fragility of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2010); United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG), *Report of the Secretary-General on Enhancing Mediation and its Support Activities* (New York: United Nations, 2009), S/2009/189; Cousens, Elizabeth, *It Ain't Over 'Till it's Over: What role for mediation in post-agreement contexts?* Oslo Forum background paper (Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 24–27 June 2008).

**The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue**

114, Rue de Lausanne  
1202 Geneva | Switzerland  
info@hdcentre.org  
t: +41 22 908 11 30  
f: +41 22 908 11 40

[www.hdcentre.org](http://www.hdcentre.org)

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