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# FORUM

## INTERVIEW

In our time: 15 years of war  
and peacemaking

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### **Oslo Forum**

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The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) is a private diplomacy organisation founded on the principles of humanity, impartiality and independence. Its mission is to help prevent, mitigate, and resolve armed conflict through dialogue and mediation.

Co-hosted by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and HD, the Oslo Forum, is a discreet and informal annual retreat which convenes conflict mediators, peacemakers, high-level decision-makers and key peace process actors.

The following interviews were conducted specifically for the Oslo Forum 2017 and reflect events until early-May 2017. They were intended to provide background information to guide and inform discussions at the Oslo Forum, and do not represent the positions of the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.

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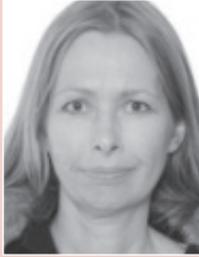
Photo of Dr Comfort Ero – Courtesy of Julie David de Lossy / CRISIS GROUP

Photo of Dr Ram Manikkalingam – Courtesy of the Dialogue Advisory Group

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**Tone Allers**

Tone Allers is the Director of the Section for Peace and Reconciliation at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Previously, she served in the Norwegian Embassy in Germany (2004–2007) and the Norwegian Embassy in Japan (2002–2004). Ms Allers joined the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1999 in the Asia Section and has been actively engaged in Norwegian support to peace processes ever since. She is a member of the Nordic Women Mediators. From August 2017, Ms Allers will take up her new position as Norwegian Ambassador to Jordan.



**Emmanuel Bombande**

Emmanuel Bombande is a co-founder and former Executive Director of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and the Former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Republic of Ghana. Before serving in government, he worked with the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. He is a peacebuilding practitioner and an international trainer in conflict mitigation and prevention across Africa and beyond with a strong background in conflict analysis. He has been a lead mediator in many community-based mediation efforts in West Africa.



**Comfort Ero**

Comfort Ero is the Africa Program Director at the International Crisis Group, and oversees its work in West, Central and Southern Africa, as well as the Horn of Africa. She first joined the organisation in 2001 as its West Africa Project Director, before serving for three years as the Political Affairs Officer and Policy Advisor to the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Liberia. Prior to joining the International Crisis Group, she was Deputy Director of the Africa Program at the International Center for Transitional Justice.



**Ram Manikkalingam**

Ram Manikkalingam directs the Dialogue Advisory Group. He was involved in the teams that disarmed the Irish National Liberation Army in Northern Ireland and ETA in the Basque Region. Dr Manikkalingam has assisted international organisations and governments in dialogues with armed groups in Libya, Iraq and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In Sri Lanka, he is assisting the President's Office on national reconciliation. Previously, he advised then President Kumaratunga on peace talks with the Tamil Tigers and has served as an adviser with Ambassador rank at the Sri Lankan Mission to the United Nations.



**Meredith Preston McGhie**

Meredith Preston McGhie is the Africa Director at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD). She has worked with various United Nations agencies and non-governmental organisations in Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia, focusing on developing new approaches to post-conflict reconstruction, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration and small-arms control, with a particular emphasis on gender, inclusion of women and addressing the needs of disabled soldiers. As Regional Director for Africa, Meredith manages a range of public and confidential mediation processes.



**Teresa Whitfield**

Teresa Whitfield is the Officer in Charge of the Policy and Mediation Division at the United Nations Department of Political Affairs. Prior to that, she was Senior Adviser to the President of the International Crisis Group. Ms Whitfield has long combined analysis of conflict and peacemaking related issues with practical experience, including providing the Norwegian Foreign Ministry with advice on aspects of the Colombian peace process. From 2008 to 2014, she was a Senior Adviser to the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, and a Fellow of the Center on International Cooperation at New York University.

# In our time: 15 years of war and peacemaking

To mark the 15th edition of the Oslo Forum, six alumni share their reflections on the evolution of peacemaking since 2003.

## What do you think have been the most significant successes and missed opportunities in peacemaking during the past 15 years?

**Teresa Whitfield:** There have been classic state-to-state dialogue successes, such as the Iran nuclear deal and the dialogue between Cuba and the United States. In terms of intrastate conflicts, Colombia stands out in recent years. Although the story is not finished, last year's agreement was an enormous achievement. The emerging cooperation between the United Nations and regional actors, perhaps most obviously in West Africa, has also had a positive impact, especially with respect to conflict prevention. Finally, the Basque process is a case where, very quietly, non-governmental actors have helped to end a small but nasty conflict. In terms of missed opportunities, there are lots! I could name the failure to engage with the Taliban in Afghanistan in the early 2000s, the incapacity of the international community to address Syria early on, and the inability to respond quickly to real grievances which eventually led to the radicalisation of groups such as Boko Haram. Other examples include the Middle East Peace Process and the Annan Plan for Cyprus.

**Tone Allers:** Of course I have to highlight the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC. The agreement, for which Norway and Cuba acted as guarantors, is a major achievement,

and demonstrates in many ways how peace negotiations have matured during the last 15 years – in terms of peace and justice, inclusion and mechanisms for implementation. The latter are now being put to the test. Norway is taking part in the follow-up commission, and recognises that the need for support did not end with the signing of the agreement. It is the responsibility of mediators to stay engaged and point to opportunities for a political settlement when others do not see them or when a conflict has disappeared from the media spotlight.

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*The single biggest missed opportunity is the failure to make peace in the conflicts that emerged from the Arab Spring.*  
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**Meredith Preston McGhie:** One of the clearest successes in the last decade was the cohesion that emerged around the Kenya mediation process in 2007/2008. With a unified international and regional approach, a strong capable mediator and momentum moving the process forward, these talks delivered Kenya back from the brink at a critical time. While it is important to learn from this, in Kenya the stars all aligned so that other domestic and regional issues did not get in the way of such clear coherence for a positive result – a rare moment. The greatest missed opportunity, in my mind, lies with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) for Sudan. While many saw the implementation of this leading to the independence

of South Sudan as a success, this misses the clear nature of the problem that led to the conflict. The CPA was an opportunity to address governance in Sudan as a whole. By focusing almost solely on South Sudan and independence, the implementation of the agreement missed an opportunity for real reform, and today we see two countries in extreme conflict.

**Ram Manikkalingam:** The single biggest missed opportunity is the failure to make peace in the conflicts that emerged from the Arab Spring: Libya, Yemen and Syria. There have been multiple actors in these conflicts fighting alongside and sometimes against each other, blurring the distinction between a state and armed groups. But international peace efforts were pursued as though there were only two parties – a state and a rebel armed group – confronting each other. We continue to try to force conventional peace processes to fit unconventional wars. The biggest successes are Colombia and Sri Lanka. In Colombia, the oldest armed conflict in the world was brought to an end with the assistance of Norway. In Sri Lanka, the armed forces defeated the Tamil Tigers. The victorious government, rather than pursuing reconciliation, polarised communities to consolidate power. But a broad multi-ethnic political coalition defeated an authoritarian government in a clean election without shedding a drop of blood.

**Emmanuel Bombande:** A significant success is the increasing impetus for prevention and the return of preventive diplomacy to the forefront of peacemaking. The active engagement of regional inter-governmental organisations, working with the UN and non-governmental and civil society organisations, accounts for some successes towards prevention. The Gambia in January 2017 is a good example,

but peaceful transitions have also been managed in Niger and Burkina Faso. In Benin, tensions leading up to elections in 2016 were successfully handled through preventive diplomacy, with a peaceful transition to the current President. Regrettably, there is weakness in effective coordination among these actors, as seen in initial efforts at engagement in Mali. Active political engagement has been weakening, while institutional competition is more visible. It is a missed opportunity when peacemaking does not adopt new approaches on the current dynamics of violent conflicts and the sustained threats of violent extremism.

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*The Basque process is a case where, very quietly, non-governmental actors have helped to end a small but nasty conflict.*

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**Comfort Ero:** In Sierra Leone, it was crucial that the United Kingdom, a permanent member of the Security Council, took a lead role in the peace process, but the region was also essential in rethinking the agreement and establishing mechanisms to protect its implementation. In Liberia, several factors, including the sometimes tense but important collaboration between regional actors and the UN, were important in building peace. Despite efforts by

the warring parties to derail the process at times, implementation held because of growing consensus among key external actors. Another success is the development of mediation capacity by regional organisations, including their ability, though uneven, to support envoys. South Sudan is the most significant missed opportunity in Africa. The foundations for the country's upheavals were in part laid with the inability to implement the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement's crucial goal of nudging the SPLA/M to transform from a liberation movement into a cohesive political party capable of governing. After the 2011 referendum, the party struggled to establish legitimate internal democratic processes and instead relied on ever-shifting alliances to maintain stability.

## How has mediation been affected by the rise of extremist groups and the reaction of states and international organisations to this phenomenon?

**Ram Manikkalingam:** While the rise of extremist groups is not new, the reaction of states has changed. Europe had more bombings, killings and kidnappings during the 1970s and 1980s by the Baader-Meinhof gang, the Red Brigades and the IRA than it does now. Members of those organisations were locked up for committing violent acts; today, people are being imprisoned for sharing extremist ideologies. When the mere association with an extremist ideology is criminalised, states and international organisations cannot talk to extremists, even if they do not engage in violence, leaving coercion as the only option. This opens opportunities for unofficial mediators, unconstrained by government policies or the norms of international diplomacy. They face fewer security, political or diplomatic challenges in engaging extremists. Unofficial mediators confer less legitimacy on extremist groups, can deploy more flexibly and effectively explore spaces for dialogue. Such actors can complement formal efforts led by international actors and states, and bring some of the extremists into the processes.

**Teresa Whitfield:** Hugely. In the early 2000s, the ‘global war on terrorism’ and the resulting counter-terrorism legislation had a chilling effect on official mediation and engagement by states. Paradoxically, it also increased the space for non-governmental mediators. In addition, the proliferation of violent extremist groups has shifted demand in the field away from ‘classic’ processes. The Islamic State has killed nowhere near the number of people that the government of Syria has, and yet it has changed the dynamic on the battlefield and the mediation table. A single individual can easily take a vehicle, kill a few people with enormous repercussion, and the Islamic State will claim responsibility. The immediacy and headline horror of their tactics, their reach into Western countries – all this has had quite a distorting effect. This dynamic has been highly daunting for those countries and regions where the level

of suffering is in the hundreds of thousands. We, as mediators, should try to have a sense of perspective on how these groups intercept with conflict dynamics, as well as on what they do.

**Meredith Preston McGhie:** Extremist violence has fundamentally changed the nature of conflict. Groups are more diffuse and harder to reach, and their goals often seem aligned to continued conflict rather than

politically achievable ends. This challenges our understanding of dialogue and what it should achieve. Mediators have yet to develop adequate approaches to manage these conflicts. Instead, securitised approaches are squeezing peacemaking space, making it more difficult to talk to those beyond the pale than it was in the past. State-based concepts of mediation need to adapt to address transnational, regional and international dynamics, and understand

that dialogue must be at the heart of addressing these conflicts in the long term – although the processes will look little like a ‘traditional peace process’. We must, therefore, as mediators, work out what processes or agreements might look like to best address the roots of these conflicts and help to resolve them.

**Emmanuel Bombande:** Mediation has been affected by the limited narrative that it is not possible to talk with extremist groups. States have reacted with counter-terrorism approaches, which often reduce the scope for innovation and more comprehensive and dedicated long-term efforts towards preventing violence. The traditional approaches of seeking quick but short-term solutions make compelling arguments for military enforcement of security that often increases the vulnerability of civilians and reduces the capacities of states to protect their own citizens. When states, in the effort to suppress extremist groups, abuse human rights and commit atrocities, they accelerate radicalisation and even contribute to the proliferation of these extremist groups. Such

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situations can be exacerbated by military intervention, covert or overt, from outside powers. As a result, the space for dialogue and mediation efforts is constricted and trust decimated. The long-term consequences of such interventions become even more devastating and destructive to a country than ever imagined at the start of the crisis, such as in Libya and Syria.

**Comfort Ero:** Engagement has become increasingly difficult, especially with proscribed groups such as Boko Haram or al Shabaab. Practical constraints, such as the proliferation of counter-terrorism legislation – both within and outside the African continent – have made it even more difficult for NGOs or mediators to engage with such actors. In addition, some groups are simply not interested in the peace table. Regardless, mediators should always encourage dialogue, and should assess and seize opportunities to engage, although this is never easy. There have been unofficial exploratory efforts to reach out to various groupings, and these have needed to remain

discreet. There have also been some innovative mediators seeking informal channels, especially to find ways to peel away some of the fighters from their groups and encourage these groups to come to the peace table.

**Tone Allers:** It is easy to jump to the conclusion that the rise of extremist groups makes the window for mediation smaller. At the same time, there has been a development during the last 15 years towards greater acceptance by states and international organisations that we need to talk to groups with which we do not agree. During the 1990s, Norway was one of very few countries that engaged with armed groups. Gradually more countries are exploring this field. Together with the understanding that peace processes need to be inclusive, and taking into account the interests of actors beyond warring parties, this is a positive development. Of course engagement is worthwhile only where actors have a political agenda, and would, under the right circumstances, be willing to abandon armed violence and enter into a political process.

## How has peacemaking been affected by technological changes which have occurred since 2003?

**Emmanuel Bombande:** Overall, technological changes have had a negative impact on peacemaking. Parties and other stakeholders in conflict listen less attentively to one another. Much more attention is paid to social media, with information often skewed to deepen emotion and division. Mediators now find it more difficult to guarantee the confidentiality of delicate peace processes given instant availability of videos of violent conflicts becoming part of a destructive wider public discourse. Peacemaking efforts have not fully harnessed technology to be more effective, and we need to re-learn mediation approaches with reference to social media. Young people are maximising the use of new technologies and want to be heard and present in peace processes. Mediation should embrace these developments and open more spaces for the active contribution of

citizens. Agreements can be implemented with wider support when the process leading to the agreement involves more participation. New technologies can enhance participation as an outreach tool for citizens' support for peace processes.

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*Peacemakers are way behind the curve in terms of technology.*

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**Ram Manikkalingam:** Technology has had no impact on peace mediation, which is about building trust between leaders who oppose each other politically and militarily. Technology has had significant impact on other aspects of conflict that peace mediation needs to consider – human rights, humanitarian engagement and military operations. These affect the issues parties discuss and the positions

they take. Nevertheless, peace is ultimately made because leaders build sufficient inter-personal trust with their adversaries to take a leap of faith into the unknown. Technology has no role here.

**Teresa Whitfield:** The world that we are engaging in has changed extremely quickly and, generally speaking, peacemakers are way behind the curve in terms of technology. It is however a field of enormous importance for the future, especially for younger generations. In addition to being extremely busy, mediators tend to be older. Although some are very active on their Twitter accounts, most are not. While many appreciate the mobilising factor of social media, there is much more sophisticated use and understanding of the potential of social media in the humanitarian field. Peacemakers are thus playing catch-up on this issue. One reason for this is the real challenge of confidentiality – think of people tweeting from inside negotiations, rival messaging and the difficulty of managing communication within peace processes. It also creates difficult expectations.

The balance between confidentiality and building public support is often extremely delicate in peace processes.

**Comfort Ero:** Technological changes need to be placed in the context of the closing of public space in parts of Africa. Governments have tended to perceive media and communication as a fifth column, seeing them as new opposition elements – increasingly so today given the rise of new forms of media. Mobile phones have become powerful tools for providing information on the continent. Innovations include the use of WhatsApp to gather, generate and spread information but also to provide early warnings. In some cases, WhatsApp has been used when political turmoil brought a media blackout. In Burundi, when government threats and harassment drove out journalists, forcing them into exile, and popular radio stations were shut down, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and text messages partly filled the void. Social media allow people to generate their

own news, yet such tools can also have a negative impact, particularly when they are used to send out false information and spread hate. A wrong piece of information on Twitter can unravel very sensitive processes.

**Tone Allers:** Technological development changes the field of peacemaking to a certain extent. It may be

positive in some cases, for example when direct contact between conflict parties via different mobile applications facilitates communication and creates trust, when parties are able to spread information about the outcome of negotiations to a broader population, or when new technologies are used to ensure more inclusive processes. But there are also risks that we need to be aware of, for example when talks that would benefit from confidentiality are

exposed on social media, or when spoilers use the media to undermine a peace process. In the end, however, the criteria for successful negotiations remain the same: trust-building, capacity and political will. When it comes to the fundamentals of political negotiations, new technologies can only disturb or enhance the effect of these.

**Meredith Preston McGhie:** The use of social media has helped mobilise actors around important social causes but has also provided spaces for hateful rhetoric, fuelling conflict by armed and political actors. Where mediators have not caught up is in how to use these media to greater advantage in popularising peace processes and getting messages out to wider populations about peace processes as they progress. This can be an extraordinary tool in bringing processes to the people if well leveraged. This is one of many examples where the mediation community needs to be in the forefront of innovating in peace processes.

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## What do you think has changed in the past 15 years in terms of inclusion and what do you think should be done in the future?

**Comfort Ero:** The participation of women in peace processes, and references to women in agreements, have been increasing, especially when the UN is involved. Yet, we still have a long way to go in terms of implementation and shifting mind-sets, locally and internationally. Beyond the commitment from leaders at all levels, we need to look at gender norms and power imbalances. We need to move away from the numbers game. Women should be recruited for their competences, not just as tokens. Also, a woman who sits at the negotiation table does not represent all women. We need to think outside the box by recruiting women from civil society, minorities, religious groups and ethnic groups. Underpinning all of this is finance, budget-commitment and monitoring of inclusion. One has to ask whether there has been any real effective monitoring of all these commitments that we make around including women, young people and national ownership.

**Meredith Preston McGhie:** Over two decades, I have seen a progression from a focus on inclusion of women (as an often tokenistic gesture) to a wider recognition of the need for inclusion of women and other groups that may be under-represented in peace processes. However, there is still a long way to go. What is important in the future is not to focus on how to include groups into a process that is structured along the same power lines as before but to think about how processes could be restructured to make inclusion more meaningful and bring about agreements that help to reduce the inequalities that may be at the heart of the conflict in question.

**Teresa Whitfield:** There is an increased recognition of the multiple ways in which women can be included, although discussion of inclusion still far out-strips its practice. Positive examples include Colombia for example, where there was a sub-commission on gender which was able to make the language

through the agreement gender-sensitive. External actors cannot insist on the presence of women in parties' negotiating delegations, but we can think of ways to help encourage different voices – of women and other constituencies – to be heard and understood within a mediation process. It is a slow process, but there is no alternative. The UN Secretary-General has recognised the challenge of securing women as Track I mediators and has put this very high up in his priorities. This has also been a core concern for Norway, HD and the Oslo Forum for years. I have met remarkable women at the Oslo Forum and go through the Oslo Forum participants list to recommend women for other positions. Networks like these are critical. We have to be assertive in connecting and pushing people up. It's a slow process but I am pretty optimistic that the next 15 years will be quite different.

**Tone Allers:** Despite persisting challenges, important progress has been made. The Colombian peace process and the women's advisory board and the civil society room in the UN-led Syrian peace talks are only two illustrations of innovative mechanisms of inclusion. Also, the UN, regional organisations and individual countries have improved their own capacities through national action plans, the training of peace envoys in gender and mediation and the establishment of regional networks of female mediators. We have moved beyond the stage of creating awareness. And we have moved from focusing merely on gender to recognising the question of inclusion more broadly. In the future, we should continue to insist that there are mechanisms for inclusion in all peace processes, and work with women and civil society to get a peace process going where there is none. We have gained considerable experience over the past 15 years on how these groups are more able to focus on long-term settlement, while warring factions often have a shorter-term focus.

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*A woman who sits at the negotiation table does not represent all women.*

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**Ram Manikkalingam:** In the past 15 years, talk about the role of women in peace processes has increased – but their actual role has not. Peacemaking brings together commanders of warring parties from different sides, who are invariably men. The UN and external actors who manage peace processes cannot decide for the warring parties who they should bring to the negotiating table. However, the UN and other mediators can decide who they include in their own team. And they have failed to include women. Working out a political agreement is about more than ending war. It is about the roles of citizens and social groups in a new political order. Here, women can and should be included. Indeed, it seems ridiculous that we should still have to make the case for including half the population in discussions about their own future. Furthermore, inclusion goes beyond gender. It is also about youth, marginalised communities, and political and social minorities. Finally, we need to find a way to include the ‘spoilers’. You never really know who is a spoiler until you have sought to include them.

**Emmanuel Bombande:** Over the past 15 years, there have been gradual but only slight improvements on inclusion in peace processes. The dominance of political actors in peace processes continues to exclude women who are less visible in the political field. Processes should open more spaces for women practitioners regardless of their political positions. Mediation structures would be more effective with increasing female participation and more women in leadership roles. The design of mediation efforts should undertake to engage with all parties for the presence and inclusion of women throughout a peace process and in the implementation of outcomes and agreements. Building inclusive and peaceful societies for sustainable development, as articulated in the Sustainable Development Goals, has a better chance of success when peacemaking is understood as commitments and long-term efforts rather than responding to particular crises that find expression in violence but are rooted in deeper interconnected issues.

## What advice would you give to the upcoming generation of mediators?

**Ram Manikkalingam:** Join a non-governmental organisation or a government, not the UN. Work as a humanitarian or a political activist, trying to make change in the context of armed conflict. Get comfortable with confusion. You will need this experience to navigate your way through the fog of war and peace. Put yourself in the other person’s position and develop multiple perspectives on mediation.

**Teresa Whitfield:** Learn languages, travel as much as possible, listen – and acquire patience! There is currently considerable effort to professionalise the field, which of course I welcome and try to contribute to through the UN’s mediation support. However, the experience of spending time in one place and really understanding the dynamics of one conflict is very valuable. It is extremely helpful to dig in, to spend hours and hours listening to those who have taken the extraordinary decision to pick up or put down weapons to defend their ideals or

interests. One cannot underestimate the life-changing dimension and complexity of these two decisions. We have to be respectful and able to listen to that.

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*Get comfortable  
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**Meredith Preston McGhie:** Learn from history. Be willing to take risks and search for new ways to do things. Innovate. We are at a watershed period for conflict mediation, where we need different approaches and solutions. Listen to the parties, listen to the people in a conflict and understand the heart of the problem. If you don’t understand that, you cannot help

to find a solution. Lasting agreements are most often found within a constellation that aligns the interests of people in power with the interests of the people. While these are hard to find, they are key to a long-term solution in any conflict.

**Comfort Ero:** It is important to acquire knowledge on the trajectory of a conflict, the factors that led to it,

its actors, geopolitics, shifting alliances and the broader politics of a region. Listen, understand and balance. Be wary of the choices that governments present in terms of who gets to sit at the table and do not reproduce elite patterns. One should empower younger and non-traditional actors that we often see kept out of the peace room – those who could be agents for reforms rather than the putative chief-leaders of groups. Sometimes, mediators get caught up in spending considerable time dealing with who they see as the key leaders. There are other important actors, especially at the community level, who can help the mediator find a better way to resolve crises and build peace.

**Emmanuel Bombande:** We should appreciate that mediation is no longer an activity that responds to crisis. Rather, mediation is a permanent feature at the core of governance and sustaining peace. The structures that support mediation efforts should be established not only in response to violent conflict but also to pre-empt peace processes. Opportunities for support by international actors could be enhanced in conflict settings where leadership and ownership of peace processes can be identified to make peace and prevent violent conflict. There is now enough evidence to demonstrate that, when regional inter-governmental organisations are functional and effective, prevention of violent conflict through collaboration with and support from the UN and other players produces effective results and

reduces violence that has occurred or recurred. The upcoming generation of mediators should ask how regional organisations could become more effective in mediation. Where such regional organisations do not exist or are non-effective, how could they be supported to provide regional leadership, have ownership and become more effective in mediation?

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**Tone Allers:** In the new era of geopolitics, mediators should continue to focus on the conflict parties. Keep the process going between the protagonists, even when regional or geopolitical actors seem to be pulling the strings. At the same time, mediators have to refine their arguments for a political process, and make them heard

by decision-makers and others generally more receptive to arguments for military intervention. At this point, it may be tempting to seek cooperation with like-minded actors. However, this is not an option in the field of mediation. You need to look for complementarity when you choose your partners, and be open to interacting with actors who have different perspectives. Finally, it is crucial to learn from other processes. That is why Norway established a section for peace and reconciliation 15 years ago and, together with HD, initiated the Oslo Forum as an arena for mediators to meet and exchange experiences. It is our firm ambition that, while drawing upon the experience of seasoned mediators, the Forum will continue to be a platform for the upcoming generation, contributing to renewal of the field.

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