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JUN 26 2015

15-05587

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Note to the Secretary-General
(Through the Deputy Secretary-General)

UPDATE ON THE STANDBY TEAM OF MEDIATION EXPERTS

1. Following Member States' strong support at the 2005 World Summit for strengthening the United Nations' capacity in the area of mediation, the Policy Committee authorised, that same year, the creation of the **Mediation Support Unit (MSU)** within the Department of Political Affairs. The MSU, located within the Policy and Mediation Division of DPA, has since become a centre of excellence and its services are today recognised as essential professional resources to support the work of the Special Envoys and Representatives carrying out good offices and mediation efforts on your behalf, and of partners in regional and sub-regional organisations.

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2. A flagship tool of the MSU is the **Standby Team of Mediation Experts (SBT)**. These eight experienced experts in designing and facilitating mediation processes and in thematic issues that arise in peace talks – ceasefires, power-sharing, natural resources, constitutions, and gender, to name but a few – are now deployed at around 100 times per year either in direct support of peace talks, or for training and capacity building efforts. They are often deployed at short notice in response to urgent requests from your envoys and representatives; other times they are deployed for prolonged or repeat engagements to help sustain a political process over time.

3. Almost every peace effort currently underway under your auspices requests and receives help from the MSU and the SBT. To give you a snapshot of some of the current work of the SBT: Special Envoy de Mistura has heavily relied on the MSU and SBT experts to design and conduct the current Geneva consultations on **Syria**. Your current **Yemen** envoy attended a senior mediation training last December provided in part by the SBT and, immediately upon being appointed, asked for MSU support to design and carry out talks in Geneva. Two experts were part of his team for the first round of talks. On **Libya**, SBT experts have provided technical expertise to SRSG Leon's effort on power-sharing issues, ceasefire and security arrangements and confidence-building measures. The SBT has provided significant support through UNSOM to **Somali** leaders on constitutional issues.

4. MSU is a system-wide service provider and as such its services are also in demand by entities such as **DPKO** and **UNDP**, as well as by regional and sub-regional organisations. In the context of the consultations on the **Mali** peace process mediated under **Algeria's** lead, an SBT expert played a central role advising your Special Representative in efforts to secure the signature of one of the key parties to the conflict that had remained outside it, to avoid a partial agreement and to promote its implementation. Through several deployments, MSU and the SBT helped design the process of consultations that preceded the recent **Bangui Forum** in **CAR** and was deployed to support the mission and SRSGs Bathily and Gaye during the Forum itself.

5. SBT members are also regularly engaged in **non-mission settings** to support Resident Coordinators, such as in **Ukraine** (recently training OSCE ceasefire monitors and conducting a constitutions support mission under the RC), **Bangladesh** (supporting ASG Fernández-Taranco), the **Philippines** (supporting RC/UNDP efforts on dialogue, and earlier those of the Humanitarian Dialogue Centre), and many other contexts.

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6. A recent internal study that we conducted indicated that since its establishment in 2008, most operational SBT deployments have been to Africa (41%), Asia (21%) and the MENA region (20%). These data present us with a snapshot of the Organisation's global engagements and where there is need to mobilise professional mediation advisers.

7. DPA directly conducts, or else conducts through partners, a large range of **mediation trainings** – on overall mediation, and on thematic areas such as ceasefires and gender. UN staff at senior, mid, and junior levels, as well as staff from regional and sub-regional organizations, participate. SBT members are almost always lead trainers or resource persons in these efforts, and also are called upon to give tailored coaching sessions to senior mediators. DPA regards this as essential to the efforts to professionalise the conduct of mediation and share wisdom, experiences and best practices as widely as possible.

8. DPA's operation of the SBT requires several things to be successful. First, it requires **client receptivity** at the highest levels as well as close collaboration in-house. The envoys and representatives who carry out your good offices are increasingly recognising that they benefit from this kind of help, not just when a problem arises in a mediation, but in designing the entire process from the start. Second, it requires active **political guidance and management**, which is provided under my auspices. DPA regional divisions and DPKO IOTs work closely with MSU so that political analysis and guidance and mediation support are properly integrated. Third, it requires a **flexible and responsive administrative system**, which allows for field deployments to take place to mission and non-mission settings within 72 hours (and often earlier) of a decision to that effect by Headquarters. Currently, the Norwegian Refugee Council is our partner in this effort, but for legal and administrative reasons, DPA is looking to shift this arrangement to UNOPS for the next team, due to take up their functions in March 2016. Fourth, we must attract and select **the right experts**. DPA invests a lot of time into the annual recruitment of the experts, placing a heavy emphasis on mediation experience and diversity. This is also essential to maintain the confidence of Member States in the mechanism.

9. It goes without saying that these deployments also require **financing**. The work of MSU and the SBT current relies on extra-budgetary voluntary contributions. Norway and the EU have provided by far the bulk of financing for the SBT to date. As a direct result of your decision to devote to mediation support half of the funds from the Seoul Peace Prize awarded to you in 2012, DPA was able to expand the team to eight experts. The current fiscal climate affecting traditional donor countries as well as the desirability to attract a broad base of funding makes it essential to use every opportunity to reaffirm the importance of adequate and predictable funding for the Organisation's conflict prevention and mediation activities. This is something that I have stressed in my consultations with the **High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations**, which in its Report to you have highlighted the lack of predictable funding for core functions in the MSU, and tools such as the SBT, considering the situation unacceptable (para. 70) and offering recommendations.

10. As the Secretariat considers these recommendations and defines its envisioned follow-up actions, the role of the **Group of Friends of Mediation**, a grouping of Member State allies in this regard, should be kept in mind. The Group, co-chaired by Finland and Turkey, is already looking to strengthen the financial underpinning of our mediation efforts based on a needs assessment conducted last year. As the Secretariat considers the scope to significantly strengthen the resourcing of mediation activities through the Regular Budget, as recommended by the High-Level Panel, DPA will explore means to secure the necessary

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extra-budgetary resources to continue to professionalise the field of mediation and ensure the United Nations can rapidly respond to crisis situations.

11. Given your personal interest, should you agree, an opportunity to meet with the Standby Team during their upcoming mid-term review in October can be arranged.



Jeffrey Feltman
24 June 2015

c.c.: Ms. Malcorra
Mr. Ladsous
Mr. Fernández-Taranco



Fw: Note to SG - Update on the Standby Team of Mediation Experts

SGCentral to: Hazel Foster

Sent by: Jill Annitto

26/06/2015 11:14 AM

----- Forwarded by Jill Annitto/NY/UNO on 26/06/2015 11:14 AM -----

From: Angeli Badelles/NY/UNO
To: SGCentral/NY/UNO@UNHQ
Cc: DPA-OUSG Correspondence, Dora Przybylek/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Silva Armani/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Maria Zaroui/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Levent Bilman/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Mary-Elizabeth Danseco/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Maria Regina Semana/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Vida Cofie-Robertson/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Naututu Okhoya/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Peter Ho/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Jasmine Lagumdzija/NY/UNO@UNHQ
Date: 26/06/2015 11:09 AM
Subject: Note to SG - Update on the Standby Team of Mediation Experts

Dear colleagues,

Please find attached note from Mr. Feltman on the above-mentioned subject.



20150626103805.pdf

Best.

Angeli

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